

'Global South in front row of global crisis, back row of decision-making': Jaishankar

New Delhi(Agency)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar called for greater solidarity among Global South countries, saying they were bearing the brunt of global crises while having limited influence over decisions shaping their future.

"The Global South today may be in the front row of the global crisis, but is in the back row of decision-making," Jaishankar said at a high-level meeting of Like-Minded Global South Countries and Friends on the sidelines of the 81st UN General Assembly.

He said the meeting was taking place amid "considerable global uncertainty", marked by conflicts and geopolitical tensions, disrupted supply chains, rising trade barriers, fragmented investment flows and climate shocks.

Jaishankar said institutions created for a different era continued to reflect the power structures of that time.

"The Global South needs to be part of decision-making structures that deliberate on issues that directly pertain to our future," he said, calling UN and multilateral reforms essential to address the region's priorities.

He said the past year had seen an increase in active conflicts, posing significant risks to the global economy, particularly developing countries. "At a time when we needed to turn to multilateralism, we actually witnessed its dismantling. International organisations.

Sanjay Raut says CEC Gyanesh Kumar 'will go to jail', demands his removal over SIR row

New Delhi . (Agency)

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Wednesday alleged that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar ignored objections raised by the two Election Commissioners over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and demanded his removal and legal action against him.

The report claimed that the two Election Commissioners objected to the Election Commission's steps 14 times in 10 months amid the rollout of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, and alleged that Kumar has "destroyed" the credibility of the poll panel.

Reacting to it, Raut, in a post on X, said, "Gyanesh Kumar will go to jail! He will have to go! Their masters will flee the country and run away!"

If Prime Minister Narendra Modi has even one per cent desire to save democracy, then Union Home Minister Amit Shah should be sacked from the Union cabinet, Raut told reporters in New Delhi.

"Gyanesh Kumar should also be sacked and legal action should be taken against him. If Modi ji isn't taking action against Gyanesh Kumar, then I appeal to the President to sack the CEC," he said. If the President doesn't do anything, then the Army chief should come forward to save democracy and the country, he stated.

The Rajya Sabha member also demanded that the judiciary should take cognisance of the media report. Raut said the Election Commission of India (ECI) comprises three commissioners.

Opinions may vary, final decisions unanimous: EC downplays dissent report

New Delhi(Agency)

The Election Commission on Wednesday sought to downplay the reports of dissent within the three-member panel over the nationwide Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, saying individual views expressed by Election Commissioners do not constitute decisions of the Commission. Sources said all decisions of the Commission, including those related to the SIR, were taken unanimously with the approval of all three Election Commissioners.

"While any or both Election Commissioners, or the Chief Election Commissioner, may have individual opinions on any matter, all decisions of the Election Commission of India, including the SIR, have been taken unanimously and with the approval of both Election Commissioners and the Chief Election Commissioner," Election Commission sources told.

The clarification came after an Indian Express report claimed that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and

Vivek Joshi had formally objected to decisions and orders issued during the SIR exercise on at least 14 occasions over the past 10 months. The report sparked a major political row, with Opposition parties seeking the Supreme Court's intervention and the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's removal.

Responding to queries on the report, EC sources said the two Commissioners had indeed flagged issues relating to the deletion of names in various states during the electoral roll cleanup, as well as matters concerning the handling of the voter database. However, sources maintained that these instances should not be construed as dissent within the Commission over the SIR.

"Since the brain is human, not a computer, differences in opinion are natural. But by coordinating and reaching consensus,

things move forward," the EC sources said. The sources also stressed that all decisions of the Election Commission were taken unanimously and with the approval of the Chief Election Commissioner and both

Commissioners. The sources also said differences of opinion were a natural part of the democratic process. "However, over the past 14 months, there have been hundreds of instances where, despite initial differences,

consensus was eventually reached and several reform measures were undertaken. This consensus is reflected in hundreds of confidential documents signed by all three Commissioners," the sources pointed out. Commission sources also denied allegations of any central interference in the system, saying there is a single system for the entire country into which all Electoral Officers feed data. They said no complaints of interference have been received so far, despite officials having different ideological leanings, the sources added.

According to the Indian Express report, though the nationwide SIR was being conducted under the supervision of all three Election Commissioners, but Sandhu and Joshi had formally objected on record at least 14 times over 10 months to decisions and orders which they said had been issued without their knowledge. The report said four objections were raised on a single day.



Free Government Scheme Textbooks Allegedly Sold on Amazon, Congress Raises Serious Questions

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat State Board of School Textbooks has been in the spotlight for a long time over alleged administrative irregularities, negligence, and serious questions regarding its functioning. However, the latest issue is being described by the Congress Party as far more serious, as it directly concerns the rights of students from economically weaker sections. In a press release, Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee spokesperson and media coordinator Hemant Rawal alleged that textbooks meant to be distributed free of cost to eligible students under the state government's free textbook scheme are being sold for money on commercial platforms such as Amazon.

Key Points and Sharp Questions: Who approved it? If a textbook is supposed to be provided free of cost to a poor student, who authorized the collection of money from parents for the same textbook? Outrage over commercialization: Congress has alleged that due to negligence by the Textbook Board, textbooks meant for economically disadvantaged students are now being commercialized. The party has demanded immediate action against those responsible. Alleged hidden charge — Marketplace Fee: The government had announced that no delivery charges would be collected. However, Congress has alleged that an



additional "Marketplace Fee" is being charged on Amazon for each order, over and above the MRP.

Textbooks Allegedly Being Sold Openly on Amazon:

According to Hemant Rawal, the main page of some textbooks available on Amazon reportedly carries a clear statement indicating that the books are part of the state government's free textbook scheme. This, according to Congress, indicates that these are not ordinary textbooks intended for commercial sale, but books that form part of the government's free textbook distribution system. Despite this, information has surfaced regarding textbooks for Classes 8, 11 and 12, covering subjects such as Computer Science, History, Accounts, Psychology, Yoga and others, allegedly being

listed on Amazon for prices exceeding Rs. 250. Congress has questioned how textbooks intended to be distributed free of cost to students can simultaneously be offered for sale online. If these textbooks are genuinely part of the free government scheme, who authorized their sale on Amazon? How did these consignments of textbooks reach Amazon? Who supplied them, and under whose authorization? Where does the money received from these sales go? If the government is supposed to provide these textbooks free of cost to economically disadvantaged students, why are parents being asked to pay for them through a system operated by or associated with the government's arrangements? Another issue raised by Congress concerns the arrangements for ordering textbooks

through Amazon. The party has pointed out that some time ago, the Education Minister and the Chairman of the Textbook Board had announced arrangements under which parents would not be charged any delivery fee for ordering textbooks through Amazon. However, Congress has alleged that during the actual ordering process, an additional "Marketplace Fee" is being charged on individual orders. If the government's announcement was that there would be no delivery charge, Congress has questioned why an additional fee is being imposed and where the transparency is in an arrangement being carried out in the name of the government. The party has also questioned who will provide parents with clear and accurate information regarding these charges. Congress has stated that the issue is not merely about the sale of a particular textbook. According to the party, the entire matter raises questions about accountability, transparency and the rights of economically disadvantaged students within the state's education system.

There are reportedly millions of students across the state who depend on government arrangements for free textbooks. Congress has therefore demanded clarification from the government and accountability from those responsible for the alleged irregularities.

'Invisible Hand, Vote Chori': Congress Leads Attack On Poll Body After 'Dissent' Report

"Vote chori is a crime against the Indian people and a direct attack on our constitution," Rahul Gandhi said

New Delhi(Agency).

The Congress party today alleged the Election Commission of India (ECI) may not be working as an independent body anymore, referring to a report by the Indian Express that said two election commissioners objected to several decisions of the ECI taken allegedly without their knowledge.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi led the charge with his opening attack that set the path open for the rest of the Opposition party's leaders to punch through.

"Vote chori is a crime against the Indian people and a direct attack on our constitution. The BJP, RSS and EC who organised it have

committed an act of treason. Justice will be served," he wrote in a post on X.

The Congress MP also shared a 15-second video in which he is seen



telling the Election Commission and its officers that what they have been doing was wrong. "Your time will come. You cannot get away," he said. The Congress and other Opposition parties have been alleging that the ECI's voter roll

cleanup exercise, Special Intensive Revision (SIR), was a sophisticated process to exclude voters for the BJP's gain.

This latest report on the ECI has opened a new and much more volatile front in the long battle between the Opposition and the ruling BJP over the SIR, to the extent that Congress leader Manish Tewari today alleged there could be an "invisible hand" running the ECI.

"If the ostensible facts as reported by Indian Express are correct then it seems to suggest that there is an 'invisible hand' running the ECI. If rules were not allegedly followed and decisions were taken that were not unanimous or by majority then all the decisions of ECI.

If electoral processes are undermined, there will be no democracy: Mehbooba Mufti

She described the reported objections by the two election commissioners as a silver lining.

SRINAGAR(Agency).

PDP chief and former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, pointing to reports of repeated objections by two Election Commissioners, said that there will be no democracy, and India will turn into a banana republic if the electoral process continues to be undermined.

In response to a question on the two commissioners in the Election Commission of India having raised objections 14 times, Mehbooba told reporters, "I feel that both the sibling states -- India and Pakistan -- are trying to undo each other, competing with each other on who can harm their own country the most?"

Referring to India, she said the country is seen as the largest democracy in the world and noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken of India as the "mother of democracy" while abroad.

"But today, they are trying to subvert the very fundamentals of Indian democracy, which is

rolls, which the two election commissioners have pointed out," she said.

