



TN gets Rs 12,300 crore investment boost

CHENNAI (Agency)

During Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's official visit to the United Kingdom, a Tamil Nadu state delegation signed multiple agreements in London on Monday, securing investment commitments worth Rs 12,300 crore.

The projects span key sectors, including advanced manufacturing, electrical equipment production, and Global Capability Centres (GCCs), and are expected to create approximately 10,000 high-value jobs across the state. A major part of the investment comes from Samvardhana Motherson International Ltd, which, alongside its European and UK joint venture partners, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to invest Rs 11,000 crore. The mega-project is expected to create nearly 7,000 employment opportunities for the TN workforce.

The MoU was signed by Barrie Painter, Global Head, Marketing and Communications, Samvardhana Motherson International Group, and Deepak Jacob, Managing Director, Guidance, Tamil Nadu government.

The proposed investment will cover design, engineering, manufacturing, assembly and logistics facilities and is expected to strengthen Tamil Nadu's position as a hub for advanced manufacturing, engineering and automotive-related activities.

The Motherson commitment is the first major investment announcement from London since the CM arrived in the UK capital as part of his visit to attract investments to TN.

'Tear us apart': Shivakumar challenges Oppn over probe by Central agencies

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday challenged the Opposition to conduct any investigation against him and his party leaders, including by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) or Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), but questioned why they, including Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, approach courts for relief when investigations are initiated against them.

"Do whatever you want with us. Tear us apart, hand us over to the CBI and conduct any investigation. But when investigations are conducted against them, why do they go to court and obtain stays?" Shivakumar wondered. "I do not want anyone to face trouble. Power should be used positively and not misused. My commitment is to use this authority to do good for people," the CM said.

'HDK pushing aside Ashoka and Vijayendra'

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar took a dig at Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, saying the JDS leader was waiting to push aside BJP leaders R Ashoka and BY Vijayendra and emerge as the principal Opposition leader in Karnataka.

"Let elections come closer. Ashoka and Vijayendra will have no authority. Someone else (Kumaraswamy) will parachute in," Shivakumar said.

Defence sector key to India's 2047 vision, tech leadership vital for strategic edge: **Rajnath Singh**

Singh said India must achieve self-reliance in critical technologies, substantially increase indigenous content, expand defence exports and establish a stronger presence in global supply chains by 2047.

New Delhi (Agency)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Tuesday said technological leadership would determine strategic advantage in future warfare and called for closer collaboration between the DRDO, industry, start-ups and MSMEs to build a self-reliant defence ecosystem.

Addressing the DRDO-Industry Synergy Meet, 'Vimarsh 2026', at DRDO Bhawan in New Delhi, Singh said the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047 was not limited to economic growth but envisaged a "technologically self-reliant, socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and strategically secure India".

"The defence sector is the cornerstone of this vision," he said. Singh said India must achieve self-reliance in critical technologies, substantially increase indigenous content, expand defence exports and establish a stronger presence in global supply chains by 2047. "By 2047, we have to achieve self-reliance in critical technologies, significant increase in indigenous content, multi-fold growth in defence exports, and we will have to

ensure strong presence of India in global supply chain," he said.

He said the DRDO-industry partnership should go beyond production to encompass research, design, testing, certification and the entire manufacturing value chain. MSMEs and start-ups, he added, must be made an



integral part of this ecosystem.

Singh also underlined the importance of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and drones in future warfare and urged defence companies to invest in developing technologies that could shape the battlefield of the future.

"Today, we are seeing how AI can be used to

render an image which seems to be of the 80s (referring to the viral 'in the 80s' AI-driven trend online). Joy would be when you can present an image of the future 40-50 years ahead," he said.

"We need to not just imagine the technology of the future, but we need to develop the technology of the future, today. Because, in future warfare, only that country will be able to leverage a strategic advantage, who will lead the technology. And, our imagination of today will become tomorrow's military capabilities," he said.

Singh said companies investing in new and emerging technologies would emerge as technology leaders, while closer cooperation between DRDO and industry could make India a global hub for defence manufacturing.

He described recent reforms in the defence sector as "unprecedented" and said self-reliance was not merely about manufacturing military platforms, machinery and components but also about developing an "Atmanirbhar" mindset. "The country which has its technology, has the power to build its future," he said.

The government never provides fodder, we have to borrow money for it": The Grim Reality of Gujarat's Farmers and Maldharis from Kutch's Navanagar Fodder Market!

Farmers and pastoralists of the desert region are forced to order expensive fodder from Punjab; amid claims of being 'Vibrant', cattle rearers of the desert coast are sinking under a mountain of debt!

Mahanagar Metro Desk Kutch / Ahmedabad.

The government never provides fodder, we have to bring money on interest or borrow it to keep our cattle alive... These piercing words from an agonizing Maldhari (pastoralist) standing in the Navanagar fodder market of Kutch are not just one person's pain, but the harsh reality of the pitiful plight of farmers and cattle rearers across Gujarat. Under the rule of a government making grand, hollow claims of being a 'Model State' and showcasing development, the pastoralists and farmers of the border district of Kutch are standing on the brink of ruin today Farmers Forced to Bring Fodder from Punjab, Thousands of Kilometers Away! The situation at the Navanagar fodder market in Kutch has become so dire today that there is no government arrangement or functional depot for fodder at the local level. As a result, pastoralists and farmers are forced to order fodder from Punjab, thousands of kilometers

away, paying exorbitant transportation costs: Skyrocketing Prices: The transportation cost of fodder coming from Punjab has increased so much that



keeping their livestock alive has become as difficult as chewing iron for an ordinary farmer.

Pastoralists Crushed Under a Mountain of Debt: Unable to let their voiceless animals starve, farmers are forced to buy fodder by borrowing money on interest or taking on debt. Gross Negligence by the Government: Farmers and Pastoralists Left Orphaned! When

the farmers and pastoralists of Gujarat are battling natural disasters, droughts, or severe fodder shortages, they receive nothing from the government

except paper schemes and announcements. Even in a desert region like Kutch, where animal husbandry is the main source of livelihood, the administration has completely failed to start fodder depots on time or in sufficient quantities. The Grim Reality of Gujarat's Farmers Today: Backbreaking Price Hikes in Fertilizers and Seeds: On one hand, the prices of farming

equipment and fertilizers are skyrocketing. Lack of Remunerative Prices: They do not get fair prices for their crops, and on the other hand, they are forced to borrow money on interest for livestock fodder. Government Aid Only on Paper: Amid large billboards boasting of 'Kisan Sahay' (Farmer Assistance) or 'Fodder Assistance,' the reality is that the farmer's hands remain empty. When Will the Apathetic System Wake Up? "A state's development model is a disgrace if its voiceless animals and the farmers who care for them are starving to death." The stomachs of farmers and pastoralists will not be filled by subsidies and promises on paper. If a government arrangement for adequate fodder at reasonable prices is not set up immediately for pastoralists across Gujarat, including Kutch, it is certain that in the coming days, farmers and Maldharis will march on Gandhinagar and sound the bugle for a fierce agitation.

Maharashtra govt plans to bring Uniform Civic Code Bill in Winter Session

Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis said his government will bring a bill on the Uniform Civil Code in the Winter Assembly session after the state panel submits its report.

Mumbai (Agency)

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday said the state government will implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) once the committee drafting its recommendations submits its report. He said the government plans to bring the legislation during the winter session of the state assembly in Nagpur. Fadnavis made the remarks a day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah said BJP-led NDA governments in 21 states would introduce the Uniform Civil Code before 2029.

Speaking to reporters, Fadnavis said the seven-member panel headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Desai

was working on its recommendations. The Maharashtra government had set up the committee in July and given it six months to



submit its report. Apart from Justice Desai, the panel includes former High Court judges RC Chavan and SG Mehare, former chief secretary DK Jain, former advocate general

Virendra Saraf, constitutional expert Ramesh Patange and educationist Suvarna Rawal. "The Maharashtra government has constituted a committee on UCC, and it is working on the matter. We will proceed with implementation as soon as the panel submits its report," Fadnavis said.

The Chief Minister attacked Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi over his criticism of the all-vegetarian dinner served at the BRICS Summit in Delhi, saying the issue was being raised to divert attention from India's diplomatic gains.

He said, "BRICS was not organised for a dinner," and added that a controversy was being created over the menu deliberately to shift public attention away from India's diplomatic achievements.

Rahul Gandhi alleges UPI move opens door to charges, accuses Modi govt of yielding to US pressure

The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha alleged that American payment companies had long opposed India's zero-MDR policy and claimed the government had now created a route to change it.

New Delhi (Agency).

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that the Centre's latest notification on UPI transactions had opened the way for merchant discount rates (MDR) to be imposed on transactions above Rs 2,000, accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "once again surrendering to American pressure".

Gandhi claimed the move would eventually burden consumers even if charges were levied only on merchants. "Now, MDR can be levied on merchant UPI transactions above Rs 2,000. Even if these transactions account for just 5% of the volume, they make up nearly 65% of UPI's total transaction value," he said in a post on X.

"The government says no fees will be charged to customers. But where will the fees imposed on shopkeepers ultimately come from? Added to the prices, straight out of the customer's pocket," Gandhi said. He alleged that American payment companies had long opposed India's zero-MDR policy and claimed the government had now created a route to change it. "Just like with the US Trade Deal, Compromised PM Modi is once again surrendering.



Family away for heart patient's treatment, burglars strike at home in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A family returning to its house in Pataudi's Jatauli early Friday with the body of one of its members, who had died during treatment in Jaipur, was confronted with another shock when they found the house burgled. Gold and silver jewellery and nearly Rs 1.1 lakh in cash were missing. According to a complaint filed by Jogender Singh, his wife Jyotsna suffered a heart attack on Sept 9 and was admitted to Mars Hospital in Rewari. Jogender and their son Saurav later took her to SMS Hospital in Jaipur, where she died during treatment. The family returned home around 5am on Sept 11 with Jyotsna's body. They found the lock on the main gate broken. The locks of rooms inside the house had also been damaged and household articles were scattered, according to the complaint. After cremation, the family checked the belongings and found gold jewellery missing from drawers of a wooden almirah. The stolen jewellery included a mangalsutra, maang tikka, chain, necklace, four bangles, two rings and a pair of earrings. The complainant estimated the total weight of the 22-carat jewellery at 147.25 grams. Two pairs of silver anklets were also missing. The thieves also took cash kept in two almirahs. The complaint lists Rs 50,000 in Rs 500 notes; Rs 40,000 in Rs 100 notes; Rs 20,000 in Rs 200 notes; Rs 2,000 in Rs 20 notes; and Rs 1,400 in Rs 10 notes. Two Nepalese Rs 10 notes were also missing. The total Indian currency stolen was Rs 1.13 lakh.

A case has been registered at Pataudi police station under sections 305 (theft) and 331(4) (house-trespass or house-breaking) of BNS. "A team from Heli Mandi police post has undertaken an investigation. We are also arranging a fingerprint team and dog squad at the crime scene," police said.

Kargil War veteran attacked with iron rod in Gurgaon over parking row, suffers serious head injuries

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A retired Indian Air Force Group Captain and Kargil War veteran has accused a parking attendant at Magnum Global Park of assaulting him with an iron rod, leaving him with serious head injuries and a fractured hand. In a complaint to police, Group Captain Amit Kumar Gupta (retired) alleged that the attendant also threatened to kill him following an altercation over parking on September 10. The complaint has been lodged in Sector 65 police station. Gupta, who was part of the IAF's 'Op Sagar' team during the 1999 Kargil War, had gone to Magnum Global Park for a family dinner at Gonzo restaurant that night. According to his complaint, Gupta dropped his family at the restaurant around 8pm and went to park his car. He alleged that the parking staff directed him between the valet area, basement and multilevel parking before eventually refusing to park the vehicle.

The situation escalated when Gupta tried to reverse his car. He alleged that one of the attendants struck the windshield, apparently attempting to damage it, before returning with an iron rod. Gupta alleged that the attendant then struck him twice with the rod—first on his hand and then on his head. He said the blow to his head caused heavy bleeding. He was taken to Medanta Hospital by his family, where he remains admitted. The victim has sought registration of an attempt-to-murder case against the accused.

Overflowing sewers, overgrown grass, broken roads: What ails Indirapuram, Vaishali

Noida.(Agency)

Residents of Vaishali F Block have raised the alarm after overflowing sewers turned roads in the area into overgrown shrubberies. The dirty water is getting collected around the plants and leading to a foul smell pervading the neighbourhood, which could eventually pose a sanitation risk, they said. Similarly, residents of Vaibhav Khand in Indirapuram are contending with layers of dust and loose earth, while overflowing drains further exacerbate the situation.

F Block residents' welfare association president Dharendra Kumar Singh Bhadauriya said the situation has persisted without any redressal so far. "A range of problems, including overflowing sewers and general sanitation issues, plague the area. An estimated 10,000 residents are suffering because of inadequate infrastructure and sanitation issues, particularly near the park at Ramlila ground," he said. Several carts and stalls have also sprung up recently, encroaching on the roads in the area and making it more congested, he said. Bhadauriya said the RWA has written to the municipal corporation several times but the local authorities have not responded to their pleas. Meanwhile, residents of Vaibhav Khand in Indirapuram, who are also facing the same issue, said their situation was made even worse by loose earth around the drains, which would mix with the overflowing sewer water. Residents called for immediate attention from the local authorities to restore the area, especially for those who walk through it. A resident said, "Even if restoration work on these issues starts, contractors take their own time and delay the process. Elected officials do not take any responsibility in trying to finish the projects."

Residents demanded accountability and emphasised the importance of community engagement in advocating for necessary improvements, hoping to achieve better living conditions in their neighbourhoods. When asked if redressal for these issues had begun, officials in the municipal corporation said works are in progress and results will be visible soon.

World Patient Safety Day 2026: A Step Towards Safe Care and a Healthier Life

Mahanagar Metro Desk

New Delhi: World Patient Safety Day is observed every year under the guidance of the World Health Organization (WHO). The theme for 2026, "Safe Care for Life," highlights the importance of patient safety, quality healthcare, and continuity of care. Ensuring that every patient receives the right treatment, at the right time, along with appropriate guidance, is a fundamental responsibility of the healthcare system. Currently, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have emerged as one of the world's major health concerns. Conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases affect billions of people worldwide and account for more than 74% of global mortality rate. These conditions are often associated with physical inactivity, unhealthy dietary habits, tobacco and alcohol consumption, and other lifestyle-related risk factors. In this context, patient safety extends far beyond preventing errors during hospital / Clinic - based treatment. Timely diagnosis, accurate identification of health conditions, safe use of medications, prevention of infec-



tions during treatment, effective communication of information to patients, and appropriate follow-up after treatment are all integral components of patient safety. Particularly in the management of NCDs, which often require long-term care, effective communication and coordination among patients, families, and healthcare professionals are essential. Dr. Amit M. Patel (Ph.D.), Senior Academician and Professional, and an expert core-committee member associated with various reputed international health and sports organizations, states, "Patient safety is not merely a component of the treatment process;

it is the responsibility of the entire healthcare system. Considering the growing burden of NCDs, early diagnosis, regular health assessments, physical activity, and continuous follow-up must become integral components of healthcare delivery." Physiotherapy plays an important role in this direction. Regular physical activity, appropriately prescribed exercise, maintenance of physical function, and rehabilitation can be beneficial in cardiovascular diseases, stroke, and several other chronic health conditions. Physiotherapists assess a patient's condition and functional capacity and develop safe, individualized rehabilitation programmes according to the patient's needs. However, the intensity and nature of physiotherapy interventions should always be determined in accordance with the patient's medical condition and overall clinical status. The initiatives undertaken by the Government of India for preventing and controlling NCDs also contribute significantly to strengthening patient safety. Under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD), emphasis is

placed on screening, early diagnosis, treatment, referral services, and health promotion. According to information from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, as of March 2026, 770 District NCD Clinics and 6,410 Community Health Centre NCD Clinics were operational across the country under the programme. According to Dr. Patel, "These initiatives of the Government of India are helping move healthcare beyond a hospital-centred approach towards community-based and preventive healthcare. To ensure patient safety, it is equally important to have well-trained allied and healthcare professionals, appropriate management of patient information, effective communication, and continuity of care and follow-up." The message of World Patient Safety Day is clear: safe care is every patient's right and every allied and healthcare professional's responsibility. In the fight against NCDs, integrating medical care with physiotherapy, physical activity, regular health assessments, and active participation of patients and their families can contribute to building a safer, more empowered, and healthier society.