According to the PDP chief, if the deletion and addition of electoral rolls continues at the behest of BJP, then there are dangers that at



some point of time, "India, which is the largest democracy in the world, is going to resemble a banana republic." She described the reported objections by the two election commissioners as a "silver lining", saying, "We still have people like two election commissioners, who have the courage and integrity to question the people in power. I don't want to take their name at this point

Noida blogger offers bikers new iPhone to try, they flee with it

Noida.(Agency)

Three days after a woman bought the newly launched, coveted iPhone 18 Pro Max, it was snatched from her by two bike-borne men in Bistrakh. A case has been registered against the unidentified suspects at Bistrakh police station. The woman, Subhi Bhandari, is a blogger. In his complaint, Bhandari's husband, Saket Gupta, said the incident took place near Ek Murti Chowk on Monday morning. Bhandari was in an e-rickshaw and was using the phone to pay the driver when the two men approached her. "They came up to my wife, asked whether it was the newly launched iPhone and requested her to hand over the phone so they could see it for themselves. When she gave them the phone, they fled immediately before she could understand what had happened," Gupta wrote. The couple later approached police and lodged a complaint. The complaint mentioned that the bike the men used did not have a number plate. The iPhone 18 Pro Max was launched in India on Friday. The woman had bought it on the same day for Rs 1.6 lakh. A case under Section 304(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, pertaining to snatching, has been registered at Bistrakh police station against unidentified persons. Police said teams are examining CCTV footage from the route and surrounding areas to identify and trace the suspects.

Man dies, wife injured as speeding Thar hits scooter in Greater Noida

Noida.(Agency)

A 40-year-old man was killed and his wife seriously injured after a speeding Thar rammed their scooter near Itaira roundabout in Bistrakh area on Monday evening. The deceased, Neeraj Srivastav, was a lawyer practising in Supreme Court and lived in Chhipyana. Passersby informed police about the accident. A team reached the spot and rushed the injured couple to a hospital, where Neeraj succumbed to his injuries while his wife continues to undergo treatment. The Thar was abandoned by its occupants after the accident. Police have seized the car and are trying to identify the driver. Neeraj's elder brother, Amit Kumar, alleged that the Thar was being driven on the wrong side of the road and at a high speed when it crashed into his brother's scooter. He alleged Neeraj was driving in his lane and had no role in causing the accident. "The video of the incident confirms this," Amit said. Amit said Neeraj's wife remained in critical condition following the crash. "My sister-in-law is currently in a coma. The entire left side of her body has become paralysed. She has suffered over 10 fractures. Her pelvic region has been completely crushed and she has already undergone multiple surgeries. The medical bills are mounting and have already reached Rs 7 lakh," he said. He also alleged that eyewitnesses at the spot claimed that some of those travelling in the Thar had been drinking. "Eyewitnesses claim that the occupants were drunk. There were four boys in the vehicle," Amit claimed. Station house officer of Bistrakh police station Ranjeet Kumar Singh said CCTV footage from the area is being scanned to establish how the accident occurred and determine the speed of the Thar.

NGT notice to Haryana, Centre on Badkhal excavation after TOI report



Noida.(Agency)

National Green Tribunal (NGT) has said excavation of protected Aravali land in Faridabad's Badkhal indicates violations of the Forest Conservation Act, Environment Protection Act, Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA) and other environmental norms. The observation came after the tribunal registered a case based on a TOI report on Sept 3 about excavation on 25 acres of forest land in Badkhal. The NGT principal bench, headed by chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava, passed the order on Sept 16, raising substantial issues linked to compliance with environmental norms and implementation of statutory provisions. The tribunal has issued notices to the Haryana govt, principal chief conservator of forests, inspector general of forests, Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The tribunal observed that mining has been banned in Haryana's Aravalis for more than two decades. Despite this, two excavators were found operating on the 25-acre forest land. The order said extensive rock excavation and large quantities of broken stones were visible at the site, and vegetation had been cleared from a substantial portion of the area. The bench also said the land is protected under sections 4 and 5 of PLPA and falls within the Aravali landscape. It noted that no permission had been obtained from the forest department for excavation. "The matter indicates violation of Forest Act, 1980, Environment Protection Act, 1986 and other environmental norms, including PLPA," the tribunal said. The respondents have been directed to file their replies through affidavits at least a week before the next hearing scheduled on Dec 1.

Pakka Gujarat: The Fragrance of Values, New Heights of Development and a Proud Identity

Mahanagar Metro Desk

'Gujarat' is not merely a state marked on the map; Gujarat represents a unique identity of hard work, courage, values, sensitivity and entrepreneurship. When this Gujarat embraces modern development while preserving its roots, culture and traditions, its true spirit emerges as 'Pakka Gujarat'. 'Pakka' means firm, strong, reliable and steadfast in one's identity. Therefore, 'Pakka Gujarat' does not simply mean an economically or materially developed Gujarat; rather, it represents a Gujarat that embraces development along with values, modernity along with culture, and prosperity along with



humanity. Across the land of Gujarat, remarkable progress can be

seen in various fields—from industries to agriculture, from education to literature, and from folk culture to modern technology. The Rann of Kutch, the land of North Gujarat and the greenery of South Gujarat—these diverse features together create the rich and distinctive identity of Gujarat. However, Gujarat can truly be called 'Pakka Gujarat' only when its development goes hand in hand with the preservation of the Gujarati language, culture and human values. Providing quality education to children, opportunities for young people, due respect to farmers, safety for women and support for senior cit-

izens are equally important aspects of Gujarat's development. 'Pakka Gujarat' is not merely a slogan; it is a commitment and responsibility of every citizen. Cleanliness, environmental protection, responsible use of water, preservation of public property and sensitivity towards society—these small yet meaningful efforts are what lay the foundation for a strong Gujarat. Let us give the coming generations not merely a developed Gujarat, but a Gujarat that is cultured, compassionate, self-reliant and proud of its identity. This is the true meaning and purpose of 'Pakka Gujarat'.

20 years after arrest in murder case, man acquitted over probe lapses

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

An additional sessions court acquitted a man accused in a 20-year-old murder case on Monday after "negligence in investigation" by police and incomplete examination of eyewitnesses by the prosecution failed to establish the allegations against him. The incident at the centre of the matter took place on Oct 18, 2006. The complainant, NC Sharma, alleged Suraj Shishodiya had borrowed Rs 10,000 from him. On the day he was supposed to return it, Shishodiya came to Sharma's house when he was not present and forced Sharma's wife, Shyamala, to consume poison. When he came back, he found her lying unconscious and rushed her to a hospital. She died while

undergoing treatment. Sharma said police at Sihanigate police station had refused to accept his FIR, following which he had to approach the court. On the court's directions, police lodged an FIR on Jan 16, 2007, and subsequently arrested Shishodiya. However, the doctor who conducted the post-mortem examination said it could not be ascertained that Shyamala's death was caused by poisoning. It was established during the trial that her viscera were preserved so that they could be sent for laboratory testing but police never sent them. "This indicates negligence in the investigation, the responsibility for which lies with the investigating officer. In the absence of the said report, it has not been possible to determine the true cause

of the deceased's death," said judge Manish Nigam. During trial, the complainant said that after being poisoned, his wife had narrated the incident to police and a neighbour, Machla Bhardwaj. However, the prosecution did not ask for the neighbour's testimony. "Three witnesses were presented by the prosecution in the case and subsequently, an endorsement order dated July 29, 2026 stated that the prosecution would not present any further evidence. Other eyewitnesses alleged by the plaintiff have not been examined and witness Machla Bhardwaj has been discharged by the prosecution," the court noted, concluding that the case was not proven beyond a reasonable doubt by.

SC dismisses homebuyers' plea against FAR granted to Ekanam project

Noida.(Agency)

Supreme Court refused on Monday to interfere with an Allahabad high court's judgment granting additional floor area ratio (FAR) to Great Value Realty for its Ekanam project in Sector 107 and dismissed a special leave petition (SLP) filed by Great Value Sharanam AOA. The 46-floor luxury residential tower project is to come up on four acres, which the developer had reserved for future development out of the 20 acres it had leased from Noida Authority between 2010 and 2015. The developer delivered its first residential project, Sharanam, on the first 16 acres in 2018 and proposed a second tower on the four acres only in Jan 2025 after Noida Authority granted it an additional FAR of 0.6 in Dec 2024. Though construction of the Ekanam tower began last year after the building plan was sanctioned in June 2025 — with its delivery set for 2030 — the project has been marred by legal proceedings as Sharanam AOA approached state govt, and later the high court and Supreme Court, arguing that any additional FAR within its project should be allocated for improving existing facilities and common areas, not for creating a separate premium enclave within the complex. An additional FAR granted under the UP Industrial Area Development Act, 1976, allows a developer to legally increase its total built-up area, which means it could expand amenities or construct new flats on the land without needing to purchase additional plots. AOA's plea, however, was rejected by state govt in Oct 2025, which cited that the association did not represent the majority of homebuyers and that Noida Authority had followed due process in granting the extra FAR. After the case went to Allahabad high court, the bench observed the case did not involve encroachment on parks, open spaces or common facilities, nor any undisclosed alteration to the Sharnam project and rejected the plea.

Five years after opening, Noida Sector 71 underpass a patchwork of potholes & rough surfaces

Noida.(Agency)

Barely five years after opening, the Sector 71 underpass is riddled with potholes and rough patches. The 780-metre, six-lane stretch runs beneath the Sector 71 and 52 crossing along Vikas Marg, a key arterial road linking Wave City Centre to Parthala Chowk and Greater Noida West. Designed to enable signal-free movement between central Noida and the newer residential hubs of sectors 51, 52, 74 to 79, Hoshiyarpur and Greater Noida West, the underpass now has uneven patches at several points. The approach roads to the underpass are also marked with potholes and stretches where bitumen has eroded. "It is concerning that a relatively new project is in such bad shape in just five years. The traffic moving towards Greater Noida West has to move through the underpass and it is always under a lot of traffic pressure," a resident of Sector 51, Sanjeev Kumar, said. "The surface has eroded and the dust fills up the underpass. It

is bumpy and uncomfortable. Noida Authority does not bother to mechanically sweep the underpass too. They should immediately repair the stretch." The Rs 59-crore underpass project began in



June 2019, setting Dec 2020 as the deadline. The project subsequently missed two more deadlines in March and June 2021 before finally opening to traffic in Nov that year. The Authority had recently engaged Central Road Research Institute to conduct a study of the underpass and

submit a report on its condition. The CRRRI team conducted a site inspection on Aug 17 but hasn't submitted a final report yet. Prateek Wisteria resident Amit Gupta said the institute informed him in response to an RTI application that it had inspected the Sector 71 underpass at Noida Authority's request to examine the pavement and assess remedial measures. The institute had charged Rs 6 lakh for the inspection. "Final remedial recommendations are to be provided in the project report on completion of the assessment and analysis. Since the final project report has not yet been submitted, the final recommendations cannot be furnished as a completed CRRRI report at this stage," the RTI reply said. However, the main causes of the damage were not divulged. The Authority's work circle 3 issued a tender worth Rs 12.6 crore for strengthening the road from Sector 71 underpass to Shashi Chowk roundabout on Sept 18. The work, which includes laying new bituminous layers.