If You Have Little to Explain, Say It Briefly, And If You Have Too Much to Explain, Remain Silent.

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Words hold immense importance in human life. A single small word can bring a smile to someone's face, while the same word can sometimes cause deep pain in someone's heart. Therefore, it is not necessary to say everything, nor does every matter require a lengthy explanation. There are certain things that can be explained with just a few words. But when we have to repeatedly explain something, prove ourselves, or make another person understand what is in our heart, silence often becomes the most powerful answer. "Even when words are few, emotions can be understood. Even when silence is deep, the message can be understood; Not every relationship needs words. Sometimes the eyes say everything." We often find



ourselves among people who demand an explanation for everything. What we did, why we did it, and for whom we did it—there is an expectation that we should answer every question. But it is

not necessary to give an account of every decision in our life to everyone. Some matters are connected to a person's private life and inner world, and understanding them requires sensitivity from the other person. A wise person speaks less because they understand that every matter does not need to be answered with words. When the other person is simply unwilling to understand, even thousands of words become meaningless. At such times, silence is not a weakness; rather, it is a beautiful way of protecting one's mental peace. Silence does not mean ending relationships or ignoring someone. The true meaning of silence is to preserve your energy when words no longer have any meaning. Because it is not necessary to win every argument, nor is it always

within our control to clear every misunderstanding. Life gradually teaches us that a person who genuinely wants to understand us does not need to be given lengthy explanations; and a person who does not want to understand will not understand, no matter how much we explain. Therefore, if you have little to explain, say it briefly. If your words are truthful, time will prove them. And if you find yourself having to explain too much, choose a little silence. Perhaps your silence will have a deeper impact than your words. Ultimately, the beauty of life lies in learning the difference between when to speak and when to remain silent. Because a word spoken at the right moment can save a relationship, while silence maintained at the right moment can save our peace of mind.

Rs 7 crore revamp plans for key master road linking Golf Course Road

Gurgaon.(Agency)

GMDA has planned a comprehensive revamp of nearly 2 km of the busy St Thomas Marg along the master road in Sectors 52A, 53 and 43.

The stretch is a crucial link between Ardee Mall and Golf Course Road and provides key connectivity to residential complexes in DLF-5, including Westend Heights, Princeton Estate and Carlton Estate, and several commercial establishments in the surrounding area. With a few schools and a hospital located along the road, it sees heavy traffic movement during the day.

The Rs 7.4 crore repair project will include resurfacing of the master road and portions of the service road. The repair will not be limited to resurfacing. According to officials, the plan is to also develop footpaths along the road and install guardrails to keep these spaces free from encroachments. Road safety items and thermoplastic markings will also be installed as part of the revamp. Lowering of green areas to improve the



retention of water and reduce waterlogging will also be taken up, a GMDA official said.

"We have invited bids for the project and are hoping to allot the work within the next two months. While the contractual timeline is one year, efforts would be made to complete the work before the next monsoon season," the official said. For commuters, the revamp comes as a

relief as the road had only undergone patch repairs over the years. The last repair work was carried out six years ago during which the stretch was recarpeted. Since then, locals said, the damaged patches and heavy traffic have made the short stretch difficult to negotiate during peak hours.

Nihal Mandhotra, general secretary of Ardee City, who uses the road daily, said,

"It has several broken sections which is very inconvenient for motorists. It was in need of resurfacing for a long time. Crossing this 2-km stretch is a daily nightmare, especially with bumper-to-bumper traffic. It also needs better planning and augmentation to accommodate the traffic it sees every day." Ashok Dalwani, general secretary of the RWA in Sushant Lok-1, said, "The resurfacing of this road is a welcome move because there is a strong need for improvement, particularly around Paras Hospital where the traffic volume is high. A large number of people use this road every day, and pedestrians also have to walk along the carriageway because of the poor condition of the footpaths."

Dalwani said the service road also needed attention, particularly the drainage system. "Before repairing the service road, the drains need to be cleared properly. In several places, they are covered with garbage and other material. If the drains are not cleaned first, simply repairing or recarpeting the road will not provide a lasting solution."

2 more arrested in Jharkhand exam irregularities case; 13 suspects caught so far

Ranchi,(Agency).

The CID has arrested two more people in connection with alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations in Jharkhand, taking the number of arrests in the JSSC Combined Graduate Level examination-2023 case to 13, an official



said on Tuesday. In a related development, the agency also arrested a coaching centre operator in Ranchi in connection with alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations conducted by the Jharkhand Public Service Commission. The CID has arrested more than 20 people in that case so far, including former JPSC chairman L Kiangte. An official said Dilip Kumar Paswan, 41, from Bihar's Jamui district, was arrested in connection with the alleged irregularities in the JSSC-CGL examination in 2023. He allegedly provided unfair advantages to several

candidates who appeared for the examination, the official said.

With Paswan's arrest, the CID has so far arrested 13 people in connection with the 'irregularities' case, the official added.

In the JPSC-related case, the arrested coaching centre operator was identified as Sanjit Kumar, a resident of Ranchi. "Kumar has been arrested and remanded to judicial custody. The arrested accused runs Ranchi-based Shivangan Coaching and was operating as an agent," the official said.

The CID has so far arrested more than 20 people in this case, including former JPSC chairman L Kiangte, who was arrested on August 10.

Job aspirants had staged protests from July 25, demanding cancellation of examinations conducted by the JPSC and JSSC and a CBI probe into the alleged irregularities.

On August 18, the state government announced the cancellation of several recruitment examinations, including the JSSC-CGL-2023, after the protests, following which the aspirants withdrew their agitation. However, the Jharkhand High Court later paused the government's decision on a petition.

School and homes submerged, Bihar students brave flood with classes on boat

Amid devastating floods that have submerged homes, roads and schools in Bihar's Katihar, a teacher has turned a boat into a classroom to ensure children's education continues.

Katihar(Agency).

A flood has submerged their village. Roads are underwater, homes are surrounded by water and the local school is inaccessible. But for children in Bihar's Katihar district, the floods have not brought their lessons to a halt. With nowhere else to study, they are now attending classes on a boat.

Several areas in Katihar are bearing the brunt of the floods. In Raghunathpur, water has entered homes, coaching centres and schools, leaving students without a regular place to study. In response, a private teacher has turned a boat into a makeshift classroom, allowing children to continue their education amid the floodwaters.

Mohammad Sahib, who runs a private tuition centre, began conducting classes on a boat after floodwater submerged the school in the area and his coaching centre. "The idea came when water entered our coaching centre. For two or three days after it was flooded, we stopped classes.

But then we felt that if we stopped studies, it could affect the children's future. So we thought, let us bring the children's work onto a boat and continue their education there," he said.



Sahib said the decision was also aimed at ensuring that children did not lose the skills and knowledge they had already acquired. "This way, whatever skills the children have and whatever development they are undergoing will continue. If studies stop like

this, even the things they have been taught can be forgotten," he said. The teacher said he and others approached the children's parents before starting the boat classes.

"We went to the homes of the children ourselves and spoke to their guardians. We told them that we wanted to conduct classes in a safe manner. All the guardians agreed, and we brought the children from their homes safely," he said.

The classes are being held at a location adjoining the submerged school, where the water is shallow and the area is relatively calm. The safety of the location was also checked before the classes began. Asked about the risks of teaching young children on a boat amid the floods, Sahib said the children were accustomed to dealing with difficult circumstances. Look, this is Bihar, and the children of Bihar know how to face challenges. We can do anything for education. If we have to study on a boat, there is no problem," he said. He added that the water at the location was not deep.

Blast in BJP leader's plot in Chitrakoot leaves one dead, severed legs found

Chitrakoot(Agency).

A major explosion at an empty plot owned by a BJP leader in Uttar Pradesh's Chitrakoot district has triggered panic in the area after police found the severed legs of an unidentified person near the blast site. The explosion took place near Ashoh village under the Pahari police station area, along the main road connecting Karwi and Pahari. The blast was so powerful that it left a crater several feet deep inside the plot owned by BJP leader Jagdish Gautam.

Police were informed about the incident on Monday night, two days after the explosion reportedly took place. When a search operation was conducted on Tuesday, officers found a large crater inside the boundary wall and a severed human leg in the grass some distance away. Another leg was later found outside the boundary wall. However, the rest of the person's body could not be located, prompting police to treat the



incident as a major explosion and launch a detailed investigation. Chitrakoot Superintendent of Police Arun Kumar Singh inspected the spot along with a dog squad, the Special Operations Group (SOG) and Pahari police personnel. He directed the

that an explosion had occurred and that a human leg was lying inside the plot. Police reached the spot that night but could not find anything because of darkness. During a fresh search on Tuesday, they found the large crater, a severed leg and a piece of torn clothing. Some bricks from the upper layer of the boundary wall had also been dislodged and were covered with soil.

Leaves from a tree near the crater had been completely blown off, indicating the intensity of the blast.

The SP said the circumstances at the scene prima facie suggested that the explosion may have occurred while an unidentified person was handling explosives and that the device may have detonated accidentally, killing the person handling it. "No person from any village has so far been reported missing," Singh said, adding that police were trying to establish the identity of the deceased and determine exactly what happened.

teams to establish what caused the explosion and identify the deceased person.

According to Singh, BJP leader Jagdish Gautam informed police on Monday night that the person guarding his plot had initially said lightning had struck the premises a day earlier. The guard later reported

Bengal may hike private bus fares after Durga Puja, minister says it's long overdue

Kolkata(Agency).

West Bengal Transport Minister Arjun Singh on Monday said the government would consider a hike in private bus fares after Durga Puja, asserting that such an increase was long overdue. He said any fare revision would have to be matched by better amenities for passengers.

The issue came up at a meeting between the minister, senior officials and associations of private bus operators.

Singh also said state transport undertakings, which are running heavy losses, should have raised fares earlier, while private bus owners pressed for a revision, saying the current structure has remained unchanged for eight years and is no longer viable.

"I think the bus fare hike is long overdue. We will take a decision after Durga Puja. Once hiked, the operators should offer improved amenities to commuters. We need better managed buses on roads, including those having AC services," Singh said. The minister met representatives of the Joint Council of Bus Syndicate, City Suburban Service, and West Bengal Bus and MiniBus Owners' Association at the transport department's Maidan Tent. West Bengal Bus and Minibus Owners' Association representative PN Bose said the meeting discussed several issues, including fines imposed on buses and the disparity in road toll fares in West Bengal and other parts of the country. He said the minister promised to address all these

issues. Bose said a one-time relief package for bus operators was also discussed, though there was no immediate assurance from the government. At present, the state-fixed fare for stage 1 is Rs 7, while private bus operators charge Rs 10 in what the report described as a clandestine arrangement.

"A fare revision is the need of the hour. The existing fare structure, unchanged for eight years, is no longer financially viable. We cannot survive on the



2018 fares in 2026. In the first stage at present, we demand Rs 20 to offset the operational losses," Bose said. Private bus owners said they could no longer sustain operations under the current fare regime, with diesel prices above Rs 100 per litre and maintenance costs steadily rising. "Let the government provide a one-time waiver of pending VAHAN-related penalties," Bose said.

Christian leaders ask Kharge to push Karnataka anti-conversion law repeal, 1% quota



Bengaluru(Agency).

A delegation of Christian leaders from Karnataka, headed by Archbishop of Bangalore Most Rev. Dr. Peter Machado, met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his Bengaluru residence on Monday and urged him to press for the repeal of the Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Act, popularly known as the anti-conversion law, besides seeking a 1 per cent exclusive reservation for Christians.

The delegation raised a range of issues concerning the Christian community, including greater political and administrative representation, nomination of a Christian representative to the Karnataka Legislative Council, and adequate representation on government boards, corporations and other statutory and nominated bodies.

The Christian leaders also sought 1 per cent exclusive reservation for the community under the Backward Class category, arguing that sections of the community continue to face socio-economic challenges. They urged the government to improve opportunities in

education, employment and other areas of development.

A key demand placed before Kharge was the repeal of the 2021 Freedom of Religion legislation. The delegation expressed concerns over the law's provisions and their perceived impact on the constitutional rights of citizens to practise and propagate their faith.

According to the delegation, Kharge listened to the concerns in detail and assured the representatives that he would take up the issues with Karnataka government leaders. He also promised to provide necessary directions for consideration of the demands and appropriate action. The delegation comprised Archbishop Peter Machado, Bishop of Mangalore Rev. Dr. Peter Paul, Bishop of Mysore Rev. Dr. Francis Serrao, Rev. Fr. Arun Lewis SJ, Director of Ashirwad, Praveen Peter, Anthony Vikram, and J.A. Kanthraj, PRO and spokesperson of the Archdiocese of Bangalore. The delegation thanked Kharge for meeting them and expressed hope that the Karnataka government would give due consideration to the demands raised.

Odisha STF to seek help from Assam, Mizoram, Maharashtra cops in orangutan case

BHUBANESWAR (Agency).

The Special Task Force (STF) of Odisha Police, which is probing the alleged smuggling of five baby orangutans into Balasore, is set to seek the assistance of counterparts in Assam, Mizoram and Maharashtra, where such primates were rescued in similar circumstances in recent years, officials said.

In 2022, two baby orangutans were rescued from Cachar district in Assam. In October 2023, one was rescued from Aizawl district in Mizoram. In 2024, another was rescued from an apartment in Dombivli in Thane district of Maharashtra.

Orangutans are not native to India and are primarily found in the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. The recovery of five infant orangutans in a forest in Balasore has raised suspicion that they may have been brought into the country as part of an illegal wildlife trafficking network with international links, a senior police officer said.

"As part of the investigation, steps will be taken to coordinate with the states from where the apes were previously rescued. This may provide substantial leads to trace the suspected wildlife trafficking network that brought the infant orangutans to Odisha," the officer said.

West Bengal Police are also assisting the Odisha STF in the investigation. However, investigators are facing difficulties in tracing the suspected movement of the animals between Odisha and West Bengal as neither Balasore nor Digha has automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras.

The STF had earlier obtained CCTV footage showing a black Thar moving near the Balasore forest, which investigators suspect may have been used to transport the orangutans to Odisha.

Police tracked the SUV to a hotel in Digha. However, they are yet to establish whether the vehicle's occupants were involved in transporting and abandoning the orangutans in the Balasore forest.

ED attaches Rs 13.44 crore assets in United Services Club money-laundering case

Mumbai(Agency). The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Mumbai Zonal Office, has provisionally attached 13 movable and immovable properties worth around Rs 13.44 crore in connection with a money-laundering case involving the United Services Club, the agency said.

The attached assets, located in Mumbai, Goa and Madhya Pradesh, include flats, land and plots, fixed deposits and bank balances belonging to Bernadette Bharat Varma, Bharatkumar Shankarlal Varma and others.

FAKE ACCOUNTS USED TO DIVERT CLUB FUNDS

The ED investigation was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered by the Mumbai Police under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023.

According to the ED, Bernadette Bharat Varma, who was serving as Deputy Secretary (Finance) of the United Services Club, allegedly acted in connivance with her husband, Bharatkumar Shankarlal Varma, to open or arrange fake and dummy bank accounts bearing names similar to the club's regular vendors.

The agency alleged that around Rs 77 crore belonging to the United Services Club was transferred into these accounts. The funds were subsequently diverted to personal and joint bank accounts belonging to Bernadette Varma, Bharat

Varma, their family members and associates.

PROCEEDS USED TO BUY PROPERTIES

The ED said its probe found that the accused allegedly used the proceeds of crime to acquire several immovable properties and invested part of the funds in fixed deposits with various banks. The agency further found that around Rs 11 crore was transferred to the bank account of Jyotigamay Foundation, a trust. The funds were subsequently diverted to bank accounts linked to Chandra



Prakash Pandey, his family members and firms controlled by him, the ED said.

Pandey was the Chartered Accountant associated with the United Services Club, according to the agency.

The latest attachment takes the total value of properties attached in the case to around Rs 47.95 crore. Earlier, on March 20, 2026, the ED had attached 35 properties valued at Rs 34.51 crore.

The investigation into the alleged diversion and laundering of the club's funds is ongoing.

The Future Will Judge Our Civilisation

There is something profoundly perverse in contemporary politics: those who shout loudest about defending civilisation and culture are those whose conduct is most conspicuously divorced from both. The phenomenon is not confined to India. Islamists invoke an imagined purity of Islamic civilisation while practicing violent intolerance. Christianity has a long history of projecting a 'superior' Christian civilisation, while engineering atrocities across the world. In India, the contradiction is increasingly visible in the political appropriation of Hindu identity: the kanwadias, for example, have become a spectacle of religious assertion and of coercive and obscene public behaviour, while the vocabulary of Hindutva, Sanatan, and civilisational greatness is used to legitimise an aggressive repudiation of civility. The fundamental confusion is between cultural and civilisational history, on the one hand, and living culture and civilisation, on the other.

AI in sports video 2AI in sports video 2 India possesses an extraordinary civilisational inheritance. Its achievements in mathematics, philosophy, linguistics, literature, architecture, medicine, and the arts are indisputable. Its ancient traditions of argument, scepticism, dissent, and intellectual contestation are extraordinary. But the achievements of people who lived centuries or millennia ago are not the achievements of those who merely occupy the same geographical space today. We cannot claim Aryabhata's mathematics, Kalidasa's genius or the intellectual achievements of ancient India simply because we were born here. Civilisation is not hereditary property. A civilisation survives not because its ancestors were great, but because its descendants are capable of greatness. Contemporary India is increasingly substituting ancestral pride for contemporary achievement. We celebrate Nalanda while engineering a collapse of educational standards; invoke ancient philosophical traditions while public discourse rewards abuse; boast of vasudhaiva kutumbakam while cultivating hostility towards specific 'outgroups'; invoke a tradition of debate while treating disagreement as betrayal. The past has simply become an instrument for avoiding responsibility for the present.

Culture, meanwhile, is reduced to symbols—dress, food, ritual, festivals, monuments, and slogans. But the essence of culture is reflected in whether disagreement produces argument or assault; whether public spaces belong equally to everyone; whether citizens can live differently without becoming objects of hatred. The kanwadia who believes religious devotion entitles him to intimidate another citizen, the Islamist who believes faith entitles him to suppress unbelief, and Christian extremists who believe righteousness entitles them to impose their dominance over others, are separated by theology and history; but they share a deep pathology: the conversion of a complex civilisation into a closed political identity. The scheme behind this is Orwellian. Political control increasingly depends not merely on coercion, but on controlling language and historical memory. Nationalism is obedience; patriotism is the absence of dissent; culture is conformity; history is grievance; and dissent is anti-national. Through these, authoritarian proclivities are socialised: vocal sets of citizens dictate what others should or should not eat; who they should or should not marry, how they should practice their faith; what they should read; and what particular opinions they must hold. But a confident civilisation does not fear difference; an insecure ideology does. India's civilisational history provides powerful resources against this insecurity. It is a history of encounters, migrations, arguments, accommodations, and transformations. India's strength was not uniformity, but its capacity to absorb and transform differences through intellect. The question for Indians today is not what our ancestors achieved, but what we are doing.

Urgent lessons from Nepal floods for Himachal

What is needed is decisive action and a drastic change in the model of development for Himachal Pradesh

Only a fool learns from his own mistakes," said Otto von Bismarck, "the wise man learns from the mistakes of others." It is now time for the Himachal Chief Minister to demonstrate his wisdom and imbibe some lessons from the horrendous tragedy of Nepal. And the lesson is simple — the Himalayas have had enough. Back off! Development has gone berserk in Himachal — 12,000 hectares of forestland diverted in the past 20 years for various projects, 174 hydel projects sanctioned or commissioned, 50 lakh trees felled, construction rules relaxed to permit even 10-storey buildings, the Shimla Development Plan 2041 approved to deregulate the city's precious Green Belts, an epidemic of unnecessary four-lane highways criss-crossing the state, tunnels planned under the fragile mountains, efforts to increase tourist footfall from 20 million per annum to an unsustainable 50 million. And all this in a state which comes under the highest seismic zone. The Himalayas are now pushing back, with increasing intensity. The not-so-natural disasters between 2022 and 2024 have caused financial losses of Rs 13,500 crore to the state and claimed 800 lives. The natural features that hold the fragile mountain stratas together — trees, glaciers, snowfields, permafrost, river drainage — are being decimated. The Himalayas are warming at twice the average global rate, and this is being amplified by local "heat islands" caused by emissions from heavy machinery and labour camps, deposit of black carbon on the ice fields, pollutants from the ever-increasing number of vehicles intruding into high-altitude fragile ecosystems on the new roads, and the removal of green cover. Dumping of muck in the rivers is reducing their capacity to carry excess water, resulting in regular flash floods. Many red lines have been crossed.

The Himalayas have been warning us for some time now — there was Kedarnath in 2013, Chamoli in 2021, Sikkim in 2023, Dharali in 2025, and now Nepal. Among the most dangerous impending threats to Himachal is the growing number and size of glacial lakes. The state had 107 glacial lakes of noticeable size with a total area of 5.54 sq km in 1990; the numbers are 669 and 11.2 sq km now. Some have reached dangerous proportions, like Ghepan in Lahaul, which has grown six times to almost 100 hectares. All the major rivers emanate from the glaciers above these lakes and the hydel projects on these rivers are extremely vulnerable to Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) events. Any damage to these projects would also endanger the lakhs of people living in towns and villages below them, as Nepal has so tragically shown.

Himachal is also naturally susceptible to other high risks: the state lies in the highest seismic zone, it has 20,000 landslide-prone hotspots, and EWEs (Extreme Weather Events) caused by climate change have increased by 40 per cent in the past few years. The time for studies, seminars and only monitoring is over. What is needed



urgently is decisive action and a drastic change in the model of development. Impose a moratorium on all new hydel projects, and stay those sanctioned but where actual construction has not yet started. Scrap the dozens of projects approved/planned for the high-altitude Chenab and Chandrabhaga basin in Lahaul-Spiti, and in Kinnaur and Pangri areas (which the local people have already been protesting against).

Exhume the 2010 report on environmental impacts of hydel projects by the then Additional Chief Secretary (Forests), which the High Court had accepted but the then government opposed and subsequent ones moth-balled. Consider its major recommendations — a ban on hydel projects in high-altitude, alpine, glaciated, forest catchment areas; a minimum distance of 5 km between projects; ensure minimum perennial flow of rivers.

Vigorously oppose the Centre's proposal for a 8.7-km tunnel below the Pir Panjal range to bring the waters of the Chandrabhaga in Lahaul to the Beas in Kullu. This Chinese-style project would rip out the heart of the Himachal Himalayas and would be a disaster of unprecedented proportions: it would destabilise the geology of three districts, generating tens of millions of tonnes of muck which can only clog the rivers, waterways and drainage of these areas. It would disturb the underground aquifers, and the additional water now added to the Beas would amplify the river's destructive

potential, which already causes havoc in Kullu every year. Reconsider the mindless focus on increasing tourist numbers to 50 million. The state's environment cannot support such numbers; the infrastructure needed for it and its effects — roads, buildings, vehicular pollution, sewage and garbage, water supply — would result in huge damage to the natural environment and cultural identity of the state. Learn from Bhutan. Limit the numbers, improve the quality. Discontinue and put a halt to the four-laning epidemic. They fracture the geology of the areas they pass through, destroy properties, deprive people of livelihoods, encourage even more polluting vehicles to contaminate our pristine ambience. Both the Parwanoo-Shimla and Kiratpur-Manali highways are continuing (and very expensive) disasters that prove this.

The time to act is now. The Himalayas have tolerated our arrogance for centuries, but their patience is now wearing thin. Even the Supreme Court has advised the state to be more sensitive to the environment, or else it "would disappear from the map of India". We proudly call Himachal 'Dev Bhoomi' but ravage and pillage it shamelessly for votes and profit. This must change.

We are proving right the words of Hubert Reeves, a French astrophysicist and environmentalist: "Man is the most insane species. He worships an invisible God and destroys a visible Nature. Unaware that this Nature he is destroying is the God he is worshipping!"

Make space for film lovers of all means

It's true that multiplexes have changed the movie-going experience. But none of these should cost so high that they would burn holes in the pockets of film lovers

The Thiruvananthapuram mayor's recent exclamation—"A movie ticket for ₹200 and popcorn for ₹500!"—has reignited a much-needed discussion about the exorbitant cost a family incurs when it decides to watch a movie at a theatre. While questioning the hefty prices of what's sold inside, Mayor V V Rajesh also called out the restrictions on carrying in food and drinking water from outside. Thankfully, he did not stop at that and directed all theatres in the city to ensure clean drinking water dispensers near entrances and exits. Cinema halls have also been warned against stopping parents from bringing essential food items for young children. The mayor has given theatre owners 15 days to act on these fronts.

It's true that multiplexes have changed the movie-going experience. The transition from single-screen halls to multiplex screening has also raised operational costs, which theatre owners try to recoup with overpriced food and beverages. But none of these should cost so high that



they would burn holes in the pockets of film lovers.

Theatre owners peg their argument to a recent Supreme Court verdict striking down a Jammu and Kashmir High Court order removing restrictions on movie-goers bringing in food. The SC had also allowed theatre owners

to fix the price of refreshments. But it had also mandated that free water should be provided and food for infants be allowed in halls. The theatre owners seem to have conveniently forgotten that part of the order serving their patrons' basic needs. Whatever be the legal reading, it should not stop anyone—especially elected representatives—from calling out a level of pricing that affects the public. Big-screen viewing should not be the sole preserve of well-to-do households. Such exclusionary practice has larger implications, too. The affordability crisis is deterring most Indian families from flocking to big screens, which in turn directly dampens the prospects of the film exhibition and distribution segments, on which a large number of livelihoods depend. Things have come to such a pass that a wider consensus on pricing food and beverages is called for—keeping in mind the interests of both audiences and entrepreneurs. Lawmakers should pick up the cue given by the Thiruvananthapuram mayor.

Steps should be taken to regain the Supreme Court's lost glory

Courts at all levels are moving towards majoritarianism, which is anathema to democracy

No country can claim to be free unless it has an independent and fearless judiciary. Democracy is the rule of the majority, but majoritarianism, where the voice of the other side is not heard, is anathema to democracy, writes Justice Deepak Gupta, former Judge, Supreme Court, in his widely acclaimed article The true meaning of freedom. Unfortunately, courts at all levels are moving towards majoritarianism. The vast majority of judges are men and women of integrity, but the number of black sheep is increasing. Citing various examples from Umar Khalid, Sonam Wangchuk to the Gyanvapi mosque case and chicken-on-Ganga boat, he writes that dissent is an essential part of democracy. The root of the problem is the manner of appointment of judges to the High Courts and the Supreme Court. The collegium system has failed, he writes. It has become totally opaque. The collegium takes extremely important decisions without giving reasons. Even today, most of the people repose more confidence in the judiciary compared to the legislature or the executive. Steps should be taken to regain the lost glory, he writes. This can and must be done because if people lose faith in the judiciary, the judiciary itself becomes irrelevant. That will sound the death knell for a democratic India, he warns. The Tribune Editor-in-Chief Jyoti Malhotra writes that Justice Deepak Gupta reiterated The Tribune's fidelity to fairness in an interview with the noted journalist Karan Thapar. "It is run by a Trust, not by a private player," Justice Gupta said, adding that was why The Tribune refused to inculcate the perils of "tabloidization". In current times, what legacy media has sometimes failed to achieve, social media has often succeeded by putting the searchlight on wrongdoing, she writes in her weekly column (The Great Game) article Trust is the key in the AI age. The fact remains that we, the legacy media, were supposed to be the conscience-keepers of the nation, not websites or social media handles prone to perversion by AI tools. What is new is the childlike glee with which the media is using AI tools to deliberately transform a nuanced story into a darker, more grotesque version of itself. The biggest challenge is how to tame AI and make it work for us, instead of the other way around, she writes. In a prelude to the BRICS summit, former MEA Secretary KC Singh in his Op-Ed article India's BRICS balancing act wrote that behind the summit rhetoric lie difficult choices over security, trade and diplomacy. Geopolitics is shaping the role of all global groupings. With

Canada, the UK and France sanctioning Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the cracks in NATO will widen. In US President Donald Trump's second term, the US has lost interest in the group as he engaged China in a G-2 format. The leaders attending the BRICS summit will operate at multiple levels, he writes. They would formally discuss the themes devised by India, which seek 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability'. A few plurilateral summits may at best frame solutions, but implementation requires



visionary leadership, he stresses. After 25 years of the 9/11 attacks, geopolitics continues to shape counter-terrorism measures. If India expected the post-9/11 war on terror to restrain Pakistan's indulgence in cross-border terrorism, then it has been disappointed and will continue to be so in the future, writes former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran in his Edit article 9/11 and the unfinished war on terror. Pakistan-sponsored terrorism against India has never been a US problem except when American or Israeli citizens have been killed. It resulted in limited counter-terrorism cooperation involving Pakistan-based groups, but this has receded over time. Paradoxically, the war on terror brought Pakistan back from the doghouse in which it had found itself after General Musharraf's military coup against the Nawaz Sharif government.

An important reason for the decline in international attention on terrorism is on account of the US's strategic defeat in its 'forever war' in Afghanistan, writes Vivek Katju, former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, in his Op-Ed article Why the world has moved on from 9/11. It led to an introspection within the US and the West if the manner in which it had reacted to 9/11 was strategically wise. For India, the lesson of the world's loss of real interest in terrorism is that it will have to handle Pakistani terrorism on its own, he writes. The phrase that characterises this new world is weaponised interdependence. For a middle power like India, such a world is more complex and offers many new challenges, and only imperfect answers or solutions, writes senior journalist TN Ninan in his elaborate article The quest for self-reliance in defence. There is import dependence because too many plans, goals and targets have come unstuck. The country should continue to build its conventional defence capabilities. Countering weaknesses against high-performance weapons systems can be done by deploying greater numbers (swarming), using techniques that render the superior system ineffective and making better tactical use of even inferior systems, he writes. Ukraine has shown how creative it can be and surprised the world. Ultimately, it depends on how well India has mastered the demands of drone and missile warfare and how effectively it marries tactics and technology to make up for any deficiencies in the traditional weapons of war, he writes.