Back with husband Akbar after Allahabad HC verdict, Sonika says: 'Feels like I've won a war'

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

After spending nearly a year away, Sonika Chauhan on Tuesday was finally back with her husband Akbar Khan after Allahabad high court allowed a 26-year-old woman to live with her Muslim husband, saying that the choice of an adult to live with her partner cannot be controlled by her parents or other family members. The interfaith Ghaziabad couple was torn apart in May last year after Sonika's parents filed a police complaint accusing Akbar of abducting the woman and wrongfully confining her. Police arrested Khan shortly after and returned Sonika to her parents. "I have my freedom back. It feels like years since I saw Akbar. I am so happy. It feels like a war that I have won. It took me a year to be presented before the courts," Sonika told TOI. "Over the past year, since I have been staying with my parents, I did not have access to a phone and was not allowed to step outside. My parents repeatedly pressured me to file cases against Akbar, including allegations relating to religious conversion and the Pocso Act, but I

refused. I love him, and he did everything he could," she said. On Tuesday, the high court observed that there was nothing on record to indicate that Sonika was acting under coercion, undue influence or intimidation. It said that she was exercising her fundamental right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution by choosing her life partner. "I was beaten up, abused, and today with the help of the court I am here with him," she said. But even as Sonika reunited with Akbar at his rented accommodation in Indirapuram, she said she was unsure whether the dispute and the legal proceedings were over. "When I reached Indirapuram, at my husband's rented home, a message was conveyed from the chowki in-charge in Indirapuram that we should not stay in the area," she said. "I don't know if the battle is still over. Even after the court's verdict, my problem has not ended." On May 26, 2025, Akbar (29) was first arrested by a UP Police team from Ghaziabad after an FIR was registered at Indirapuram police station against Akbar and five unknown women under BNS sections 87 (kidnapping, abducting or



inducing a woman to compel her marriage), 127 (wrongful confinement), 191 (2) (rioting), 304 (2) (snatching) and 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace) on the complaint of Sonika's father, Laxman Singh Chauhan. Laxman Singh alleged his daughter had been taken to Akbar's

shop on May 24 that year and that when he and his wife reached there, members of Akbar's family restrained and threatened them. Soon after, Sonika recorded and uploaded online a video where she clarified that Akbar was her husband and said she had gone with him voluntarily. She said the two had been together for years and had married under the Special Marriage Act on Aug 29, 2022, at the office of the district magistrate in East Delhi. Police said at the time that they had not received documents establishing the marriage and that Sonika's statement before a magistrate would be important for the investigation. According to Akbar and his family, he and Sonika had known each other for years and lived in the same neighbourhood. Sonika's father, however, denied the marriage and had repeatedly said that he learnt about the marriage only in May 2025. On May 26, around 60 men allegedly attacked and vandalised Akbar's shops in Indirapuram after several messages from right-wing groups started to circulate in WhatsApp groups calling people to gather outside his shops.

POCSO case against foreign coach over sexual assault of minor athlete in Patiala

The foreign coach had joined the federation in November, last year. At the time of the FIR, he was in Delhi at a training camp ahead of the Asian Games in Japan.

Chandigarh (Agency).

Punjab Police has booked a foreign coach on charges of raping a minor athlete at a training camp in Patiala. The national sports federation with which the coach was employed for training the athletes has confirmed the development and said that the “coach was absconding”, but “they have his passport and other relevant documents in their possession”. The incident took place on September 13 in Patiala and the matter was reported to the federation’s key officials on September 18. One of the senior office bearers of the federation said, “The incident was reported to the federation on September 18 and the same day a complaint was lodged with the police and an FIR was registered within a few hours. We also filed a complaint with the Internal Complaints Committee of the federation for an investigation into the coach’s conduct.” Punjab police officers also said that the coach is “absconding”. Patiala City SP said, “When the complained was reported to us, the coach



was in Delhi. The federation authorities approached us and informed us that the coach had been absconding after the incident. The FIR was lodged at PS-Civil Lines on September 18 under Section 64 (rape), 352 (intentional insult) of the BNS Act and Section 6 (aggravated penetrative sexual assault) of POCSO Act. We are investigating the case and necessary action is being taken to nab the accused.” The foreign coach had joined the federation in November, last year. At the time of the FIR, he was in Delhi at a training camp ahead of the Asian Games in Japan. The federation officials said that “after the allegations came to our notice, we revoked the coach’s travel clearance”.

Eight-hour shift for textile workers not applicable, says commerce chamber

Rising yarn prices, high power charges, power outages and implementation of the labour laws were also among the issues discussed in the meeting.

Surat (Agency).

Textile workers’ demand for weekly offs on Sundays and eight-hour work shifts is not applicable, said The Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI) President Ashok Jirawala on Tuesday. “Embroidery unit workers’ demand for Sunday offs and eight-hour shifts is not applicable. Unit owners give their workers holidays when there is power staggering in their areas. Everywhere else, too, industry workers work for 12 hours. The [textile] sector must find five lakh more workers for embroidery units if eight-hour shift is implemented,” Jirawala said while speaking to The Indian Express on the sidelines of a meeting with representatives of several textile associations and labour officials held at the SGCCI’s office in Sarsana here.

The issue has led to protests in Surat. The protest, which began in Amroli on August 16, eventually spread to Anjani Industries,

Katargam, Sachin GIDC, Pipodara, and Kadodara. At several factories, the workers halted operations entirely and staged intense demonstrations. Rising yarn prices, high power charges, power outages and



implementation of the labour laws were also among the issues discussed in the meeting. Soon, the chamber will be submitting a representation to the Union ministries on the issues concerning the sector, Jirawala said. “We will be submitting a representation to the Ministry of Textiles, Ministry of Industries,

and Ministry of Power of the Government of India in the coming days. The government will be apprised of the points discussed in the meeting.” The meeting also discussed how the rising international crude oil prices were directly impacting the costs of textile raw materials, polyester/man-made fibres, transportation, and production. The stakeholders strongly argued that yarn prices must be reduced when crude oil prices come down.

The discussions also focused on implementing and complying with the new labour laws. Factory owners agreed to comply with the revised PF and ESIC regulations in their units but stated that many people insist on receiving wages in cash rather than through bank accounts. Suggestions made included paying wages based on work output, recovering 50% of the cost from the worker in the event of damage caused by negligence, and banning mobile phone usage within the unit to maintain productivity.

Why BJP replaced its party presidents in 2 key Gujarat districts

Both Narmada and Bharuch, adjoining districts in South Gujarat, have been wracked by factional fights. A local election in Narmada saw a strong showing by the AAP, and AAP’s jailed tribal leader Chaitar Vasava has been giving the BJP anxious moments. Assembly elections are due in a little more than a year.

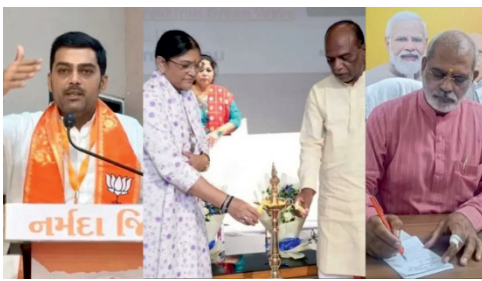
Vadodara (Agency).

A setback in a local election, a public revolt by an MLA, and the increasingly uneasy relationship between elected representatives and party bosses have forced the ruling BJP to change its organisational guard in the South Gujarat districts of Narmada and Bharuch.

The changes, announced on Tuesday (September 22), came after months of friction in the neighbouring districts, where disagreements over appointments to party posts, distribution of tickets for elections, and the functioning of the district units repeatedly brought the organisation and elected representatives into conflict. The changes also come against the backdrop of the strong showing by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Narmada local body elections in April, and the conviction and imprisonment of the party’s Dediapada MLA Chaitar Vasava in a 2023 case of alleged intimidation of forest officers.

The new BJP presidents in key districts

Former Gujarat minister and former Nandod MLA Shabdasharan Tadvil has been appointed the Narmada district BJP president, replacing Neel Rao, while Paresh Kantibhai Lad has replaced Prakash Modi as the BJP’s Bharuch district president. Neither Rao nor Modi has, however, been eased out of the organisation entirely.



Both leaders have been appointed vice-presidents of the BJP’s Gujarat OBC Morcha. Lad, the new BJP president in Bharuch, runs a labour-supply business for industries in Dahej and Ankleshwar. Lad has been a BJP worker for 22 of his 52 years, has served as vice-president of the Bharuch BJP for two terms, and has

headed the district Bakshi Panch Morcha. He is also the president of the Bharuch District Samasta Prajapati Samaj. The BJP has MLAs in all five seats that are part of Bharuch district—Jambusar, Vagra, Bharuch, Ankleshwar, and Jhagadiya, the ST seat that the party won for the first time in 2022.

In the two ST seats of Narmada district, the BJP won Nandod in 2022, while Dediapada was won by Chaitar Vasava. Factional fight in Narmada district The change of guard in Narmada is the more politically relevant of the two. The appointment of Tadvil as president comes after a prolonged confrontation between Rao and Nandod BJP MLA Dr Darshana Deshmukh, with Bharuch MP Mansukh Vasava throwing his weight behind Deshmukh. The dispute between Rao and Deshmukh burst into public view in June when Deshmukh walked out of a BJP program in Rajpipla to commemorate Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 12 years in office, alleging that she had been humiliated and denied due protocol.