Meanwhile, nine employee associations representing thousands of workers from centres of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) recently came together to voice their concerns about the trajectory of India's space reforms. The apex space agency may wither away incrementally without a transparent debate. The fear that ISRO is being allowed to bleed to death is not unfounded, writes TV Venkateswaran, visiting professor, IISER-Mohali, in his Edit article ISRO stands at a crossroads. The issue is not whether private industry should participate. It already does. The real question is where the boundary between public capability and private participation should lie. A vibrant private-sector participation does not require a weakened public space agency. That is why the present debate should not be reduced to a choice between "ISRO versus private industry."

Fight off dry Skin and keep it radiant



While most of us love bidding goodbye to the harsh and hot summer months and welcome the transition to cooler climes, at least one part of our body doesn't agree with us!

Our skin, especially in people who have dry skin, feels the extreme brunt of winter as icy winds make it scaly, itchy, irritated and dry like sand.

While you cannot control the climate, you can certainly take some measures to reduce the trauma that the cold season inflicts upon your skin. Make no mistake, as much as your body needs a transition to winter clothes, your skincare regimen also needs to change to suit the needs of the colder months. Hence, Dr Veena Rao, Dermatologist from Bangalore has come up with some tips to adopt as winter sets in.

1. Make sure your products are have moisturising ingredients

Refurbish your dressing table. Remove all skincare products that are alcoholic or astringent or water based as they zip away all oil from your skin. Replace them with products that are thicker, cream-based and moisturizing. And this means changing everything, right from face wash to cleanser to moisturizer to scrub. Each product you use should be cream based and moisturising so that the skin's natural oil is retained and augmented. Even sunscreen should be changed from gel to lotion or cream based.

2. Get a cream based thick moisturizer with UV protection

Need we even say this? A moisturizer is the single most important skincare accessory.



It is not just a remedy for dry skin, but it is also a very important antidote for early ageing. Loss of moisture is one of the two prime reasons for skin ageing (other is exposure to UV radiation). You need to immediately get your hands on a very good moisturizer that also offers UV protection so that your skin also remains protected against harmful UV radiation.

3. Go for steam therapy and exfoliation

As we apply loads of moisturizers and cold creams on our skin, the pores tend to get blocked. The creamy skin products also tend to attract more dirt and grime, which further

blocks the skin pores. Over time, this residue covers the top most layer of the skin in the form of dead cells. This may also ignite acne. To help the skin cope better, subject it to steam therapy once every week; this helps open the pores. At the same time also use a good face scrub once a week to help remove the dead cells. These procedures make the skin more receptive to moisturizers and also prevent allergies.

Add oil to your bath. No matter how much moisturizer you apply, bathing washes it all off. It is a good idea to add a few drops of olive oil to your bath water to give your skin a healing bath.

4. Go for moisturizing medi-facials

Medi-facials are not the usual facial massages that you get in beauty salons. Medi-facials are medically designed facial treatments that treat the nutritional deficits in your skin. If you have extremely dry skin, your dermatologist will examine its needs and prepare a customized medi-facial for you complete with infusion of vitamins and moisturizing agents into your skin using micro-jets. Visit a dermatologist to have your skin examined.

5. Increase intake of omega 3 fatty acids and vitamin E

Omega 3 fatty acids and vitamin E help the skin retain moisture and provide more resilience to it. Increase intake of food rich in this inputs such as fish, olive oil, nuts and cucumbers

6. Use hyaluronic acid based fillers

When administered into the skin, hyaluronic acid based fillers like Juvederm help increase the skin's water absorption and retention ability. This provides the skin a radiant glow and also serves to hydrate the skin. As the skin absorbs and retains more water from the atmosphere, it would better deal with the winter dryness.

Paint your pout mocha this winter season



Ditch basic and boring shades, try crimson, cranberry, oxblood, chocolate, blackest berry and blueberry on your pout this winter, says an expert.

Bharti Taneja, Cosmetologist, Aesthetician and Founder-Director of ALPS Beauty Group, has suggested a few shades that could make you look more trendy and daring:

1. Dark-matte lips: You can use a lot of rich, melodramatic shades like wine, plum, oxblood, masala, chocolate, coffee and cappuccino browns to turn away the winter gloom.

Just make sure to create a smooth canvas for your colour by scrubbing and moisturising your lips beforehand to get the best out of your mattes.

2. Vampire lips: As eyes are going to downplay this season, you can go a little more bold while choosing your

lip colour and round-up on shades like venom, blackest berry, extra-dark maroon, blueberry, violet, deep wines or plums and even black.

3. Pastel and bright pink lips: Bring out all your summer favourites like salmon, fuchsia, carnation, baby, hot, rose and all other forms pink.

4. Red lips: Paint your pout in all shades of red including ruby, blood, brick, cherry, crimson, candy, cranberry reds. This will surely let you infuse some warmth to the winter chill.

5. Neutral lips: Let a no-colour pout say it all for you the season of icy-chill. Choose nude glosses or lip colours like beige, mocha, peach, taupe, honey or salmon pink to match it with your skin-tone well as the weather.

6. Shimmer lips: Some shine on your lips is sure to glamourise the gloomy mood of autumn-winter, making sparkly lips a hit this season.

Simple tips to look your best on your D-Day

Every woman wants to be the centre of attraction and look perfect on special day. Start your skin care from taking at least six to eight hours sleep and eat a lot of super foods as they help in repairing skin cells, says an expert. Monika Sood, expert and managing director of TBC by Nature, an all natural cosmetic brand, has shared some tips to make it easy for you this bridal season.

- Sleep better: Start your skin care from taking at least six to eight hours sleep everyday for avoiding dark circles or tired eyes. Good proportion of sleep helps to rejuvenate you and balance your hormones. This is the most important thing you need to look like a princess on your special day and also drink 12-15 glasses of water daily to remove toxins from your body.

- Eat super foods: A lot of vitamins and antioxidants super foods can help you fight with skin problems. It can also repair your skin cells. You need to eat Vitamin C rich citrus fruits everyday like papaya, kiwi fruit, guava and watermelon.

- Cleansing your skin: Leave your regular cleansing routine aside for winters. Swap your cleansing milk for rose water, honey, turmeric, sandalwood paste or even saffron face wash to boost your glowing skin naturally.

- Homemade herbal face packs: This is the natural way to get smooth, glowing and supple skin. There are some home-made face packs given below:-

-Tulsi face pack for removing sun tan: Tulsi is known for its antibacterial, anti-fungal properties. Due to its healing properties, tulsi helps in removing sun tan, pigmentation and dark patches.

Method: Crush a few tulsi leaves with a little rose water, add two tablespoon of fine sugar, add one tablespoon of lemon juice. Now

properly mix it and apply the mixture to your face and neck. Leave it for 10 minutes. While removing the pack gently scrub your face in circular motions especially the sun tan areas. Wash your face using cold water and pat dry.

- Rose petal face pack for bridal glow: Rose has been the main ingredient in making beauty products from many years. You can prepare a rose petal face pack with some rose petals which gives natural glowing skin.

Method: Crush the rose petals with some milk for oily skin and with milk cream for dry skin. Apply the face pack for 20 minutes and wash with lukewarm water. Apply this face pack twice a week.

- Exfoliate your elbows: Most of the times brides only focus on improving skin tone but forget about their elbows.

You must get rid of the dead skin and dry patches on your elbow to get that wholesome beauty.

Mix salt and lemon to make an exfoliating scrub. Apply this scrub on a daily basis for couple of weeks. This will give you miraculous results.



Get fuller looking Eyebrows with these tips



Can your Beauty salon harm you?



If you're planning on some post party indulgence, here's why you should think twice

The quickest way to pamper yourself is to indulge at the salon. However, a recent study claims that a simple fish pedicure that involves tiny toothless carp nibbling away at dead skin could spread deadly infection and disease. And that's just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. So, if you have intentions of stopping by the salon for a beauty treatment, read on.

Skin-tillating? ...not at all! If you have a weak immune system, or condition like diabetes and psoriasis in particular, experts advise you to stay away from your local beauty parlour. They warn of the dangers of contracting Hepatitis C from the use of unsterile scissors (through a nick during a haircut or even a manicure). A website even reports how American singer Paula Abdul suffered a long and painful thumb infection she picked up at a Los Angeles nail salon and

testified before legislators in support of a bill to increase nail salon health standards.

"If a person is already infected with a bacterial or fungal infection and warts or molluscum (viral) and bleeds into the water in the tank, then there definitely is a very chance this could be passed to another client, either via the fish or contaminated tank water; if this not taken care of it can be harmful," says skin expert Dr Krupa Amonkar. In addition, there is a danger of contracting the Hepatitis c virus from unsterile scissors either through a nick during a haircut or during a slip that draws blood in a manicure. A website reports how singer and American Idol judge Paula Abdul suffered long, painful thumb infection that she apparently picked up at a Los Angeles nail salon and testified before legislators in support

of a bill to increase nail-salon health standards. Mike Comins, chairman of the British Association of Cosmetic Doctors, says: "Hepatitis C is a robust virus that can live outside the body for quite a long time and may not display any symptoms at all. It can linger for decades, increasing your risk of cirrhosis and liver cancer. It's very contagious and not routinely tested for." Adds skin doctor Rita Shah, "One has to be careful. If the instruments are not sterilised properly, there's a risk they could spread blood-borne infections." Hair and now! Ever thought a simple blow dry could nix it for you? That's apparently that case.

You can actually suffer 'asphyxiation' from a Brazilian Blowdry as a major ingredient in the straightening treatment dubbed the Brazilian, or permanent, blowdry is said to be formaldehyde. And in spite of certain restrictions on the amount of the chemical that can be used, and new formaldehyde-free formulations, certain firms are still selling products that can cause breathing difficulties and other unpleasant side-effects. That's a scare, not counting smaller woes like head lice from dirty brushes! And don't forget hot wax has the potential to be seriously dangerous if it's not handled properly or even a stroke from a washbasin! If you have managed to just end up with a crick in your neck and shoulder after a shampoo, count your blessings. Research indicates that the position in which you have to hold your neck while being shampooed over a basin could, in a few cases result in a stroke, known as Beauty Salon Stroke Syndrome. The result can be dizziness, facial numbness, and even a blood clot in the brain. This is especially dangerous for those with high blood pressure. The warning signs are out, next time you might want to do a re-think before your hairdo or manicure.

There must have been days when you've realised that you are not only losing out hair on your scalp but on your eyebrows as well! Since eyebrows shape your face, it is important for them to be healthy and strong. Here are a few things that you must keep in mind.

Use natural products

Rubbing a little coconut or olive oil works the best for your eyebrows. Says beautician and makeup artist Puja Taluja, "Every night before you go to bed, take it a little oil on your palms and rub them hard so that the oil warms a bit. Apply this evenly on your brows and massage it for a while. Keep this on for the whole night." Oil will make your brows healthier and in a few days, you will notice that they have become fuller.

Find the right shade of colour

When you fill your eyebrows with a shadow or a pencil, always choose a colour that is closest to your natural brow colour. For example, if your brows are dark brown, choose a shade of coffee to fill in. But if you cannot find the exact colour, always go for a shade lighter. This will make your brows look as natural as possible.

Fill them with a pencil colour

If you have extremely thin brows, it is always best to fill it in with a brow shadow for a soft and natural look. To do this, use an angled brush (if you are using a shadow) or a pencil colour and apply it on your brows, without straying too far from your natural hair line. If you have a bigger spot to be filled, it is best to use an eyebrow pencil. Apply thin and light strokes in the direction that your hair grows.

Do not use tweezers too often



Tweezing your eyebrows more often will make them thin. If you have unwanted hair growth and wish to get rid of that, it is always best to go in for a threading than tweezing and taking out that hair. Says beautician Tasneem Subzwari, "Your eyebrows normally takes about six to eight weeks to grow fully. Thus wait for it to grow completely, rather than forcefully taking it out because that will damage your hair growth and in turn make it thinner."

Hair gel can work wonders too

At times applying hair gel on your brows will make your brows thicker as well as make them look well-groomed as well. But do not apply this on an every day basis. Adds Taluja, "If you apply a hair gel on daily it will make your brows sticky and thereby making the roots weak. Stick to applying this at least once in a fortnight."

Box - Shape them perfectly

- Use a concealer that is as close to your natural skin colour and apply this on the inner area of your brows.
- Pick an eyebrow pencil and fill in your brows perfectly.
- Take an angular brush and comb your brows properly.

Young women are colouring their hair grey!



Pop stars Rihanna and Lady Gaga, singer Kelly Osbourne, reality TV star Kylie Jenner are among the many young women, who have been spotted with grey hair. And we're not talking about a few odd pesky strands; they're going the whole hog and dyeing their hair in this stale shade of silver! Closer home, designer Nandita Mahtani has been known to proudly sport grey streaks. Why is this dull hue becoming such a rage amongst young women?

Grey is the new black

Stylist Uday Shirali believes granny chic beauty is a reflection of the carefree attitude that young women have today. "The confidence of sporting grey hair makes one look sexy. Feminine dye colours like pink, purple, blonde, magenta, cherry are done to death; grey is a welcome change. Also, there is the constant pressure to look different. So women who like experimenting

and have access to high-end beauty products and salon services are not afraid to move away from conventional trends and try something path-breaking," why it will suit Indian women "The silver streaks would look more enhanced and beautiful on black hair that most

Vintage style granny chic fashion like thick-rimmed glasses, floral tea dresses, frumpy cardigans and kitten heels have featured heavily on the catwalks for many seasons. Taking a cue from this popular sartorial style, we now have celebrities who have extended this trend to beauty as well.



India n girls have. This is a great look to pull off, if you are in your twenties and thirties," says Shraddha Naik, hairstylist. The key to sporting the trend right -If you're going grey on your hair, you have to complement it with the right make-up. Wear your lips in bright shades of hot pink and fiery red. Match the grey tones in your hair by going for smokey eyes. -To lend a whimsical touch to your grey locks, add a purple or red tinge to

the tips o f your hair. -Flowing waves or a bob work best for grey hair. -Says Dr Amrapali Patil, "Since dyeing is a chemical process, your hair will require regular maintenance, like conditioning treatments and frequent touch-ups. Also, hair colour fades over time and looks dull, so avoid washing your hair frequently. Be careful in chlorine-treated swimming pools, as chlorine can cause the hair colour to change."

US envoy Sergio Gor offers prayers at Mumbai's Lalbaugcha Raja on Ganesh Chaturthi

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor visited Mumbai's Lalbaugcha Raja pandal and offered prayers during Ganesh Chaturthi. He described the celebrations as an extraordinary display of faith, energy and community.

Delhi. (Agency)

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor joined thousands of devotees in celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi in Mumbai on Monday. He visited the iconic Lalbaugcha Raja pandal and offered prayers to Lord Ganesha.

Gor, who visited the famous pandal during the 10-day festival, described the experience as extraordinary and urged those who have never witnessed the celebration to experience it for themselves. The US envoy said the atmosphere at Lalbaugcha Raja was unlike anything he had experienced, pointing to the scale, energy and sense of community surrounding the celebrations.

"It's absolutely incredible. I'm honoured to be here. It's great to be invited. I think everybody should come here and see this, because there aren't many places that are this vibrant. The energy is incredible. It's hard to describe if you're not here. So if you've not been here, come," he said.

GOR SHARES GANESH CHATURTHI MESSAGE

Gor also took to X to share his experience of visiting the pandal, describing the celebrations as a vibrant expression of faith and community. "Delighted to visit Mumbai Cha Raja and Lalbaugcha Raja. A truly vibrant expression of faith and community that



brings people together. Wishing everyone celebrating a wonderful Ganesh Chaturthi," he wrote.

His visit came as Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra marked one of India's most prominent religious festivals, with devotees gathering at homes and public

pandals to welcome Lord Ganesha.

The streets of Mumbai have been filled with celebrations, devotional music and chants of "Ganpati Bappa Morya" as devotees seek the blessings of Lord Ganesha.

LALBAUGCHA RAJA AT CENTRE OF MUMBAI FESTIVITIES

Lalbaugcha Raja remains one of Mumbai's most recognisable Ganesh idols and has become a defining symbol of the city's Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations. According to ANI, the idol is associated with the Lalbaugcha Raja Sarvajani Ganeshotsav Mandal at Putlabai Chawl. The mandal was established in 1934 and has since grown into a major part of Mumbai's annual

Ganesh festival.

The idol's tradition has also been closely associated with the Kambl family, which has been involved in maintaining it for more than eight decades. Every year, large crowds of devotees make their way to the pandal to seek blessings, making Lalbaugcha Raja one of the most visited Ganesh idols in the city. Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated across Maharashtra and several other parts of India. The festival begins on the fourth day of the Hindu lunisolar month of Bhadrapada and culminates with Anant Chaturdashi. Devotees install idols of Lord Ganesha in homes and community pandals before offering prayers and taking part in cultural and religious celebrations.

Lights, camera, seva: Delhi students to create reels on nation-building

Delhi. (Agency)

Students in Delhi's government schools will create short videos as part of a new Directorate of Education initiative under the "Meri Seva, Mera Sankalp" competition.

The exercise is a key component of the month-long "Sewa Sankalp Abhiyan", to be held from September 17 to October 17 across government schools in the national capital.

Schools have been asked to encourage students to create reels on themes including acts of kindness, community service, environmental responsibility and their vision for a "Viksit Bharat @2047".

The initiative reflects an effort to engage students through short-form digital storytelling rather than conventional formats such as essays. The themes listed in a circular include "Jan Bhagidari" or people's participation in nation-building, respect for public property and national symbols, innovative ideas for social good, inspiring stories of individuals or communities contributing to society, acts of kindness and compassion, community service, and helping the elderly, persons in need and vulnerable sections of society.

Alongside the reel-making competition, schools will also organise drawing and speech competitions under the broader theme of "25 Crore Children's Dreams of India". These activities will encourage students to reflect on 25 years of public service, welfare initiatives and nation-building.

Officials said in the circular dated September 14 that the campaign was designed to move beyond passive learning. By asking students to document everyday acts such as helping the elderly, promoting cleanliness and participating in community welfare, the initiative seeks to translate ideas of citizenship and service into lived experiences.

Delhi Mayor Pravesh Wahi inspects wards 51, 53 of North-West zone under cleanliness campaign

Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi Mayor Pravesh Wahi, continuing the series of inspections under the 'Delhi Ko Kood Se Azadi' campaign, inspected Wards 51 and 53 of the North-West Zone on Monday to assess the sanitation arrangements. The Mayor also reviewed the construction work of compactors being installed at 'Garbage Vulnerable Points'.

Dharmveer Sharma, Vice Chairman of MCD's Works Committee and Councillor of Ward 53, Anshul Sirohi, Deputy Commissioner, North-West Zone along with senior officials and staff of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi were present during the inspection.

Wahi expressed deep displeasure upon seeing a heap of garbage near the Kali Mata Temple on the Outer Ring Road. He ordered strict action against the concerned official and the imposition of a heavy fine on the concessionaire. The Mayor also appealed to citizens to pay special attention to cleanliness after organizing Bhandaras at temples or to request MCD officials for assistance regarding cleanup.

He also stated that no negligence regarding Delhi's sanitation system would be tolerated and instructed Municipal Corporation of Delhi officials to work continuously at the grassroots level to strengthen waste management at the ward level and ensure timely waste disposal and maintain cleanliness in public spaces.

The Mayor inspected a compactor currently under construction near Safeda Wala Park in Ward No. 51, North-West zone and directed officials to complete the construction work as soon as possible. Subsequently, the Mayor inspected the E and F Block of Prashant Vihar and reviewed the ongoing development works. He also directed officials to remove encroachments from the roads. Expressing dissatisfaction with the area's sanitation the Mayor ordered immediate improvements to the cleanliness system.

Further, he also inspected a compactor under construction in Rohini Sector-3 and instructed officials to make it operational at the earliest. He stated that the Municipal Corporation plans to install compactor machines at 'Garbage Vulnerable Points' to ensure proper waste disposal and appealed to citizens to segregate household waste at the source before disposal, noting that by keeping such small details in mind they could assist the Corporation.

Because I'm a woman: Kerala vlogger posts SOS from Afghanistan after 'arrest'

Delhi. (Agency)

A popular woman travel vlogger from Kerala, who has been travelling across Afghanistan and posting videos from the country, on Monday claimed that she was "arrested" by the "Mujahideen" in Bamyán and sought help in contacting the Indian embassy. However, nearly three hours after posting an SOS, the vlogger said she was allowed to leave after reaching a settlement with Taliban members.

In a post on her Facebook page, 'Backpacker Arunima' shared what she described as a translation of an official communication, according to which she had been arrested by the mujahideen in Afghanistan. The message showed, "You were

arrested by the Mujahideen just now because you do not have an official letter."

Sharing the communication, seeking help to contact the Indian embassy, Arunima wrote, "I am in trouble in Afghanistan. I am in Bamyán".



The post did not provide details about the circumstances of her alleged arrest or identify those who had detained her. Indian officials in Kabul and New Delhi also did not

provide any update on the alleged arrest.

In a subsequent detailed social media post, however, Arunima said she had been released by the Mujahideen and explained what she said had happened between her SOS message and her release.

"According to the law of this country, a woman cannot travel alone," the authorities in Bamyán told her, claiming that she had violated the law and would be arrested, the vlogger said.

"The 'crime' I had committed was travelling alone as a woman in a country where women are not allowed to travel alone. A permit is required for every province. I hadn't obtained those permits because they would not issue them to a woman travelling alone," she explained.

India, New Zealand plan first bilateral exercise in 2027, boost maritime ties

Delhi. (Agency)

Navy Chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan held substantive talks with his New Zealand counterpart during a visit to the island nation aimed at deepening maritime cooperation and strengthening professional and operational links between the two navies, officials said on Monday.

The discussions with Rear Admiral Garin Golding, Chief of Royal New Zealand Navy, focused on expanding practical cooperation, increasing operational engagement and improving maritime information sharing.

Adm Swaminathan began his visit to Australia and New Zealand on September 9 and first travelled to

Australia to bolster bilateral naval cooperation.

A spokesperson for the Indian Navy said, "Building upon the India-New



Zealand Maritime Security Cooperation Arrangement, the two chiefs exchanged views on enhancing the partnership between the two navies, advancing operational engagement, including a maiden bilateral naval exercise in 2027, and

exploring ways to ensure better maritime information exchange."

The Indian Navy said the visit was "aimed at further strengthening maritime cooperation and enhancing professional and operational linkages between the Indian Navy and the Royal New Zealand Navy".

The visit to New Zealand began with a traditional Maori Powhiri for Adm Swaminathan at Te Taua Moana Marae, at HMNZS Philomel, Devonport Naval Base, Auckland. The Indian Navy said the Powhiri, a traditional Maori welcome, was a powerful expression of 'manaakitanga', or respect and welcome, and was followed by a ceremonial guard of honour by the Royal New Zealand Navy at HMNZS Philomel, the 'Home of the Navy'.

Air India CEO summoned after 3 Italians skip immigration check at Delhi airport

Delhi. (Agency)

Three Italian passengers boarded a flight from Delhi to Munich without completing immigration formalities at the airport earlier this month, prompting the Union Civil Aviation Ministry to issue a show-cause notice to Air India and seek an explanation from CEO Tewolde Gebremariam over the major procedural lapses.

The three passengers had travelled from Amritsar to Delhi on an Air India flight on September 4 and were subsequently booked on a Lufthansa flight to Munich. However, instead of completing immigration in Delhi before taking the international flight, they were taken to the international transfer area and proceeded to board the Lufthansa flight, sources said.

In the wake of the incident, the Union

Home Ministry has called a meeting of officials and stakeholders today to discuss what it has described as a "serious security and immigration related lapse".

The meeting, chaired by Home Secretary Govind Mohan, will be attended by Air India Group Head P Balaji, senior officials from the Civil Aviation Ministry, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Immigration, the Delhi Airport CEO and other stakeholders, according to sources.

AIR INDIA TO FACE 9 QUESTIONS OVER LAPSE

The Civil Aviation Ministry has sought a written response from Air India on nine grounds related to the violations.

The airline has been given seven days, until September 19, to explain why

action should not be taken against it for the violations and non-compliance.

Among the issues raised by the ministry are the role and responsibility of Air India and SATS personnel involved in

immigration area and complete the prescribed immigration process.

The Ministry has also sought an explanation on why an onward boarding pass for the Lufthansa flight was issued

at Amritsar when the Hub-and-Spoke standard operating procedure does not provide for issuing such a boarding pass at the spoke airport.

Air India has additionally been asked to explain the role of the designated airline Nodal Officer and the supervisory mechanism in place when the incident occurred. Air India has not commented on the incident.

HUB-AND-SPOKE POLICY

The Home Ministry has asked the Civil Aviation Ministry to prepare a presentation on incidents involving violations of the Hub-and-Spoke policy.



Rupee falls 30 paise to 95.84 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The rupee depreciated 30 paise to 95.84 against the US dollar in early trade on Tuesday on elevated Brent crude oil prices and heightened Middle East tensions. With Brent crude touching USD 106 per barrel, increased dollar demand from oil importers raised concerns over India's external balance and inflation, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.84 against the US dollar, registering a loss of 30 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had settled at 95.54 against the American currency. Forex and equity markets were closed on Monday on account of Ganesh Chaturthi. The surge in crude oil prices and heightened tensions in the Middle East have increased safe-haven demand for the dollar and pushed US Treasury yields higher, said Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 99.60 higher by 0.21 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 1.19 per cent at USD 106.94 per barrel in futures trade, amid escalating US-Iran tensions and fears of disruption to oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz. The Sensex climbed 233.66 points to 75,022.37 in early trade while Nifty rose 63.85 points to 23,462.30. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 930.90 crore on a net basis on Friday, according to exchange data.

AI to reshape IT career ladder, promotions to hinge on skills: Tech Mahindra

New Delhi. (Agency)

Artificial intelligence is forcing Indian IT companies to rethink the traditional career ladder, with promotions increasingly likely to be based on skills and demonstrated capability rather than years of experience, according to Tech Mahindra Chief People Officer Richard Lobo.

As AI enables individual engineers to deliver work that previously required several people, companies will need to shift the way they assess employee contribution, productivity and performance, Lobo said. "Promotions will become less about tenure and more about demonstrated capability," he said, adding that companies would increasingly recognise specialised and relevant skills while rewarding both individual contribution and team outcomes. At Tech Mahindra, the approach is to balance individual and team performance while factoring skills into compensation, Lobo said.

AI is also expected to reduce management layers, although this would not necessarily make organisations uniformly flatter. Managers are likely to oversee larger and more diverse teams, while managing both people and AI-enabled digital labour. "The manager of the future will need to work with digital labour alongside humans," Lobo said. Managers will also be expected to coach employees, build organisational culture, enable continuous learning and drive business outcomes. This could result in fewer management layers, but broader mandates and greater accountability for those who remain in managerial roles. It is also prompting companies to reconsider traditional talent pyramids in favour of more flexible, skills-based structures.

Tata Trusts may challenge RBI listing directive, seek lifting of SRTT board meeting stay

New Delhi. (Agency)

Tata Trusts, which controls Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata group, with a 66.6% stake, is preparing to mount two legal challenges — one against the Reserve Bank of India's September 11 directive asking Tata Sons to go public immediately, and another seeking a direction to the charity commissioner to lift the stay on the Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), the second-largest trust with a 23.57% stake in Tata Sons, from holding its board meetings. The RBI action came after it sat on Tata Sons' application to surrender its NBFC-CIC (core investment company) licence for 30 months. The application was filed in March 2024. The directive has put Tata Sons chairman Noel Tata in a difficult position. Unless the stay on SRTT's board meetings is lifted, the board's cannot take key decisions, including on the succession of Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran and the proposed IPO. Under Tata Sons' bylaws, decisions of the board have to be unanimous. There is also urgency to mount a legal challenge as the Tata Sons board is scheduled to meet on September 17, with three critical issues converging at the same time — the IPO, uncertainty over who will succeed Chandra and the continuing governance impasse at SRTT.

"Given the urgency of the situation, both the trusts and Tata Sons are of the view that only a legal challenge can give them time and freedom to run their affairs. They are likely to move the Bombay High Court later this week with a joint writ petition to set aside the RBI directive on listing and another petition by the trusts to direct the charity commissioner to vacate the stay, as its amended rules are being applied retrospectively," two people aware of the thinking at the trusts told TNIE on September 16. The stay on SRTT's board meetings was imposed by the charity commissioner in early May after an advocate petitioned that, under the September 2025 amended rules governing public charitable trusts,

Insolvency rules to change following Subhash Chandra's haircut: IBBI to make 4 changes

Subhash Chandra's haircut of 99.97% startled the nation as his repayment plan envisaged a return of Rs 6.25 crore against claims of Rs 22,006.57 crore. Following that astounding example, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India or IBBI proposed four changes to the insolvency process for personal guarantors. These include preventing related parties from voting, investigating suspicious transactions, mandatory valuation of the guarantor's assets as well as maintaining a detailed record of creditor decisions.

Kolkata. (Agency)

Subhash Chandra's haircut of 99.97% startled the nation as his repayment plan envisaged a return of Rs 6.25 crore against claims of Rs 22,006.57 crore. A single-member NCLT bench approved Subhash Chandra's repayment plan. Following that astounding example, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has proposed four changes to strengthen the bankruptcy process related to personal guarantors. Significantly, these changes could impact both companies and their personal guarantors. The proposals aim to provide greater protection to banks and other borrowers. The IBBI has sought public comments on these changes by October 3. These changes include rules related to voting, asset values, and transaction verification. Motion to abstain from voting

The IBBI has proposed that related parties associated with the guarantor should not have the right to vote on the repayment plan. The current regulations



prohibit associates from voting, but the definition of an associate is narrower than that of a related party. Therefore, certain entities over which the guarantor may have influence can vote. The new proposal aims to address this shortcoming and strengthen the protection of interests of lending institutions.

Transactions will be scrutinised

Under the new proposal, the resolution professional will also be required to investigate the guarantor's past transactions. This will include undervalued transactions, such as selling assets at a low price. Preferred transactions and loans with high interest rates may also be investigated. The information revealed in the investigation will be presented to the creditors before voting. Any legal action will require their approval.

Value of the property

IBBI has also proposed that the guarantor's assets be valued. A registered valuer will determine the fair value and realizable value of the property. The fair value will estimate the fair value of the property, while the realisable value will determine the amount that could be realised if the property was sold.

Sensex, Nifty rise at open as IT stocks rally; HDFC Bank gains over 2%

New Delhi. (Agency)

Benchmark indices opened higher on Tuesday, helped by a sharp rally in IT stocks and gains in heavyweight HDFC Bank. The recovery comes after the Sensex and Nifty suffered five consecutive weekly losses, although elevated crude oil prices and high global bond yields continued to cap gains. At 9:27 am, the BSE Sensex was up 243.82 points, or 0.33%, at 75,025.58. The index had opened at 75,369.63. The Nifty 50 gained 61.25 points, or 0.26%, to 23,459.35 after opening at 23,576.15. The IT sector led the early gains, with the Nifty IT index rising 4.79%. HCLTech was the biggest Sensex gainer, rising 6.06%, while Infosys gained 5.30%, Tech Mahindra rose 5.23% and TCS advanced 4.91%.