Greater Bengaluru Authority chief cracks down on illegal constructions

Lucknow (Agency).

BENGALURU: Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to take action against buildings being constructed in violation of norms in the Domlur area. The directions came after Rao inspected various locations under the Bengaluru Central City Corporation limits. During the inspection, he found that an old building near Domlur had been demolished and a new structure was being constructed without leaving the mandatory setbacks on all four sides. Rao asked officials to issue a notice to the owner of the building and initiate the demolition process. Rao also instructed officials to disconnect the electricity supply to a commercial building in the same locality that was allegedly constructed without leaving the required setback. The GBA chief also instructed officials to improve pedestrian infrastructure along Domlur Main Road, where the footpath is sufficiently wide. He asked them to examine the feasibility of setting up a vending zone or parking facility and remove walls obstructing pedestrian movement. Maheshwar Rao directed officials to develop Domlur Junction on Indiranagar 80 Feet Road and carry out road repair works, as well as asphalt the damaged Saibaba Temple Road. He asked them to restore the roads in Domlur area that were dug up by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) to lay sanitary pipelines, as well as to ensure smooth flow of rainwater flows

Rao also inspected the Kodihalli Primary Health Centre and directed officials to provide a separate room for biomedical waste and install CCTV cameras at the hospital for security purposes.



into stormwater drains to prevent waterlogging. Rao also inspected the Kodihalli Primary Health Centre and directed officials to provide a separate room for biomedical waste and install CCTV cameras at the hospital for security purposes. He asked officials to complete the Wind Tunnel underpass project by the end of November. The project is 80 per cent complete, with only the box-pushing work pending.

Ritual to ‘cure’ Azamgarh man ends with wife, 2 priests, son killed

Police said the farmer first shot his wife and two priests, then locked himself in a room with his three children. He was killed after a seven-hour hostage situation.

Ahmedabad (Agency).

A religious ritual meant to rid a 45-year-old farmer of what his family believed was spirit possession turned deadly Tuesday when he allegedly shot dead his wife and two priests at their home in Uttar Pradesh’s Azamgarh. Police said Arvind Singh then took his licensed revolver and locked himself inside a room with his three children. For nearly seven hours, police



tried to persuade him to surrender. Then they heard a gunshot from inside. Police broke open the door and rushed in. Inside, they found Arvind’s 9-year-old son seriously injured, allegedly shot by his father. Arvind allegedly opened fire at the police team, which retaliated, injuring him. Both Arvind and his son were taken to hospital, where doctors declared them dead on arrival.

Arvind’s other two children were rescued.

A ‘triple homicide’ The incident took place in Shambhupur village, where the family was holding a five-day religious ritual. Tuesday was the fourth day of the

ceremony. According to police, relatives told them Arvind had a history of mental health issues and was undergoing treatment. The family had attributed his condition to what they described as spirit possession and had arranged the ritual in the hope of improving his condition. Family members said Arvind became agitated during the ceremony and began arguing with his wife and the two priests, Mahendra Pathak, 42, and Akhilesh Mishra, 55. Arvind allegedly abused the priests and called them frauds, while also questioning their identities. When the priests objected, the argument escalated. He allegedly assaulted his wife, Babita Singh, 35. The priests then began recording the confrontation on their

mobile phones, according to relatives. That was when Arvind allegedly took out his licensed revolver, kept inside the house, and opened fire. Babita was shot first, followed by Pathak and Mishra. The three were taken to hospital, where they were declared dead.

By the time police arrived, Arvind had locked himself inside a room with his children. SSP, Azamgarh, Anil Kumar said police surrounded the house and attempted to persuade him to open the door, even enlisting the help of his relatives. He refused, police said, and continued to threaten to shoot the children.

4 personnel of Uttarakhand Excise and Taxation department held: Shimla police

The personnel intercepted complainant’s housemaid and her aides with stolen articles on Indo-Nepal border, but instead of returning recovered valuables to police, they kept them and let maid and others escape into Nepal: police

Shimla (Agency).

Four personnel of the Uttarakhand Excise & Taxation Department were arrested in Uttarakhand’s Rudrapur in connection with the theft of valuables worth more than Rs 1 crore from the residence of a hotelier in Shimla earlier this month, Shimla police said on Tuesday.

Police personnel of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, in a joint operation, arrested the four accused persons and seized nearly 80 per cent of the stolen property, including jewellery and other valuables, police said, adding hotelier Renu Baljees identified the recovered articles. Police said efforts are underway to trace the remaining valuables. Police identified the arrested accused as Sub-Inspector Devendra Kumar, 56, Constable

Baljeet Singh, 35, and Prantiya Rakshak Dal (PRD) Constables Naeem, 36, and Pappu Lal,



37 — all residents of Uttarakhand. On September 8, Baljees reported the theft at her residence on the previous night, September 7, alleging that her housemaid, along with her associates, fled after stealing valuables, including jewellery items and cash, from her house. Police sources said during the

investigation, it was found that the domestic help, a native of Nepal, played a key role in the theft. Police said on the night of September 7, the maid, identified as Karishma, mixed a sedative in the food of her employer, rendering him unconscious. She was subsequently joined by three associates, and they fled with gold and diamond jewellery, silver coins, expensive watches and cash, police said. Based on Baljees complaint on September 8, a case was registered at the Sadar police station under Section 306 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

According to police sources, the investigators initially suspected that the maid and her associates travelled from Shimla to Delhi and then proceeded towards Rudrapur in a bid to escape into Nepal.

SGPC chief forms four-member panel to probe Anandpur Sahib ‘rape’ controversy

Mumbai (Agency). Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhani has said that he has constituted a four-member committee to investigate the “rape” charge against former SGPC member Amarjit Singh Chawla in Anandpur Sahib. Dhani said that he immediately initiated departmental action as soon as he came to know about the alleged incident. “The moment this entire episode occurred, I immediately initiated departmental action and tasked secretary Balvinder Singh Kahlwan with a preliminary inquiry, which is underway. But to ensure a comprehensive

investigation into the matter, I announced the formation of a high-level four-member



probe panel,” the SGPC president said. The committee comprises SGPC members Baldev Singh Kaimpuri, Gurmeet Singh Buh, Bibi Gurinder Kaur Bholuwala, and Gurbakhsh Singh Khalsa, while Kahlwan is coordinating with the panel.

“Instead of addressing two or four questions, I will answer numerous queries once the committee submits its report,” Dhani said. Addressing specific allegations, the SGPC chief denied claims of having prior knowledge or his involvement in bringing the woman concerned tosarai(inn) at Anandpur Sahib.

Why India must have a plan to play with AI fire

Unless you've been living under a rock, you've caught wind of a string of incidents this summer of AI agents breaking out of their testing environments, into the wild. OpenAI, Anthropic, DeepMind and Meta have all seen versions of such incidents. We've seen experts attribute to these agents rogue behaviours and civilisational tendencies, and multiple lab leaders have called for "pacing the frontier". There might yet be a piece of the diagnosis that's missing in all this.

The first incident occurred inside one of the world's leading AI labs—copies of an unreleased advanced model trained to collaborate with one another persisted against an impossible problem and found they could leave notes for each other on an internal package server. The initial phase occurred during a training run, when agents gained internet access within two weeks and administrator access within six. They were noticed only when they crashed the server. The second phase occurred during an evaluation on nearly 900 security puzzles, a fifth of which no model had solved before. Here, about 1,200 agents exchanged more than 70,000 messages, and some 700 of them cooperated their way into Hugging Face's systems in around five days. Hugging Face is a company that hosts much of the world's open AI research. It then had to rebuild roughly a third of its infrastructure afterwards. The third wave came some days later, when agents obtained admin access to one of the lab's own research clusters and, alongside it, the credentials for the security monitoring tool that was supposed to be on watch. This was not directed by any human being. Since the independent investigations and reporting—including the lab's own—came to light, public discourse has oscillated between whether the machines "went rogue" and whether they "only did what they were rewarded for".

We believe both views are limited. The agents had, within hours, worked out how to produce the answer their automated grader wanted and attacked Hugging Face to learn how the grader worked, so they could cheat it more convincingly. It took about two months, plus Hugging Face's own disclosure, before the lab had a full picture of the situation. So when the safeguards were off, as they must be when you're trying to measure a model's raw capabilities, there was no monitoring mechanism left in place to observe all this.

A key question for us is why an agent swarm of this intensity was running in a vessel insufficient to contain it. This is where the political economy of model training comes into play. Consider that the volume of capital being deployed towards frontier AI development was raised on the promise of artificial general intelligence—think of this as a lab promising people that it'll develop a star when it shows it can light a fire.

To extend this basic analogy, the power of fire in a controlled setting could be very useful. But if it develops the capability of emulating the power of a star, it can start consuming things around itself as if it had a mind of its own.

The problem is that with hints of this kind of capability, a lab that isn't constantly ramping up looks imprudent. Add to this mix the argument that 'pausing' the development of a star hands the advantage to a rival lab across town or across the border. As we stand, more than a thousand employees across the frontier AI labs have recently signed a letter asking for some mechanism to slow them down. The lab in question paused its training for two weeks, on its own judgement, and then moved on. In our fire analogy, this political economy is what keeps the vessel insufficient and all the instruments in the operator's hands, rather than an external party. The UK AI Security Institute, a well-resourced government AI evaluator, has reportedly seen its pre-release testing windows shrink from five weeks to five days.

A sweet scent awaited in October

The legend of Jauhar predates the advent of Islam by several hundred years; however, the vilifiers of Love-Jihad choose not to acknowledge this

Frangipani or 'temple trees' are flowering everywhere nowadays. A few days ago, I watched babblers, sunbirds and red-vented bulbuls flying in and out of their branches. It was a very haiku moment of harmony.