The gains came as concerns over a slowdown in the pace of AI

development eased some of the fears around the disruption that artificial intelligence could cause to traditional Indian IT services



companies. IT stocks have been among the market's major laggards over the past year as investors worried that new AI tools could reduce demand for conventional software development and outsourcing services. A slower pace of AI development could give traditional IT companies more time to adapt their businesses, integrate

AI into their services and protect existing revenue streams. This is particularly relevant for Indian IT companies, whose businesses remain largely linked to traditional technology services rather than being dependent on pure-play AI products. HDFC Bank was another major support for the benchmarks, gaining 2.32%. The country's largest private-sector lender is in focus after submitting two candidates to the Reserve Bank of India for the position of CEO, formally starting the succession process for Sashidhar Jagdishan, whose term ends on October 26. However, the gains remained selective. The Nifty 100 rose 0.17%, while Nifty 200 gained 0.09% and Nifty 500 rose 0.03%. Mid- and small-cap stocks were weaker, with the Nifty Midcap 50 down 0.14%, Midcap 100 down 0.21% and Smallcap 100 down 0.28%.

Construction cost up 25% since West Asia war began: NAREDCO president Parveen Jain



New Delhi. (Agency)

Construction costs in the real estate sector have risen by 25% since the West Asia war began in February, said NAREDCO president Parveen Jain. Speaking to TNIE, Jain said, "The input cost of construction has gone up by 25% because all raw material prices have increased in the last six months. Copper has seen a price rise of 60% in the past six months. Even if things return to normal in the next few months or the US-Iran war stops, it will take

another three months for supplies to normalise."

He, however, said there was little possibility of residential property prices rising further as housing prices had already increased. "The revision or changes in residential properties in the real estate sector are already reflected in the current market value. Any change in prices is not possible at least this year," Jain said. He added that his company, Tulip Group, had been seeing slower demand this year compared with last year.

Jain said most real estate companies in the country were bullish on India's real estate growth. "In India, there is always a shortage in supply compared to the overall demand. There is robust demand for residential properties and we are short of supply. The real estate industry is bullish on India for the next 10-15 years." The concern, however, is that short-term crises such as the West Asia war are hindering growth and making the overall outlook somewhat uncertain. "However, we have to deal with such crises if we want to grow," he said. Jain also said several real estate bodies had urged the government to provide land at subsidised rates or acquire land under the PPP model so that developers could build affordable housing, as land is a major component of development costs.

4% of global oil supply at risk as drone-hit Saudi pipeline faces weeks-long outage

New Delhi. (Agency)

A new threat to global oil supplies is emerging from Saudi Arabia, where a crucial pipeline could remain largely shut for weeks after an attack, while Houthi advances threaten another major shipping corridor already strained by the wider conflict in the Middle East. The East-West Pipeline, a 1,200-kilometre route connecting Saudi Arabia's oil-producing areas on the Gulf coast with the Red Sea port of Yanbu, was shut after a drone attack that Riyadh blamed on Iranian-backed militias. According to two regional officials cited by The Associated Press, repairs could take three to five weeks, although the pipeline may continue operating partially during the repair work. The outage threatens another major blow to global oil supplies at a time when shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has already been severely disrupted by the war between the US and Iran.

SAUDI EXPORT ROUTE FACES WEEKS-LONG DISRUPTION

Saudi Arabia has enough oil stored at the Red Sea port of Yanbu to maintain exports for only about five to seven days if the pipeline remains shut, news agency Reuters reported. After that, as much as 4 per cent of global oil supply could be put at risk, adding to millions of barrels a day already affected by disruption around Hormuz. Saudi Arabia has not provided a detailed assessment of the pipeline damage or said when normal operations will resume. According to AP, sources estimate that repairs could take three to five weeks, particularly because a major pumping facility was damaged. One official told AP that the pipeline could continue to operate partially during repairs, although it remains unThe scale of the potential disruption is significant. According to Rystad Energy, the pipeline had been carrying a weekly average of between 2.6 million and 4 million barrels of crude a day since late August. A complete halt would therefore remove a substantial volume from the market. Brent crude reached \$109, with Rystad saying the price movement was "a clear signal that the market is increasingly pricing in a significant loss of supply".clear how much oil could still flow through it.

HOUSHI ADVANCE CLOSES ANOTHER OIL ROUTE

The pipeline crisis is unfolding alongside a major Houthi advance along Yemen's Red Sea coast.

UPI payments above Rs 2,000 may no longer be free: What you need to know

The government has kept UPI payments up to Rs 2,000 free while allowing room for charges on higher merchant transactions. The final impact will depend on NPCI's framework, with RuPay debit card payments still protected.

New Delhi

The government's latest clarification on UPI charges has kept small digital payments free, but it has also opened the door for banks and payment companies to levy fees on larger transactions made through the Unified Payments Interface. A notification issued by the Department

of Financial Services on Monday specified that UPI transactions of up to Rs 2,000 will not attract charges from banks or system providers. Payments made using debit cards powered by RuPay will also remain free of such charges. The move is huge because it effectively creates a threshold beyond which merchant charges on UPI could be introduced. A detailed operational directive on the proposed merchant discount rate (MDR) is expected from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), reported The Economic Times. So, while consumers making UPI payments are not being asked to pay a new fee, merchants could eventually face charges when they accept larger UPI payments.

WHAT HAS THE GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY SAID?

The government notification does not itself announce a new MDR rate.

Instead, it specifies that UPI transactions up to Rs 2,000 and RuPay-powered debit card payments cannot be charged by banks or system providers. The notification says no bank or system



provider can impose a charge, directly or indirectly, on a person making or receiving a payment through the specified electronic modes. This distinction is important. The government has not yet announced how much merchants would be charged for larger

UPI transactions. The detailed operational framework is expected to be issued by NPCI. The rates would be decided by the "UPI and services steering committee", headed by NPCI along with other stakeholders, as per the report.

WHY IS RS 2,000 BENCHMARK IMPORTANT?

UPI has operated without an MDR since January 2020, when the government changed the rules to make UPI payments free and encourage digital payments. The new notification effectively draws a line at Rs 2,000 for UPI. Payments up to that amount will remain protected from charges, while larger transactions could potentially become subject to an MDR once the operational framework is finalised. This does not mean merchants will immediately start paying a fee on every UPI transaction above Rs 2,000.

NEWS BOX

Came through roof, stayed 8 hours: How masked man stole Rs 14-crore gold in Mathura

KOCHI (Agency).

Around 9.30 pm on Sunday, a lone figure dressed in black snuck into a jewellery shop in Mathura through the roof. He remained inside for nearly eight hours. By the time he slipped out at 5.30 am, more than 10 kg of gold worth Rs 14 crore and nearly Rs 14 lakh in cash were gone — along with the shop's CCTV Digital Video Recorder (DVR). Mathura police are now trying to identify the masked man who allegedly carried out the heist at the shop in Kosi Kalan. The thief's movements after the break-in have been pieced together from CCTV cameras outside the shop. Police suspect the crime may have involved an insider and have zeroed in on a former employee, sources said.

How the thief got in

Police suspect the alleged thief reached the shop's terrace by scaling the boundary wall of a neighbouring house and crossing several interconnected rooftops. He then cut through an iron grille, meant to keep monkeys out, using a gas cutter to enter the shop. Police said once inside, he went straight to the room where the strong-room keys were kept and used them to open the safe.

Police said the suspect took gold ornaments, jewellery and gold biscuits, leaving the silver and artificial jewellery untouched. He then retraced his route: police said he went to the terrace, crossed to the neighbouring rooftop, descended into the house below, and left through the main gate.

CCTV trail goes cold

With the shop's DVR missing, police have had to rely on CCTV cameras installed at nearby shops and houses.

Footage shows the suspect carrying two bags and hiring an e-rickshaw in the early morning hours.

The e-rickshaw took him to several locations, with police following his movements through CCTV footage along the route.

Police found he went to the railway station before doubling back. He was later dropped off in a congested part of the city, where his trail went cold.

Police also questioned the e-rickshaw driver, but he could not provide a clear description of the man's face.

Rs 70 crore in fake Rs 20 coins: How UP gang put them into circulation

Lucknow (Agency).

Through liquor shops, toll plazas and grocery stores, a counterfeit coin syndicate has allegedly put fake Rs 20 coins worth an estimated Rs 70 crore into circulation, police said.

Saharanpur Police busted the gang, arresting five alleged members in the Titron area on Sunday while they were transporting machinery to set up a new unit in the district. Police said the gang allegedly operated across Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Bihar.

"The gang claimed to have the capacity to produce 10,000 to 12,000 counterfeit coins a day using the machines. These coins were then circulated through liquor shops, toll plazas and grocery stores on a commission basis, with liquor shops reportedly being the gang's primary market," said Saharanpur SSP Abhinandan.

Police claimed to have recovered 6,400 counterfeit Rs 20 coins, with a face value of Rs 1.28 lakh, semi-finished coins estimated to be worth around Rs 5 lakh, and six coin-making machines.

Among the five arrested is the alleged kingpin, Upkar Luthra alias Abhay Pratap Singh, who used to work as a goldsmith in Punjab's Mohali.

Police said Luthra, who is in his 50s, has been involved in the counterfeit coin trade since 2001. He was arrested by Delhi Police in 2017 after a Rs 1 lakh reward was announced for information leading to his capture.

The other four are Himanshu alias Gullu of Saharanpur; Kuldeep of Muzaffarnagar; Anurag Pal alias Lankesh of Bhadohi; and Santosh Chaurasia alias Janardan of Bihar. They are aged between 30 and 40. Asked how police arrived at the Rs 70-crore figure, Superintendent of Police Vyom Bindal said it was an estimate of the value of fake coins the accused had circulated in the market.

The arrests come days after counterfeit currency worth Rs 17.29 crore was recovered from the currency chest of a nationalised bank in the district. The recovery is being probed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which has arrested one person so far.

The operation

Police said the eight members had been assigned different roles within the network.

Punjab has money for DA arrears, employees say. Do the numbers back them up?

From higher tax generation to excise collection to GST inflow jump, employees cite state government's figure to justify demand; economists differ

Mumbai (Agency).

Citing a sharp rise in Punjab's tax revenues over the past four years, employees' unions say the state can afford to clear the roughly Rs 14,200 crore in pending Dearness Allowance (DA) and related arrears sooner than later. Punjab's own revenue numbers form the centrepiece of their argument. Tax revenue has risen from about Rs 37,300 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 57,900 crore in 2024-25, according to figures cited by the unions. Citing the Comptroller and Auditor General report, they point to a similar increase across major revenue heads. Excise collections, which averaged about Rs 4,406 crore in 2016-17 under the SAD-BJP government and Rs 6,158 crore under the Congress government in 2021-22, are expected to touch Rs 12,800 crore under the current government this financial year. GST inflows have nearly doubled on an annual average basis, from Rs 15,541 crore in 2021-22 to about Rs 32,000 crore this year. Stamp duty collections of about Rs 19,500 crore in the four years till January this year have already exceeded the collections under either of the previous two five-year

governments over their full terms, the unions claim. Early figures for the current financial year, they say, point in the same direction. Revenue receipts during April-July 2026 reached 29.08 per cent of the annual target,



compared with 27.44 per cent during the corresponding period a year earlier. Non-tax revenue nearly doubled over the same period, while both the revenue and fiscal deficits were accumulating at a slower pace than last year. Employees and some economists say the trend indicates that the state has greater fiscal room than the government is willing to acknowledge.

That is only part of the unions' argument.

Employee leaders say the government's case for staggered payments rests on what they allege is a misleading assessment of the state's finances. "The calculations were manipulated," alleged Vikram Dev Singh, president of the Democratic Teachers Front and a state leader of the Joint Coordination Committee of the Democratic Employees Federation.

Vikram Dev pointed to a sealed report submitted by the government to the Punjab and Haryana High Court when the DA dispute first arose, which, he said, claimed that Punjab was spending a higher proportion of its income on salaries and pensions than other states. He alleged that the calculation was skewed.

According to him, the share of state income going towards salaries has actually fallen from 104 per cent to 70 per cent over the past five to six years if central grants, Punjab's share of GST and loans are counted as income.

Vikram Dev also argued that DA should not be clubbed with the broader salary bill. Punjab's per capita income, he noted, is over Rs 2 lakh, a factor that the state's Pay Commission is required to consider while reviewing pay scales every 10 years.

Kochi's mobility plan remains stuck in a three-decade-old boundary

KOCHI (Agency).

Pointing out that the 732-square kilometre study area used in the Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP) is based on the Greater Cochin Development Authority (GCDA) boundary notified nearly three decades ago, critics have argued that it no longer reflects Kochi's actual urban and economic footprint. They said the outdated planning area could understate present and future travel demand, particularly as major growth centres and infrastructure have emerged beyond the traditional GCDA limits.

The draft CMP uses a study area comprising Kochi corporation, nine municipalities and 29 panchayats. The area covers 95 sq km under the corporation, 162 sq km under the municipalities and 475 sq km under the panchayats.



"This is the same territorial list as the metropolitan area notified in 1995. The April 2025 Gazette updated the names following local body mergers and conversions but did not substantially expand the geographical

extent of the metropolitan area. Also, the DPR of Kochi Metro Phase 3 was submitted without the preparation of CMP," said KMRL sources on condition of anonymity.

They pointed to the expansion of employment and residential activity towards Kakkanad, Nedumbassery, Angamaly, Perumbavoor, and the eastern and southern corridors as evidence that Kochi now functions as a much larger urban region. "The draft CMP itself recognises the wider catchment of Kochi. Its travel-demand model has an influence area of around 1,908 sq km around the 732-sq-km core," a source said. The population within the designated study area increased from 16.58 lakh in 2001 to 19.06 lakh in 2011 and 23.63 lakh in 2023. It is projected to increase to 27.14 lakh by 2031, 32.55 lakh by 2041, and 39.67 lakh by 2051.

Govt to set up Kerala's first dedicated container freight station at Vizhinjam

Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor will attend as chief guest.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM (Agency).

The government is setting up Kerala's first dedicated Container Freight Station (CFS) to support cargo operations at the Vizhinjam International Seaport.

The public-sector project, implemented by Kerala State Industrial Enterprises Limited (KSIE) under the government's 100-day action plan, will be established on nearly 5 acres of land at the Travancore Spinning Mills (TSM) compound in Balarampuram, with the remaining land retained for the mill's operations.

Industries Minister P K Kunhalikutty will formally inaugurate the construction work on Wednesday, in a function presided over by M Vincent MLA.

Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor will attend as chief guest.

The project involves a total investment of Rs 25 crore across four phases and is scheduled

to commence full operations by February 2027.

A Container Freight Station functions as an off-dock facility where Export-Import (EXIM) cargo is consolidated, stuffed into containers, or deconsolidated for distribution. Serving as an off-site extension of an EXIM port, a CFS plays a critical role in decongesting main port terminals by allowing customs examination, cargo clearance, temporary storage, and documentation to happen away from high-density berth space.

Strategically situated just a 15-to-20-minute drive from Vizhinjam, the Balarampuram facility will help clear quayside space and manage container traffic smoothly, according to KSIE managing director Dr K Manil Muhammed.

"Customs regulations require containers to be evacuated from the port terminal to a CFS



within five to six days to prevent congestion at the berths," said Josemon M D, general manager (CFS), KSIE. "As the first dedicated facility for Vizhinjam, we are targeting an initial capacity of 2,000 to 2,500 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) per month. To put that in perspective, our Vallarpadam unit handles between 1,000

and 1,500 TEUs monthly." Initial yard and warehouse operations at Balarampuram will kick off in four months once ground strengthening, equipment procurement, and statutory approvals are completed. The facility will also feature dedicated plug-in points for reefer containers to maintain the cold chain during the six-to-seven-day window usually required for customs processing. Apart from Balarampuram, preparations for second-phase allied services are under way at Kerala Automobiles Limited (KAL). KSIE, which already handles air cargo operations at Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode airports alongside its Vallarpadam unit, is also pursuing EU RA3 accreditation to facilitate direct exports into European Union markets. Specialised logistics training is also being provided through KSIE's dedicated academy to prepare.

Lawrence Bishnoi's close associate Karamveer Singh deported from Canada

The notice in connection with an FIR filed nearly a year ago, was issued last week, directing the former student to remain present before the investigating agency for interrogation.

Chandigarh (Agency).

The Punjab Police's Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF) took Karamveer Singh, alias Karamveer Deo, a close associate of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, into custody at IGI Airport in New Delhi early on Tuesday morning following his deportation from Canada.

Karamveer Singh is alleged to have provided logistical support and a hideout to Anmol Bishnoi, brother of Lawrence Bishnoi, in the United States. He was wanted in connection with an FIR registered in SAS Nagar.

"The accused has a criminal history involving cases related to murder,

attempt to murder, robbery, extortion, Arms Act offences, and other criminal activities. Further investigation is underway to uncover his wider criminal network and activities," said DGP Gaurav Yadav.

The AGTF issued a look-out circular (LOC) for Karamveer Singh on September 3. Karamveer Singh was charged with murder in 2012 in Punjab in connection with the shooting of a political figure. He spent years in custody, was released on bail in 2019 after his father's death, and then left India while the case was still pending. Officials describe a broader criminal record involving

murder, attempt to murder, robbery, extortion, and arms-related offences. Canadian and US court filings and FBI documents further allege he acted as a logistical operator for the Bishnoi network, providing a hideout and support to Anmol Bishnoi in California, helping members enter the US, and being suspected of directing a 2024 shooting and arson at singer A P Dhillon's home in British Columbia. Those claims remain allegations, and he has not been charged with crimes in Canada. Addressing a press conference on Monday, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said the police.



NEWS BOX

Ben Shelton not taking any time off after US Open final loss



New Delhi. (Agency)

Ben Shelton is wasting little time getting back on court after his run to the US Open final, with the American set to represent his country in the Davis Cup this week. Shelton was named in the US Davis Cup team on Monday for their second-round qualifying tie against the Czech Republic in Prague. He will then join Team World for the Laver Cup in London the following weekend. The 22-year-old lost to Alexander Zverev in his first Grand Slam final on Sunday. Despite the defeat, Shelton moved up to a career-high No. 4 in the ATP rankings on Monday.

The Davis Cup appearance will be Shelton's second for the United States and his first since the 2024 finals. Learner Tien, Martin Damm, Christian Harrison and Austin Krajicek were also named in the US team. Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul withdrew from the squad. Tien reached the fourth round of the US Open, while Damm pushed eventual semifinalist Frances Tiafoe to five sets in the first round. The 20-year-old Tien and 22-year-old Damm will make their first Davis Cup appearances. The US will face the Czech Republic on Friday and Saturday in a best-of-five tie on an indoor hard court at Prague's O2 Arena. Jakub Mensik, Jiri Lehecka, Tomas Machac and Vit Koprivka have been named in the Czech squad. The winner will advance to the Davis Cup Finals in Bologna, Italy, in November.

Shelton will then head to London for the Laver Cup, where he will represent Team World. Zverev, who defeated Shelton in the US Open final, will represent Team Europe. Several other leading players will also feature in Davis Cup ties this week, including Alex de Minaur for Australia, Stefanos Tsitsipas for Greece and Casper Ruud for Norway.

AFG vs IND 2nd T20I: Sooryavanshi may have to wait as India seek another Delhi rout



New Delhi. (Agency)

In familiar conditions, India produced a near-perfect performance against Afghanistan in the first of a three-match T20I series in Delhi on Sunday. It was a much-needed confidence boost for the Men in Blue, who had assembled a full-strength squad for the first time since the T20 World Cup, with the Asian Games now just weeks away. The second T20I between Afghanistan and India will be played from 7:30 pm IST on Tuesday. Sony Liv will provide TV coverage, while FanCode will offer livestreaming of the match in India. After restricting Afghanistan to 156 in 20 overs, India rode on Abhishek Sharma's blistering 32-ball 82 to chase down the target in just 13.4 overs and seal a seven-wicket win. Barring the fifth-bowling option, which was shared by Nitish Kumar Reddy and Shivam Dube, India were in cruise control throughout the contest. There has been very little turnaround time for Afghanistan, with the second T20I to be played at the same venue on Tuesday. Before the series, Afghanistan had seen an opportunity in their familiarity with the conditions, hoping it would add fuel to their bid to beat India in a T20I series for the first time.

However, the batting-friendly conditions at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Afghanistan's designated home ground for the series, did little to aid their cause in the opener. Afghanistan's biggest strength, their spin-bowling group led by Rashid Khan, was nullified as the quartet of Rashid, Mohammad Nabi, Noor Ahmed and Mujeeb Ur Rahman found very little assistance from the surface.

Monaco striker Brunner facing ban over throat-slitting goal celebration

Brunner said after the game he did not intend to show disrespect and that he was sorry if his gesture had hurt anyone. He added his gesture had been "clumsy" and that he "should not have done it"

PARIS. (Agency)

Monaco striker Paris Brunner is facing a ban after being referred to the disciplinary body of the French league for celebrating a goal with a throat-slitting gesture. The German player, who leveled with a superb long-range strike in Saturday's 1-1

draw against Strasbourg as Monaco remained unbeaten this season in Ligue 1, has apologized for the controversial celebration. The National Council for Ethics and Professional Conduct, an independent body within French soccer, said in a statement on Monday that "players must behave courteously and respectfully towards their opponents, as well as towards their supporters." It recalled that "passion for football" must be controlled and that individuals involved in the game have a duty to set an example through their behavior.

Brunner said after the game he did not intend to show disrespect and that he was sorry if his gesture had hurt anyone. He added his gesture had been "clumsy" and that he "should not have done it"

The council replied by saying, "While these apologies are welcome, they do not erase



the reality of the gesture, which is liable to constitute a breach of the obligations of respect, setting an example and self-

control." Brunner has been in excellent form this season, scoring three goals in four matches.

Wrestler Antim Panghal hungry for Asian Games, Olympic medal: No jalebi till LA 2028

New Delhi. (Agency)

For the last three years, Antim Panghal has stayed away from jalebi, his favourite sweet. The 22-year-old wrestler has made a promise to herself that she will finally have one after the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. The wait is part of a larger sacrifice for a wrestler whose immediate focus is the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, but whose biggest ambition is to win an Olympic medal in Los Angeles. "I have not had it for three years now. I will eat it in 2028 (after LA28). I really want to eat it. But I will not eat it now. Whenever I go home, my mother prepares Kadhi and Churma for me," Antim told Times Now in an interview. Before she can think about Los Angeles, Antim has an important target in Japan. She will compete in the 53kg category at the Asian Games, hoping to improve on the bronze medal she won in



Hangzhou in 2023. "I will give my 100 per cent. Last time, I was a junior. But this time, I have to compete as a senior," she said. Her Asian Games campaign will also

be an important part of a much bigger Olympic plan. The World Championships in October will be one of Antim's biggest tests before the Olympic qualification cycle begins in February 2027. "I have to qualify for the Olympics next year. I have to give my best in the World Championships," she said.

ANTIM'S ASIAN GAMES TARGET

Antim secured her place in India's Asian Games squad after beating Meenakshi Goyat in the 53kg selection bout in New Delhi. Meenakshi had earlier stunned Vinesh Phogat in the semi-final before Antim stopped her from completing the upset run. The field in Japan will be tough, with Antim expecting the biggest challenges to come from the traditional Asian wrestling powerhouses.

"We will do our best. But most of the challenges will come from Japan, China and North Korea," she said. Antim also spent time training at Nippon University in Japan last year, an experience that could help her settle into the conditions when she returns for the Asian Games.

ANTIM PANGHAL'S RISE IN INDIAN WRESTLING

Antim took up wrestling in 2017 after being encouraged by her elder sister, a kabaddi player, in Bhagana village in Haryana's Hisar district.

Rumesh Pathirage's 90m-plus javelins broken in flight right before Asian Games

New Delhi. (Agency)

Star javelin thrower Rumesh Pathirage's three prized javelins have been damaged in transit, just days before the Asian Games. The Sri Lankan, who has landed three separate 90m+ throws this season, revealed that all the javelins used for those national record-breaking throws were damaged while being transported by Turkish Airlines. The Commonwealth Games and Diamond League winner was returning to Sri Lanka from Hungary after his victory at the World Athletics Ultimate Championships when his javelins were damaged in transit. Rumesh took to Instagram to reveal the incident, posting photographs of the broken equipment. The javelins were found damaged after he landed in Sri Lanka, prompting a complaint to be

lodged with the airline. All three javelins I used for over 90 throws have been damaged. It might have been a mistake by



the airline, but that's how it is. It's not a big issue. I'll move on," the Sri Lankan javelin star said. The damage comes at an unfortunate time for Rumesh, who has

been one of the standout athletes in world javelin this season. The 23 year old has won the Commonwealth Games, the Diamond League Final and the World Athletics Ultimate Championships in 2026. He has also thrown beyond 90 metres three times this season, with all three of those throws coming with the javelins that were damaged during the journey back to Sri Lanka. WHY ARE THE JAVELINS IMPORTANT?

Javelins used by elite athletes are highly specialised pieces of equipment, with throwers often developing a preference for particular models and setups. Damage to competition javelins can therefore disrupt both training and preparations for a major event.

Rumesh's javelins are manufactured by Javel Inn Ltd., the Hungarian company behind Nemeth Javelins.

After public embarrassment, Hockey India calls emergency meeting to resolve infighting

New Delhi. (Agency)

Hockey India has called an emergency Executive Board meeting on September 18 as the federation looks to resolve the differences among its top officials following a series of controversies in recent weeks.

The meeting, to be held at the Hockey India office in New Delhi, has been called by secretary Bhola Nath Singh on the direction of president Dilip Tirkey. The rift between the two officials came into the open following the controversy over the change in the colour of the Indian teams' jerseys from blue to saffron ahead of the recently concluded FIH World Cup. Tirkey had said that the change was made without his knowledge and without the approval of the Hockey India Executive Board. He subsequently issued a show-cause notice to

Hockey India Director General Cdr R K Srivastava and stripped him of his powers with immediate effect.

The notice listed eight charges against Srivastava, with the jersey controversy among the key issues. Srivastava has been given four weeks to respond. Bhola Nath's email to the Executive Board members, a copy of which is with PTI, said the 119th Executive Board meeting will be held at 3pm on September 18.

RESTRUCTURING OF HOCKEY INDIA LEAGUE

One of the most important items on the agenda will be the future of the Hockey India League, which has struggled amid disagreements over its administration.

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya met Tirkey and HIL franchise owners on Monday and asked them to prepare a

roadmap for the men's and women's leagues. A five-member panel has been tasked with working on a proposed governance and



financial model. Franchise owners have also pushed for a greater role in the running of the league, with dissatisfaction over the way the competition has been managed by Hockey India. The proposal being discussed includes turning the HIL into a joint venture between Hockey India and the franchise owners. The plan calls for a separate company, HIL Pvt

Ltd, with Hockey India holding 40 per cent equity and the franchises collectively holding the remaining 60 per cent.

Another proposal is to create a new Governing Council for the league. It would have a chairman and two members from Hockey India, along with two representatives from each franchise, and would oversee the administration of the HIL. The restructuring of the league could therefore be one of the biggest decisions to emerge from the September 18 meeting.

ELECTIONS ALSO ON AGENDA

The Executive Board will also discuss the Hockey India elections, including the appointment of an Electoral Officer to oversee the process. The meeting will also consider and approve the federation's balance sheet and income and expenditure accounts for the 2025-26 financial year.

'Ladkiya Mar Rahi Hai Shaadi Karne Ke Liye':

Sonali Kulkarni

On Aamir Khan Playing A Father In Dangal

Sonali Kulkarni played Salman Khan's mother in Bharat, and the actress is younger than Bollywood's Bhaijaan. When asked if she feels women tend to get older roles quite early while men continue to play young heroes, she told News18 Showsha that times have changed and now many male actors are shedding the larger-than-life hero image. She cited Aamir Khan and Saif Ali Khan's examples.

Recalling a time when women used to stop getting heroine roles after marriage, Kulkarni said, "There was a time when we used to discuss how women don't get heroine roles once they marry. Do you hear that nowadays? No. Because I think the audience has proved that just like heroes get married, heroines can also get married. They can also have children. They can have families."

She further continued and, while sharing how content from across the world is being viewed in the country and how there are different mediums to show talent, Sonali added, "In this scenario, I don't think we have room to complain that girls are getting different roles. I feel pity for those people who claim that they just want to be a hero. I don't think any actor is that narrow-minded today. Whether a male actor or a female actor, they want to explore their talent."

She then cited her Dil Chahta Hai co-stars, Saif Ali Khan and Aamir Khan, and discussed how they are taking up challenging roles. "We have such versatile actors. I don't think any actor will say that he wants to look young. If we talk about Saif Ali Khan, he is maturing like a fine wine; he isn't fearing taking up the role of a young dad who is in love," Sonali said.

The actress further continued, "Aamir Khan is the epitome of experimenting. I don't think anyone has the courage to do what he has done in Dangal. Aamir Khan jiske poster lagte hain, ladkiyan bekarar hain, mar rahi hain shaadi karne ke liye. He is presenting himself as the father of 3-4 daughters without any prosthetic; then he is my hero. (Aamir Khan, whose posters are put up everywhere, has girls going crazy for him, dying to marry him. He is presenting himself as the father of three or four daughters without any prosthetics; then he is my hero). He is grinding himself fearlessly."

Sonali concluded, "I don't think any good actor is stuck in this competition where they want to look young. They are flaunting their talent. They are flaunting their command over acting. By all means, they don't fear their age."



Shehnaaz Gill

Says 'Acha Hua' As She Reacts To Shelved Film With John Abraham, Riteish Deshmukh

Shehnaaz Gill has spoken about 100%, the Sajid Khan film that was announced nearly four years ago but was eventually shelved. The project was supposed to feature Shehnaaz alongside John Abraham, Riteish Deshmukh and Nora Fatehi.

Looking back at the film now, Shehnaaz says she does not spend much time worrying about projects that fail to materialise. In fact, she believes there are times when something not happening may ultimately be for the better.

Shehnaaz Gill On 100% Getting Shelved

Speaking to Hindustan Times about 100%, Shehnaaz said she does not take such developments too seriously and has made peace with the film not being made.

"Main utna serious leti nahin hun in cheezon ko. Mujhe aisa lagta hai ki nahin hui acha hua, kyunki kuch cheezein nahin banne mein hi bhalai hoti hai," she said.

The actor also shared why she now prefers not to speak about a project until it is completely ready. According to Shehnaaz, plans can change at any point, and announcing something too early can create expectations among audiences.

"Jitni der tak tumhara project pura ban ke ready nahi ho jata hai, tab tak baat na karo uski kyunki kabhi bhi kuch bhi ho jata hai. Mujhe pata hai kal ko nahin hua to log sawaal karenge

aur main unko jawab kya dunggi. Logon ki ummedein bhi ban jati hain, to main wo todna nahin chahti," Shehnaaz added.