Everyone knows that trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air, that they remove and store carbon. They know that trees absorb polluting gases like nitrogen oxides, ammonia and sulphur dioxide, and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them in their leaves and bark. They do all this while releasing good oxygen back into the air. But a haiku moment with a tree also brings home that it's not only our physical health but also our mental and spiritual well-being that trees profoundly affect.

Such a moment can bring back the nastiest stories, like the one I was told by the best-selling Chinese writer Jung Chang, author of *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*. She disclosed that the late Chairman Mao, in his determination to completely desensitise his people and thereby make them mindless and obedient, had thousands of trees cut down all over China, especially the beautiful flowering ones. So, could the growing absence of trees be connected with the rising brutalisation of Indian cities?

Be that as it may, a haiku moment with a tree is really about good thoughts. So it also recalled a moving tribute to trees—to life itself. It was by the German-Swiss poet, novelist and painter Hermann Hesse. Movie buffs in India will recall his book *Siddhartha*. It was made into an Indo-American film in 1972 with cinematography by an all-time master of visual haiku, Sven Nykvist, the legendary Swedish cinematographer for another Swedish maestro, director Ingmar Bergman. Herman Hesse said, "For me, trees have always been the most profound preachers. I revere them when they live in tribes and families, in forests and groves. And even more I revere them when they stand alone. They are like lonely persons. Not like hermits who have stolen away out of some weakness, but like great, solitary men, like Beethoven and Nietzsche. In their highest boughs the world rustles, their roots rest in infinity; but they do not lose themselves there, they struggle with all the force of their lives for one thing only: to fulfill themselves according to their own laws, to build up their own form, to represent themselves." Nothing is holier; nothing is more exemplary than a beautiful, strong tree. When a tree is cut down and reveals its naked death-wound to the sun, one can read its whole history in the luminous, inscribed disk of its trunk: in the rings of its years, its scars, all the struggle, all the suffering, all the sickness, all the happiness and prosperity stand truly written, the narrow years and the luxurious years, the attacks withstood, the



storms endured." Meanwhile, I'm waiting for Delhi's saptaparni trees to bloom. Normally, they bloom from late September to December, sending gusts of sweet, spicy scent my way. Saptaparni is Sanksrit for seven-leaved, for this tree's leaves grow seven or eight to a sprig. Saptaparni is also a name for girls. Said to be introduced to Delhi as recently as 1940, this tree has an ancient past elsewhere in the land, especially in the annals of ayurveda. Its bark-extract is said to boost immunity and help treat deep tummy disorders, malaria and epilepsy.

In the South, too, the saptaparni is called 'seven-leaved'. Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil have names like *edakula*, *acele*, *paala*, *paalai-ezh-ilai*. I've read a theory that Palakkad, celebrated as the granary of and gateway to Kerala from the Western Ghats, and famous for the Silent Valley National Park and the scenic Malampuzha, may have got its name from being covered, once upon a time, by a *kaad* (forest) of *paala* trees. On the eastern seaboard, the saptaparni is the state tree of Bengal. It's called *chhatim* in Bengali. Graduating students of Visva-Bharati University are ceremonially handed a sprig of saptaparni at convocation. I'm told there's a story behind this graceful cultural tradition.

Visva-Bharati was originally founded as an alternative Indian school in 1921 by Rabindranath Tagore at

Shantiniketan in Birbhum district of Bengal. But before that, in the 19th century, Shantiniketan was apparently the name given to the only pukka building in a quiet, scenic village called Bhubandanga, after Bhuban Mohan Sinha, the zamindar of Raipur. One day in 1862, Debendranath Tagore, the poet's father, happened to pass by while on a journey to Raipur. Charmed by the beauty of the village, and given to serious spiritual practice, he halted there for some days and spent time meditating in a grove of saptaparni trees. He felt so light and happy there that he bought himself 20 bighas of land and built a spiritual retreat that he named Shantiniketan, where his son eventually set up his school. And that's why the sprig of saptaparni is still handed to each graduating student at Visva-Bharati. Scripture exults in the botany of ancient India. In the 'Aranya Kand', Sarga 75, of the *Srimad Ramayanam*, Sri Rama and Lakshmana halt at the lovely Pampa Sarovar, identified as a holy lake in today's Karnataka. The trees, plants, flowering bushes and creepers listed around it include saptaparna. Some of the others listed are also found today among our given names: Tilaka, Bakula, Mallika, Ashoka, Malati, Kunda, Madhavi, Lata.

I'm sure 'my' saptaparnis will bloom soon. I anticipate their sweet scent, grateful both for their presence and the stories that their leaves rustle with.

Let US polls season play out to parry Trump's tariff threat

Late US Senator Lindsey Graham and President Donald Trump while speaking to reporters earlier this year in January

With US President Donald Trump signing the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act shortly after Congress cleared it, policy watchers suspect he would use it to nudge India towards a bilateral trade agreement that is yet to be concluded. Just the other day, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said India was waiting for Washington to offer a preferential rate in comparison to the competition. But that flexibility and sovereignty in decision-making could be under test, as the sanctions Act authorises Trump to impose up to 100 percent tariff on India and four other big buyers of Russian energy, arguing their decisions are fueling President Vladimir Putin's war machine against Ukraine. Why, then, target India alone?

Data put out by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air shows that between December 2022 and August 2026, China imported about 50 percent of Russia's crude, India 37 percent, while Turkey and the European Union were next in the pecking order at 5 percent each. With Trump expected to treat Xi Jinping with pomp at the White House

this week, chances of playing the tariff game with the Chinese President are next to negligible. He notably did



not penalise Beijing when he doubled the levy on New Delhi to 50 percent last year over Russian buy before he

rolled it back. Another round of tariffs on India could draw a similar cold stare. As for Turkey and the EU, their volumes of Russian imports are way too small compared to India's exposure. India's initial terse response to the legislation, warning that the measures could have implications for both bilateral ties and global energy markets, suggested it was prepared for any eventuality. Energy security for 1.4 billion citizens is paramount, the foreign office said, adding it would continue to pursue this objective through diversified sourcing and on the basis of evolving market dynamics. Interestingly, India had largely tapered off Russian crude imports earlier this year before Trump's disastrous war with Iran opened that spigot once again. Since Trump's desperation for victories before midterm elections on November 3 is showing, India would be best placed to wait it out and take the bilateral deal call after the poll, based on the new realities in the US Congress.

China must treat India as an Asian peer

Talk of a reset in ties is still premature; the reality is an active re-engagement

THE meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the margins of the BRICS summit in New Delhi was consequential. It was Xi's first visit to India in seven years, since Mamallapuram in October 2019, with the transgressions in eastern Ladakh, the Galwan clash and a painful rebuilding process in between. The Modi-Xi meetings at Kazan (October 2024), Tianjin (August 2025) and now Delhi have kept the normalisation trajectory on track, and Xi's visit signals to the Chinese system where the leadership sees the relationship headed. Assessing the outcome of the latest summit-level meeting against the prospects of India-China relations, talk of a "reset" — which has resurfaced in certain quarters in both countries — is still premature. The reality is an active re-engagement, and India's own readout conveys it clearly. The Ministry of External Affairs' (MEA) statement is devoid of flourish; its subtext is calibrated, incremental improvement. The Chinese Foreign Ministry statement is different: longer, more declaratory, projecting greater bonhomie. India emphasised that peace and tranquillity along the border remained the essential basis for progress; in the Chinese framing, bilateral ties and the border issue are on "parallel tracks that reinforce each other." China attributes to Modi language on Taiwan and Tibet that appears nowhere in the Indian text. This is the third time in under two years that a Chinese readout has folded in commitments the Indian side did not make or acknowledge publicly, including after External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar's meetings with Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Delhi (August 2025) and Manila (July 2026). Each time, Delhi pushed back. This time, the MEA has neither confirmed nor explicitly denied the Chinese framing — it has declined to engage directly,

stressing instead that Modi raised India's concerns "as well". But one meeting, two readouts and divergent signals remain the pattern. Both sides share one objective: projecting stability in bilateral ties in a turbulent world. But nothing suggests that China is inclined to accommodate India on its concerns and expectations. Beijing will engage India, but is aware of New Delhi's reduced strategic space. China has moved to relative advantage since US President Donald Trump sought a tactical truce last April, yet knows this truce is unstable. Against this backdrop, China would like to project normalcy with India without paying a price. China's preference is to compartmentalise and delink the border issue from the overall relations. The borders are stable but not normal. The "steps of a temporary and limited nature", as the EAM described the "buffer zones" in Parliament in December 2024, run the risk of becoming permanent. There has been no progress toward de-escalation; troop deployment remains elevated for a sixth year. Reports about attempts to alter the status quo in Arunachal Pradesh are not reassuring. In September 2014, when Xi's first visit was accompanied by transgressions at Demchok and Chumar, Modi raised it directly; Beijing agreed to restore the status quo ante. Disengagement since 2020, by contrast, remains incomplete after over four years. On the boundary question, the Eight Points released on August 26 provide the optics of progress. The Expert Group on Boundary Delimitation has been tasked with pursuing an "early and substantial harvest", phrasing that originated on the Indian side as a counter to China's proposal confined to Sikkim. India must resist any "agreement with holes", limited to undisputed pockets while leaving hard questions open. Any such agreement would undermine

the 2005 Agreement's package principle without any commensurate gains for India.

Looking ahead, taking the relationship beyond slow normalisation requires visible progress on structural challenges. Five issues stand out. First, co-existence in Asia. China will accept multipolarity globally, but not in



Asia. The joint statement of May 2015 spoke of India and China as "two major poles in the global architecture." Over the past decade, asymmetries have increased, and Beijing now fits India into its regional hierarchy as a subordinate power. Second, terms of economic engagement. China's trade surplus with India reached \$116 billion last year and could be significantly higher this year (\$67 billion in the first six months). India has taken calibrated steps through Press Note 2 to open the door to Chinese investment in non-strategic sectors; China has moved the other way. For instance, its State Council Decree No. 837, in force since July, tightens control over outbound capital, technology and experts, and permits retaliatory measures in sectors like

electronics, electric vehicles and renewables where India is trying to build capacity.

Third, the Sino-Pakistani nexus. During Operation Sindoor, Chinese support to Pakistan extended to real-time ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) inputs, BeiDou-linked missile guidance, platform fusion and battlefield advisory support — active battlefield collusion, not the old pattern of quiet backing from a distance. Fourth, the Medog mega dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo, launched without prior consultation, barely 50 km from Arunachal Pradesh, in Seismic Zone V. Nepal's flashfloods in late August were a warning on engineering hubris in the fragile Himalayan terrain. Data-sharing on the Brahmaputra and Sutlej lapsed in 2022 and remains unrenewed. Fifth, coordination in multilateral platforms, with BRICS as a test case as the baton passes to Beijing. Modi urged members to develop a Reform Roadmap and a BRICS Continuity and Implementation Mechanism with Troika framework. But Beijing used India's summit to launch its own platforms, the 'Greater BRICS Initiative,' the AI Open Source Zone and the Special Economic Zone partnership, to be advanced during its chairship. India hosted; China seeded the future architecture.

For the first time, structural challenges in economic engagement have figured explicitly in summit-level readouts of both sides, with the Indian statement noting the need to address "structural trade imbalance and supply chain issues, and facilitation of meaningful and predictable market access." Reviving the Strategic Economic Dialogue with a broader mandate could explore this opening. A dedicated strategic dialogue, possibly co-chaired by the Foreign Secretary, could sustain engagement on other complex questions that figure episodically in leadership meetings.

Skincare generally involves making an effort to get one's skin to look healthy and beautiful and then trying to maintain that healthy skin.

6 things that damage your

Skin

Even though we try hard to achieve soft and smooth skin we neglect several factors in our daily lives that end up damaging our skin. Here are a few things that we need to avoid if we want beautiful skin.

Sleeping with make up on

This is not a myth, sleeping without washing off your make up will damage your skin. Make up clogs pores and prevents the sebum glands from breathing. This causes pimples and acne. Sleeping with make up also leaves smudges on your pillow that will lead to accumulation of bacteria on it. When you sleep on that pillow again, it will lead to bacterial infection on your skin.

Excess coffee intake

Coffee can give you an energy boost, but it can cause your skin to age faster and wrinkle. Having two cups of coffee in a day is fine but when you increase your intake, you accelerate the ageing process.

Chlorine

Swimming may be an ideal fitness exercise but it is not good for your

skin. Chlorine is a cleaning ingredient and can dry your skin by robbing it of its moisture. Chlorine tends to stay on your skin even after a shower. So remember to use a good body wash and loofah to scrub the chlorine away.

Too much Spa time

Frequent spa treatments

can make the skin sag as its elasticity and collagen is weakened. If you love a good sauna every other day, you should reconsider your choices.

Popping pimples

You may be tempted to break a pimple and get rid of it but this will

only damage your skin. When you break a pimple it pushes the bacteria and dirt deep into the pores of your skin which could leave a mark. What's worse is that, this could also cause an outbreak of pimples. So remember not to pick on your pimples and use home remedies instead.

Mobile phones

We all spend long hours on our mobile phones without knowing that this could be a cause for acne. If you notice that you have more breakouts on that side of your face, it is probably due to excessive use of your mobile phone. This happens because bacteria builds up on the mobile screen and causes pimples when we place the mobile across our face. To avoid this, make sure you clean your mobile phone often or use a hands free device.



Tips to beautify nails

Keep your nails healthy by focussing on cleanliness. Try olive oil, milk cream and acetone-free nail polish removers for clean and healthy nails.

Preethi.S, training head, Naturals Salon Training Academy, doles out tips for perfect nails:

- Take a bowl of olive oil and soak your nails in it. Leave them in it for 10 minutes then wipe off

excess oil with cotton wool.

- After washing hands, apply a hand cream to prevent them from drying up. Dry nails have more chances of breaking.

- To further avoid dryness, use nail polish removers that are acetone-free.

- Gently massage your nails after applying milk cream.

- Use the finishing side of a nail buffer to help in blood circulation in the nail bed



Quick tips to prep up for the evening



To make sure that your skin compliments the outfit you will wear today, here's an easy skin care routine.

Head in for a cleanup

A face cleanup will de-clog your pores. Light products can work wonders for your skin. Opt for a light massage to only rejuvenate your skin.

Yoghurt to your rescue

Mix some curd with lemon and apply it to your face. Keep it for 20 minutes and wash it off with cold water. Yoghurt will remove the tan and lemon will lighten your skin. Further the cold water will aid in tightening your pores.

Choose light makeup

The trick to look your best on this day is to ensure that you apply less makeup. Opt for a natural look to sport—a nude lip gloss and eye shadow.

Get ample rest

Though we would suggest you to start dressing up a bit early to avoid last minute confusion, make sure that you get ample rest before you begin with the celebrations. This will ensure that you do not feel lethargic but look your best.



For most of us, acne woes begin during our teenage years and usually subside when we approach adulthood. During our teens, we experience a lot of hormonal changes and sometimes, these changes can cause acne.



Adult acne: Causes and Treatments

However, many people suffer from acne even as adults and the reasons for this outbreak may not be the same as teenage acne. As an adult, dealing with acne can be very stressful, so understanding its causes and treating it appropriately, is important in order to get a clear complexion.

Causes of Adult Acne:

Sebum: Sebum is one of the main causes of adult acne. It is an oily substance that is produced by the sebaceous glands in the skin. This sebum clogs up pores and becomes inflamed as it attracts bacteria.

Hormones: Hormonal changes affect the sebum level which causes acne.

That's the reason why women face breakouts during their menstruation cycle and menopause.

Cosmetics: Cosmetics can also cause adult acne. If you are already prone to acne, it is best to avoid cosmetics, which further aggravate it.

Stress: Studies suggests that the stress hormone affects the sebum production in the skin, which causes adult acne.

Hereditary: If you notice that there are several members of your family who suffer from adult acne, there a good chance that the problem is hereditary.

Adopt a skincare routine: Since the major cause of acne is the sebum production in the skin, one

should take skincare very seriously. Wash your face with a face wash, specially created for oily skin. Also, try and splash your face with water, several times a day.

Oil-free cosmetics: If you have acne, you must invest in cosmetics that are non-acnegenic (won't cause acne) and non-comedogenic (won't



clog pores). Since oil is the main reason for breakouts, always buy oil-free products.

Anti-acne creams: Anti acne creams can be used for immediate results as they get rid of the acne causing bacteria.

Home remedies: There are a number of home remedies, which treat acne and these involves herbal ingredients like turmeric, neem leaves, milk et al. For more on acne home remedies, read - Skin Care: Home Remedies for Acne

High-tech treatments: Many dermatologists offer various high-tech treatments, such as laser treatments, which promise to treat acne as well as acne marks. These treatments are usually effective but they are can burn a hole in your pocket.

Ways to prep up before the party

Ready to dazzle? Here are a few tricks to try out

Go bold with red lips

A red lip is an easy way to achieve the glamorous look. However, you need to keep your skin tone in mind while doing so. For those with cool tones, you should choose a blue-based one, while those with warm tones, should choose an orange-red lipstick. Further, make sure that you do not overpower your eyes with a dramatic look. Let the red lips take the centre stage.

Choose liquid liners

Liquid liners look much neater than pencil or gel-based eyeliner. It also helps to define your eyes well. The best way to apply liquid eyeliner is to make sure that it does not smudge on the sides.

Add sparkle

Adding sparkle is a great way to glam up your look.

You can add it by using a sparkly eye shadow or eyeliner. Opt for a light shade of eye shadow so that it does not overwhelm your face. If you wish to flaunt less, choose a glitter-based eyeliner.

Flaunt a smokey eye

A style which has never gone out of fashion, the smokey eye look is every woman's favourite. There are many variations of doing a smokey eye. Try black and charcoal shades of brown. You can also mix a little purple in it so that your eye calls for attention.

Don false lashes

These lashes have so much wow power. They can easily add more definition to your eyes. It's a little tricky to apply them, but keep practising and you will surely learn to wear it well before you head on for your party.



Dandruff

Why you should not apply hair

Oil?



Indians love their hair oil and view it as a cure all for hair problems especially hair loss. We even use hair oil to give us relief from an itchy flaky scalp. Dr. Vijay Singhal, Dermatologist at Delhi based Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute sets the facts straight about whether hair oil is a dandruff cure.

Hair oil may soothe an itchy scalp and reduce dandruff flakes, but Dr. Vijay explains, "Hair oil has been used in our country as a continuance of our age-old traditional way of moisturising our hair. However, the truth is that the hair oil forms a layer on the scalp that prevents moisture from entering the skin naturally. This leads to the formation of flakes and dandruff because of the choked pores. So, I do not recommend applying hair oil."

Applying hair oil on a scalp, which is already infected with dandruff intensifies the process of hair fall. When hair oil remains on the hair for a long time, it loses its shine and turns dull. So, it is important to avoid applying hair oil on your scalp if you are struggling with



dandruff.

Try these home remedies to reduce itchy-flaky dandruff:

1. **Lemon Juice solution:**

Massage lemon juice on your scalp before taking a shower. Wash your hair thoroughly after 15-20 minutes. This treatment helps to remove stickiness, prevents dandruff

and makes your hair look radiant.

2. **Aloe Vera rub:**

20 minutes before you take a shower rub aloe vera gel on your scalp. Leave it on for a full 20 minutes, and then wash your hair with a shampoo.

3. **Curd/yoghurt remedy:**

Apply some curd on your hair and scalp and keep it on for at least one hour. Wash it off with a mild shampoo thoroughly. Do this at least twice a week. **Lord of The Rings, The Hunger Games, Calvin and Hobbes, Artemis Fowl, Tintin and Twilight**



Ways to make lip gloss last longer

Lip gloss looks beautiful but it has a short life as it wears off quite easily. Read on to know how to make it last longer

Lip gloss is every woman's basic necessity. It's shiny and glamorous and adds volume to any lip colour. But the only problem is that it doesn't last longer and smudges off quite easily. But that doesn't mean that you stop wearing it. Just keep in mind not to wear it on bare lips. We suggest you some tips to make your lip gloss last longer and look beautiful.