In English, Shehnaaz explained that she does not take these situations too seriously and feels that sometimes it is better when certain things do not happen. She also said that one should avoid speaking about a project before it is completely ready because circumstances



can change unexpectedly.

Shehnaaz added that when a project is announced, people begin expecting it to happen. If it subsequently falls through, questions follow, and she does not want to disappoint people after raising their hopes. 100% was announced around four years ago with Sajid Khan attached as director. The planned film had an ensemble cast comprising Shehnaaz Gill, John Abraham, Riteish Deshmukh and Nora Fatehi.

'Not Directed At Salman Khan': Amaal Malik Clarifies Comment On 'Main Hoon Hero Tera' Song Credit



Amaal Malik has called out Salman Khan Films over missing credits for Main Hoon Hero Tera, the song he composed for the 2015 film Hero. The composer questioned why his name and that of lyricist Kumar were not mentioned in a post celebrating 11 years of the film.

The post shared by Salman Khan Films featured Salman Khan performing Main Hoon Hero Tera. Amaal reacted in the comments and made it clear that his complaint was about the film's social media team and the way the song's creators were being credited, not about Salman Khan himself.

Amaal Malik Calls Out Missing Music Credits

Amaal said he was frustrated to see the composer and lyricist left out of the post. "Whoever is handling the social media of @skfilmsofficial, I love the audacity you have shown by leaving out the composer and the lyricist of the song," Amaal wrote. He then spoke about the work that goes into making a song and questioned why the creators are sometimes ignored when their work is celebrated. "The song that is created with the pain, blood, sweat and tears of a music composer and his lyricist, and is celebrated without the creators being respected or even mentioned," he added.

Amaal also asked the team to give proper credit to the people behind the song. "Learn to do the basics," he wrote, while also asking that his comment not be deleted and that Salman Khan be allowed to see it.

Armaan Malik Sang The Original Version

Main Hoon Hero Tera was composed by Amaal Malik, with lyrics by Kumar and vocals by Amaal's brother Armaan Malik. Salman Khan later recorded his own version of the song.

The credit issue came up again when Salman Khan Films shared the anniversary post featuring Salman performing the track, leading Amaal to question the absence of the song's original creators from the post.

Amaal Says Music Credit Fight Is Decades Old

Amaal later addressed the matter through an Instagram Story on Sunday. He said the fight for proper music credits has continued for decades and that he speaks up because he feels artists are often not recognised at the right time. "Who wants to keep this drama and get into controversies? I have to do it because no one else talks on time, and this fight has been on for over four-five decades! It has always been for music and credits," he wrote.

Neena Gupta Told Masaba 'Sorry' That She Had To Grow Up Without Father Viv Richards: 'It Is My Fault'



Neena Gupta has spoken again about raising her daughter Masaba Gupta as a single mother and said she would not advise anyone to choose single parenthood unless they truly wanted it. The actor said the experience was extremely difficult and affected her "body", "soul" and finances, while also saying she believes it was important to be honest with Masaba about her family from a young age.

Neena Gupta On Single Motherhood

Speaking to Zoom, Neena said she would not encourage others to follow the path she took. "I would not propagate it. I have always said, 'Don't do it because I did it.' It is very difficult, and it is not fair on the child. I will still say that," she said.

Neena said her opinion has nothing to do with social judgement. She feels single parenthood can be difficult emotionally, physically and financially. "It is not because of judgement. It is very tough on your body, your soul and your finances, and it is not good for your child. So, that is why I will not tell anybody to go that way. Unless they want to, it is their choice," she added.

She Told Masaba The Truth About Her Father

Neena Gupta said she decided early on that Masaba should know the truth about her family rather than hear it from other people. She explained that she told her daughter about her father slowly, as she grew older and asked questions. "Under the circumstances in which I had my baby, it was very important for me to tell her the truth. I systematically, slowly and gradually told her the truth whenever she asked me, in such a way that she didn't even hate her father," Neena said. She also wanted Masaba to have a relationship with her father without carrying anger towards him. "I made her like her father. I told her why and what had happened as she grew up. So, there was no malice or anger towards me because I told her the truth."

NEWS BOX

Police arrest man after multiple people wounded in China knife attack

BEIJING.(Agency)

Police in southern China said they have arrested a man who wounded multiple people in a knife attack outside a hot pot restaurant. Authorities received reports that the suspect, a 35-year-old surnamed Li, had carried out the attack in Guangzhou's Panyu district at 5:20 pm on Monday, a police statement said later that evening. Several people sustained "non-life-threatening" injuries, the statement added. It did not give the number of victims or a suspected motive. Footage of the incident posted online suggested the attacks took place in a shopping centre and showed at least three victims with wounds to their faces. A video seemingly captured from CCTV showed a man in a face mask stabbing a woman in the face as he walked past her in front of a restaurant. Another video showed police rushing into a shopping centre and pedestrians fleeing. Police said they are investigating the case. China has seen high-profile knife attacks in recent years, including in May when three people, including two Japanese citizens, were injured in an attack at a restaurant in Shanghai. In November 2024, a former student of a vocational college in eastern China killed eight and wounded 17 in a knife attack after he failed his exams.

NATO fighter jets shoot down drone in Lithuania

world.(Agency)

NATO fighter jets shot down a drone over Lithuania, the country's President Gitanas Nausėda said Tuesday. Baltic states Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia -- NATO members sharing a long border with Russia -- regularly report drone incursions into their territories as part of Moscow's war with Ukraine. "A drone that just entered Lithuanian airspace was destroyed by NATO fighter jets," Nausėda wrote in a post on X. "With Russia intensifying its aggression against Ukraine, such readiness is vital for our region," he added. According to Lithuanian public radio LRT, which cited the National Crisis Management Center (NKVC), the drone crashed in a rural area near Lake Kaunas, in the country's central region. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Kestutis Budrys in a post on X thanked allies "whose presence helps protect our skies and strengthens our security." "This is best example of Allied unity and resolve in action -- sending a clear message that NATO stands vigilant, committed, and ready," he added. A NATO fighter shot down a Ukrainian drone over Estonia in May, the first interception of a foreign drone in the airspace of a Baltic state by NATO's air police since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

North Korea's Kim pledges 'invariable support' in Putin letter

SEOUL.(Agency)

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un promised his "invariable support" for Russia in a letter to President Vladimir Putin, calling Russia's ongoing war "sacred," state media reported Tuesday. Since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, North Korea has become a key ally of the Kremlin, sending troops to support Moscow's war effort in return for economic benefits and military technology, analysts say. South Korea's spy agency estimated last year that some 2,000 North Korean troops had been killed in the war, while a more recent assessment put the number of North Korean soldiers killed or wounded at around 6,000. "Firmly convincing the victory of the Russian Federation in the present sacred war for defending the security interests of the country and international justice.

US judge postpones Trump's new visa rules for foreign students, journalists

MANILA.(Agency)

A US federal judge on Monday postponed implementation of a Trump administration policy that would impose stricter limits on how long foreign students and journalists can study or work in the United States. The preliminary injunction from District Judge Dennis Saylor came one day before the new visa rules from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) were scheduled to take effect. Under the proposed new rules, foreigners on student visas would be admitted for a maximum of up to four years after which they would have to apply for an extension. International students were previously allowed to remain for the duration of their studies. Foreign journalists would be limited to stays of just 240 days, or around eight months, but could apply for extensions of similar duration. Until now they could stay up to five years. Chinese journalists would get just 90 days, with extensions of 90 days. A coalition of unions representing universities, teachers and journalists had filed a lawsuit challenging

the visa restrictions. Saylor put implementation of the new DHS rules on hold for now without ruling on the merits of the case and scheduled another hearing for October 2. But in an accompanying memo, the judge expressed skepticism about the visa restrictions on international students and journalists. He said the current system has permitted tens of millions of foreign students to come to the United States, resulting in "groundbreaking research in science, medicine, and technology, substantial economic growth, and a host of other benefits." Rather than attempt to improve that system, DHS elected to replace it with a new program that will substantially restrict the overall number of foreign students, researchers, professors, and journalists," he said. The judge said that under the new rules, DHS denials of visa extensions would be "entirely discretionary and unappealable." "A DHS official -- based on limited and vague criteria, and with no possibility of appeal -- will have the power to cut short the academic, research, or teaching activities.

New US tariffs, exemptions take effect on Canadian goods

Various cheeses, motorboats, papers and aluminum and steel products were added to the list, as were mattresses and certain types of furniture.

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

Key changes to US tariffs on Canadian goods took effect Tuesday, with cheeses and motorboats among products added to the list of affected items while toilet paper, fishing rod parts and cement are now exempt. The move comes weeks ahead of US midterm elections, as households and businesses grapple with high costs of living -- while recent tariffs on Canadian products threatened to hike costs further for some groups. The latest amendments change the mix of Canadian products impacted by 50-percent US duties, and senior US officials maintained that the



tariffs only apply to a small amount of overall bilateral trade. Various cheeses, motorboats, papers and aluminum and steel products were added to the list, as were mattresses and certain types of furniture. But toilet and facial tissues, fishing gear and whiskeys in containers



exceeding four liters are now exempt from the 50-percent duty. Also excluded are road salts, needed in states experiencing harsher winter weather, and cement key to construction projects. Senator Susan Collins of Maine, whose reelection will be key to Republicans retaining control of

the chamber, said she had specifically raised the impact of tariffs on road salt and cement to the federal government. The duties mark the latest salvo in an escalating trade war between the North American neighbors. President Donald Trump slapped a 50-percent tariff on \$20 billion in imports from Canada in August after trade talks collapsed, triggering Ottawa's counter-tariffs on a similar value of goods. The White House pushed back against Canada's retaliation last week by announcing a ban on some alcoholic beverages and dairy goods, effective September 29, while making changes to its tariff list. Trump tapped a little-known legal provision for the latest tariffs affecting Canada, Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930. The new duties apply to goods covered under the US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement, and come in addition to Trump's sector-specific tariffs. And temperatures could rise further. A senior US official told reporters last week that Trump's earlier threat to hike tariffs on Canadian autos from 25 percent to 50 percent come January remains in effect.

US military says Iran war has led to munitions shortfall

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

The US Defence Department's inspector general revealed Monday that the United States is facing a shortfall in ammunition as a result of its costly war in Iran.

In a first-of-its-kind mandatory report to Congress, the inspector said that between February 28 and June 30, Operation Epic Fury (OEF) had an estimated cost of \$33.4 billion, with \$22.3 billion of that spent on expended munitions alone.

The report noted "the munitions expenditure on OEF has resulted in strategic inventory shortfalls and revealed industrial base bottlenecks for munitions resupply." It also lists losses to the American fleet, including four F-15s destroyed, one F-35 damaged, seven KC-135 tanker aircraft damaged and up to 30 MQ-

9 Reaper drones destroyed.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly brushed off concerns of depleted weapons stores during the



six months of war in the Middle East, saying the US has "virtually unlimited" ammo just a couple weeks ago. On Monday Trump posted to his Truth Social platform saying again the US is producing "more Exquisite and Elite Weapons than at any time in our History." CNN has previously

reported shortages of long-range guided missiles and air-defense interceptors had affected Trump's strategy in the conflict with Iran, with the US military having "nearly exhausted 80%" of its stock of THAAD interceptors.

During the first 24 hours of war against Iran, the United States struck more than 1,000 targets, US Central Command (CENTCOM) has said, and has not returned to such large scale attacks in recent months.

The report notes that "Iranian strikes damaged and destroyed hundreds of buildings and structures at US bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, and Jordan during the conflict," but does not include those costs in the cost estimates, saying it's not yet clear if all the bases will be built, or who will foot the bill.

Russia to hold tightly controlled vote in fifth year of war

MOSCOW.(Agency)

Russia will this week hold tightly-controlled elections in a vote seen by the Kremlin as a barometer of public opinion on the war with Ukraine, which is dragging through its fifth year. Some Russians have grown weary of economic stagnation and intensifying Ukrainian retaliatory attacks and there is fear in some quarters that Putin could order a mass call-up of new soldiers after the election. The parliamentary vote -- held from September 18 to 20 -- will be the first since Russia launched its offensive in February 2022, and only the second nationwide poll after a presidential contest that re-elected Putin in 2024. Voting is also due to take place in parts of Ukraine occupied by Russia's army.

The war has killed hundreds of thousands, brought huge censorship at home, devastated eastern Ukraine and seen Moscow hit with unprecedented Western sanctions. With Moscow having banned

criticism of the war, no real opposition parties will be on the ballot paper and Putin's ruling United



Russia party is assured to scoop a majority of seats in the State Duma. A European diplomat told AFP that while the election was "quite a sham", it was a "ritual the Kremlin considers essential", and it would be striving to "ensure a high turnout". Even if the results are "predefined", voting still matters, exiled Russian political scientist Nikolai Petrov said. "Just like at the time of the Soviet Union, elections should demonstrate loyalty of citizens," he told AFP. For

Putin -- in power for 26 years -- it is important to "demonstrate to elites that he is still supported, still trusted by ordinary people", Petrov said.

Half of the 450 seats up for grabs will be decided by a nationwide vote for party blocs, with the other half allocated to single-member districts across the country. Only parties that support Putin and the war have been permitted to stand on the national ballot: the ruling United Russia party, the Communist Party, A Just Russia, nationalist LDPR and New People. Russia's sole anti-war party still active inside the country, Yabloko, was barred from standing. "It's a choice without a choice," 18-year-old Yevdokia told AFP on the streets of Moscow.

She had planned to vote for Yabloko, which called for an end to fighting in Ukraine, but will now go for New People. Authorities have used the backdrop of the war to ramp up repression to levels unseen since the Soviet Union.

Saudi Arabia warns it will react 'firmly' to Houthi attacks

Sanaa.(Agency)

Saudi Arabia warned Tuesday it will react "firmly" to Yemen's Houthis, after a series of attacks carried out by the pro-Iranian rebels using ballistic missiles and drones wounded 13 civilians in the country's south. The Houthis have been engaged in renewed fighting with Saudi-backed government forces since Yemen's civil war reignited in July, when the group declared a maritime blockade on Riyadh and began targeting its ships in the Red Sea. The group seized control of Yemen's Red Sea coast and the Bab al-Mandab Strait last week, which has become vital as the wider US-Iran war chokes the Strait of Hormuz, in a significant blow to Yemeni government forces. It has also targeted the oil infrastructure of Saudi Arabia, the world's leading crude exporter, pushing oil prices above the \$100 threshold. A Houthi strike in western Yemen on Monday killed eight soldiers from

government forces, according to two military sources. The Houthis claimed a new "large-scale" attack using "dozens of ballistic



missiles and drones" against the King Khalid airbase in Khams Mushait, in southern Saudi Arabia. A Khams Mushait resident told AFP he heard "intense blasts" which left fires burning for a "long time." "Honestly, we couldn't sleep at all." The Riyadh-led coalition confirmed Tuesday there had been missile and drone attacks the previous day on

Khams Mushait, Abha and Taif, reporting 13 wounded. Riyadh responded with more than 50 strikes, as it had the day before, according to the Houthis.

The coalition said it would deal the attacks "firmly to protect the sovereignty of the Kingdom" and would take "all necessary operational measures to deter this... hostile and extremist approach". Hazem al-Assad from the Houthis' politburo said the "Yemeni response will continue and escalate as long as they (Saudi Arabia) persist in their aggression against our people". In the early hours of Tuesday, Saudi civil defence issued air-raid alerts in six regions, before lifting them. The renewed fighting in Yemen comes as the wider regional war remains at a stalemate. But US President Donald Trump on Monday said he was open to holding talks with Iran. "The failing Nation of Iran wants to make a deal, quickly and badly. I will determine whether or not the U.S.A. will choose to engage.