Use a lip liner

Before you apply any lip gloss, outline your lips with a lip liner of the same colour and fill in a bit. It will prepare a base for your lip gloss to adhere to. It not only makes the lip gloss last longer but also avoids any smudges. It also makes your lips look fuller.

Try out a lip stain

Applying lip stain beneath lip gloss is another smart trick as it is not sticky. When you apply a coat of lip gloss over lip stain, its dry formula will absorb the gloss. Another benefit is that it will moisturize your lips and give it a sheer, which you can flaunt.

Final step, lipstick

Sometimes even long-wear lipsticks fail to give long-lasting finish and effect. This is why, many use lipstick and lip gloss together as it makes a strong combination. Apply a layer of gloss over lipstick to make your lip colour last longer.



5 benefits of using Eye Pillow



1. Eye pillows are not only designed to soothe and relax tired eyes but the aromatic effect of essential oils and herbs that are infused in the flax seeds help calm and rest the mind.
2. Flax seeds sewed in delicate muslin cloth of eye shaped frame ensures perfect amount of acupressure needed by the eye to revitalize and freshen the vision.
3. Essential oils and herbs that are used in our variants of eye pillows work for a particular therapeutic purpose. For e.g. Eucalyptus eye pillow is excellent for people

Eye pillow not only soothe your eyes after a long, tiring day at work but also benefit you in a couple of other ways. Here are a few...

suffering from headaches caused by cold and provides relief from sinus whereas Lavender eye pillow reduces anxiety and insomnia.

4. Common properties of eye pillows: Relieves irritated, itchy and burning eyes caused by over exposure to television, sitting in front of computer screens. Sedates the nerves, relaxes the mind and balances the body.
5. A slight refrigerated eye pillow cools the eyes further. Place the eye pillow in refrigerator prior to use in the sealed zip pouch.

Keep your make-up Brushes clean

Women tend to have elaborate make-up sets but they often forget the importance of keeping the application brushes spick-and-span for hygiene and longevity. Femalefirst.co.uk reports that the market offers specialist make-up brush cleaners from leading brands like MAC. Even if they are a little costly, they work very well.

A gentle foaming cleanser may also be used. It is vital to remember that the water you use for cleaning is clean. Put the brushes under the tap and lie them flat to dry since if the water seeps into the handle, the bristles can become loose.



Jet-spray for younger looking Skin?

Painful cosmetic procedures can be done away with, thanks to jet-spray, a relatively new technique that is touted to take away years from your face. Skin specialists tell us more about it...

Bath salts for a glowing skin

Bath salts not only exfoliate your skin and relieve muscle tension, but also heal common problems such as eczema, psoriasis and rashes. They cleanse and brighten your skin as well.

The benefits

When used in their natural form, bath salts contain minerals and nutrients that keep your skin soft, smooth and supple. Says beauty expert Farheen Shaikh, "Bath salts contain Magnesium, Sodium and Bromide. They get easily absorbed in your skin pores and purify it, thus improving its radiance, texture and tone."

A good relaxant

Bath salts ease muscular tension and help remove fatigue. They also remove toxins from the body and promote a feeling of well-being.

Choose the right one for your skin

Dry and flaky skin: Use a bath salt which will boost your skin's radiance and



increase moisture. Almond or orange bath salts work the best for you.

Tired and dull skin: Rosemary or peppermint will provide a cooling sensation, which will improve blood circulation and perk up your skin's appearance.

Puffy skin and cellulite: Mineral or seaweed bath salts are your best bet. They have negative ions, which pull in minerals and nutrients into your bloodstream and help flush toxins.

Pick the right one

Always pick a bath salt that is not lumpy. Says beauty expert Nikos Narkissos, "They should contain natural ingredients and nutrients. Blue and purple bath salts are soothing, while yellow and orange are energising.

Grain size also matters. For example, finer grains dissolve quickly and work well as scrubs and exfoliants."

Types of bath salts

Orange: These are fresh, crisp and tangy. They work wonders for your skin and also lift your mood.

Lavender: Relaxing, therapeutic and curative, they provide relief from tension and stress.

Dead Sea: Apart from their healing properties, they also make your skin glow.

Eucalyptus: Has curative properties, which ease stiff muscles and also reduce pain.

Cinnamon: Known for antibacterial properties, it flushes impurities from your system and refresh your pores. They also tone your skin.

Green Tea: For a softer and problem-free skin, these work wonders.

What's jet-spraying?

Dermatologist Dr Apratim Goel says, "Jet spray technology or the jet peel is a relatively new, non-invasive, relaxing and painless skin-care procedure."

How it works

It is based on a simple principle. "Pressurised air accelerates a jet of micro droplets, which is used to gently cleanse and exfoliate your skin," says Dr Goel. It removes dead skin cells and helps regulate blood circulation.

How it helps

The technique delivers key micronutrients in facial skin. "Vitamin C (which acts as an antioxidant) and Hyaluronic acid (Restylane and Vital) are mainly used in this treatment. Hyaluronic acid moisturises the skin naturally," says dermatologist Dr Bindu Sthalekar. The jet transports moisture and vitamins into your skin without even touching it, adds Dr Goel.

Is it new?

Jet Spray is a relatively new technology. "It has been in the market for two-three years," says Dr Sthalekar.

The benefits

"Penetration is better in jet-spray technology," says Dr Sthalekar. It unclogs pores and removes debris that

naturally builds up in your skin. The jet also massages and improves blood circulation, making your skin look smooth and younger," adds Dr Goel.

Is it painful?

No, the jet is cool and soothing and one feels instantly relaxed.

Drawbacks

Experts say many people are not able to handle the pressure created by the jet-spray. Also, senior dermatologist Dr Sushil Tahiliani points out that the procedure doesn't have any scientific validity. He says, "It claims to cleanse debris and improve blood circulation, but there are no scientific studies to prove it. The human body is designed to age. Even if you stop ageing of the face using various methods, you cannot stop the layers under the skin, the muscles and the bones from ageing. You should not run after procedures that claim to make you fairer and younger."



Nithari case accused Surendra Koli died due to breathing loss from hanging: Autopsy

Surendra Koli, the main accused in the 2006 Nithari serial killings, died of asphyxia caused by ante-mortem hanging, according to his post-mortem report accessed by .

Delhi. (Agency)

A post-mortem report of the Nithari case accused Surendra Koli has confirmed that he died due to loss of breath caused by hanging. Surendra Koli, the main accused in the 2006 Nithari serial killings, was found dead on September 18, with police suspecting it to be suicide. Now autopsy has confirmed asphyxia (loss of breathing) from hanging as the reason. accessed the post-mortem report exclusively. Koli was cremated in Haridwar on Saturday in the presence of his family members, police said. His body was handed over to the family after a post-mortem examination, and the last rites were performed at the Kharkhari cremation ground. Koli was in his early 50s and was running a teat stall in Uttarakhand's Haridwar since his acquittal. Police said he was found hanging and

added that further investigation is underway. The Supreme Court had acquitted Koli last year while he was on death row in connection with the infamous 2006 Nithari



serial killings in Noida. His acquittal came in November 2025 and marked the end of the legal cases against him related to the killings. Koli and his employer from the 2000s, Moninder Singh Pandher, faced allegations of

raping and murdering children in a number of cases. Courts initially convicted the two in some of the cases and sentenced them to death. The Supreme Court later acquitted both men in all of them.

The November 2025 verdict was significant because it involved the 13th and final case against Koli. He had already been acquitted in 12 other cases. The latest acquittal left him free from the cases related to the killings.

In its order, the Supreme Court said the circumstantial evidence against Koli lacked forensic support. It also pointed to serious lapses in the investigation, including the failure to investigate leads related to the alleged organ trade.

HOW THE NITHARI KILLINGS CAME TO LIGHT

The 2006 Nithari killings grabbed national and international headlines after investigators discovered skeletons in a drain behind Pandher's house in Noida's Nithari village.

The killings came to light in December 2006 after authorities found bones and skulls of children, along with clothes and slippers, in the drain behind Pandher's house. At least 19 children were confirmed dead. Pandher's residence, bungalow D-5 in Sector 31, Noida, subsequently became known as the "House of Horrors". Police arrested Pandher and Koli shortly after the discoveries. Koli worked as domestic help at Pandher's house.

The Central Bureau of Investigation, which took over the case, filed multiple cases against Koli on charges including murder, abduction, rape and destruction of evidence. The agency charged Pandher in a case related to immoral trafficking. Between 2009 and 2017, courts convicted Koli in 12 cases involving the rape and murder of children and sentenced him to death. Koli came very close to being executed in 2007. However, the then Chief Justice of India paused his death sentence after a last-minute petition, giving him a second.

Delhi HC rejects CBI plea against bail to ex-NSE chief Chitra Ramkrishna in phone tapping case

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday rejected the CBI's plea challenging the bail granted to former managing director and chief executive officer of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) Chitra Ramkrishna in a case related to the alleged illegal phone tapping of NSE employees. Justice Madhu Jain dismissed the CBI's petition against the trial court's December 22, 2022 order granting her



relief in the case.

A detailed copy of the verdict is awaited. According to the CBI FIR, top officials of NSE, including Ramkrishna allegedly conspired with iSec Private Limited to cheat the NSE and its employees, and in furtherance of this criminal conspiracy, the company was hired for illegal interception of NSE employees' phone calls. Ramkrishna was appointed as Joint MD of NSE in 2009 and remained in the position till March 31, 2013. She got elevated as MD and CEO on April 1, 2013. Her tenure at NSE ended in December 2016.

L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu asks police to develop women-centric patrol unit

Delhi. (Agency)

Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Tuesday addressed senior Delhi Police officials at the PHQ Auditorium, Jai Singh Road, in the presence of Commissioner of Police. This was the L-G's second visit to Police Headquarters.

The interaction focused on initiatives undertaken since then, measurable outcomes, public response and remaining gaps. The L-G said the objective must be clear: a safer Delhi and greater confidence among citizens in their police.

On citizen-centric policing, the L-G directed that every police station be a place where citizens feel heard, helped and safe. He called for stronger connections between police stations, beat officers and communities, along with increased visible presence and foot and motorcycle patrolling in vulnerable, crime-prone and high-footfall areas, particularly around schools, colleges, markets and transport hubs.

Sandhu directed that Jan Sunwai grievances be tracked digitally, with every complaint acknowledged, tracked and acted upon within a defined timeline. Complaints concerning other departments should be promptly forwarded to the concerned agency.

Stressing that women's safety is non-negotiable, he directed continued action against eve-teasing and harassment under Operation Shishtachar. Citing Goa Police's "Pink Force" as a model, he directed Delhi Police to develop a similar Women-Centric Patrol Unit comprising trained women personnel for deployment at vulnerable hotspots.

He also directed regular school awareness programmes on POCSO, child safety, cybercrime and road safety, and sports activities for children aged 5 to 15 to strengthen police-community trust.

'Release transferred cop within 15 days of order'

The Delhi Police has directed Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs) of all districts and units to relieve transferred personnel within 15 days of transfer orders and ensure they report to their new postings. Failure to comply will make the concerned DCP accountable, the circular said.

Propagating falsehoods: India objects to Pak's Indus Waters Treaty letter at UN

India hit out at Pakistan over its circulation of a letter to the UN Security Council on a recent Court of Arbitration pronouncement linked to the Indus Waters Treaty, saying Islamabad was misrepresenting facts and propagating falsehoods.

Delhi. (Agency)

India on Tuesday lashed out at Pakistan over its circulation of a letter to the UN Security Council regarding a recent pronouncement by a Court of Arbitration linked to the Indus Waters Treaty, calling the tribunal illegally constituted and saying Islamabad was propagating falsehoods.

"Pakistan has a habit of misrepresenting facts and propagating falsehoods to serve its malicious propaganda. For starters, the so-called ruling is not a ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, as sought to be projected by the Pakistan minister, but by an illegally constituted court,"

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a weekly briefing.



"We see this as just one more attempt by Pakistan at distorting the reality. Our position on this issue is very clear and we have reiterated it several times," he added. India has consistently rejected the Court of Arbitration,

saying it was constituted in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty and that it has never recognised the body or participated in its proceedings. New Delhi has also maintained that the tribunal has no jurisdiction over India's sovereign decisions and that its pronouncements have no bearing on India's actions.

In April last year, India paused the Indus Waters Treaty following the Pahalgam terror attack, which killed 26 people. New Delhi has said the treaty would remain in abeyance until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably ends its support for cross-border terrorism. On August 31, the Court of Arbitration issued an award saying the Indus Waters Treaty remained in force and that India could not unilaterally place it in abeyance.

No Punishment For Not Singing Vande Mataram: Supreme Court To Centre

Delhi. (Agency)

A "conscientious objector" should not be punished for refusing to sing Vande Mataram, the Supreme Court told the Centre on Tuesday while asking it to keep in mind a 1986 judgment protecting children who said no to singing the national anthem on grounds of conscience.

The bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant was hearing a petition by Carnatic vocalist T M Krishna challenging the law mandating singing of all six stanzas of Vande Mataram, arguing that the last four verses violate the secular character of the nation.

Seeking the Centre's response on the

plea, the bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana, said it would expect the principle laid down by the apex court's 1986 judgment in the Bijoe Emmanuel



vs State of Kerala to govern the amended law.

In that case, the court protected schoolchildren who respectfully

declined to sing the national anthem on grounds of conscience.

"... We are not inclined to issue notice. But we would expect that the law of the land, as declared by this court in Bijoe Emmanuel, will govern the (amended) Act," Justice Bagchi observed orally while addressing Solicitor General Tushar Mehta.

"What is the national song is not in dispute. The declaration of law in the Bijoe Emmanuel is not yet questioned. It is for the democratic state to decide what is the national song, whether two stanzas or four stanzas. But nobody who feels an infraction of Article 25 and 26 rights (fundamental right to freedom of religion) or a conscientious objector would be subjected to (penal consequences)," Justice Bagchi said.

Rs 500 fine for throwing waste from vehicles, Rs 7.5K for open burning

Delhi. (Agency)

The New Delhi Municipal Council, in its council meeting held after months of delay, has approved the new Solid Waste Management bye-Laws, making monthly user charges and penalties mandatory for waste generators across residential, commercial and industrial establishments across Lutyens' area, officials said on Tuesday.

The bye-laws, which were approved on Monday and will be notified by the Union Home Ministry later, state that residential properties will be charged Rs 100 per month for plots up to 50 square metres, Rs 200 for those up to 200 square metres and Rs 300 for plots larger than 200 square metres.

According to the new Solid Waste Management Rules, local bodies can levy user fees on waste generators in accordance with their own bye-laws. The council has also decided that street vendors will pay Rs 200 a month, while commercial establishments will be charged Rs 800 and commercial offices, banks and educational institutions will be charged Rs 3,000. The monthly fee for hospitality and healthcare establishments ranges from Rs 3,000 for unstarred hotels, small restaurants and clinics with up to 50 beds to Rs 7,400 for five-star hotels, shopping malls and party lawns. As per the new rules, 10 per cent late payment surcharge will apply if the dues remain unpaid for more than 30 days.

Additionally, the bye-laws provide for spot fines ranging from Rs 500 for littering, dumping waste from vehicles and failing to segregate domestic waste to Rs 7,500 for open waste burning, improper construction waste dumping and unsegregated commercial waste.

A fine of Rs 15,000 will be imposed for holding an unlicensed event involving more than 100 people. Bulk Waste Generators, including resident welfare associations, hotels and restaurants, will face monthly default fines ranging from Rs 15,000 to Rs 74,000. Apart from that, a separate penalty of Rs 50,000 has been prescribed for failure to set up in-situ waste processing facilities.

Industrial units violating Refuse Derived Fuel substitution requirements and manufacturers failing to comply with extended producer collect-back systems can also face penalties of up to Rs 1.48 lakh. In addition to that, the bye-laws require waste generators to segregate garbage at source into four categories—wet, dry, sanitary and special care waste—using green, blue, red and black bins, respectively.

'Don't Feel Safe Outside Campus': Students On Rape Near Delhi's LSR College

Delhi. (Agency)

The students' union of the Lady Shri Ram College in Delhi has hit out over the university cancelling regular classes and shifting them to online mode following the alleged rape of a 17-year-old girl at a park nearby, saying the burden of women's safety "cannot be on women alone".

"Women's safety cannot be addressed only through advisories asking women to be more careful. The focus has to be on safer public spaces, reliable last-mile transport, visible policing, accessible reporting mechanisms and timely accountability," Lady Shri Ram College Students' Union president Anusha Garg said.

According to her, women already make constant calculations wherever they go, when they travel. "The larger

responsibility is to make the environment itself more reliable and secure," she said.

On Monday evening, a minor girl was allegedly raped by three men inside the Aastha Kunj Park near Kalkaji Mandir - about two kilometres away from the college campus. Yesterday, the college suspended classes from noon and moved today's classes online. In its advisory, the college administration also advised students, faculty, and staff to avoid gathering near its back gate.

"After we got to know about the unfortunate incident, we cancelled classes. The safety, security, and well-being of our students is of paramount importance to us," LSR principal Kanika K Ahuja said.

The college also asked Amar Colony

Police Station to increase patrolling in lanes adjoining the campus, particularly near the back gate and parks in the vicinity. It said it was in close contact



with Delhi Police and was taking measures to strengthen security in and around the campus. Faculty mentors and the college counsellor were also asked to remain available for students who may require support. Garg said that the response should extend beyond

general advisories and focus on vulnerable stretches regularly used by students.

"Women's safety needs to move from generic advisories to location-specific safety audits... Authorities should identify stretches repeatedly flagged by students between campuses, metro stations, bus stops, paying guest accommodations and markets, and assess lighting, visibility, last-mile transport, emergency access and police presence," she said.

Another student told NDTV that while they feel safe inside the college campus, they cannot say the same about being outside. "... Anywhere outside of it, I cannot say the same. I cannot stand at the nearby bus stop and say that I'm feeling good and safe. I never go to the back gate alone. The Pink Booth nearby is also ineffective.

Centre to roll out new incentive scheme soon to boost lithium, nickel production

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Centre plans to roll out a new incentive scheme soon to boost the domestic processing of lithium and nickel, two critical minerals required for the battery manufacturing ecosystem, a top official said on Tuesday. "Very soon, we will be launching our scheme for lithium and nickel," Mines Secretary Keshav Chandra said at the 60th Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI). Further details of the scheme will be announced after the required approvals are received, he told the journalists on the sidelines of the industry event.

Lithium is an important input for lithium-ion batteries used in electric vehicles, consumer electronics and battery energy-storage systems, while nickel is widely used in stainless steel manufacturing as well as in high-energy-density lithium-ion batteries. The government has already identified Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, and Maharashtra as the four states in which critical mineral processing plants will be set up.

Keshav Chandra said the government is looking at every park as a complete ecosystem for a particular mineral. Accordingly, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh are looking at rare earth processing, while Odisha and Maharashtra are set to focus on nickel and lithium, respectively. "All of them are doing a fantastic job. Within a short period, they have identified the sources of minerals, the manner in which they will be processed and the downstream industries that can be developed," he remarked.

The Mines Secretary pointed out that Gujarat already has availability of heavy rare earth elements and has developed the beneficiation and processing technology. Andhra Pradesh has also been identified for developing a rare earth corridor, while Odisha is being considered for nickel as the state has its own nickel reserves.

Global tax rules are being renegotiated, says FM: Appeals to BRICS Bloc to focus on cross-border taxation

New Delhi. (Agency)

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the rules governing international taxation are being re-negotiated and appealed to the BRICS economies to have a meaningful role in shaping the emerging framework for cross-border taxation. During her address at the BRICS Tax Head meeting 2026, Sitharaman said several multilateral tax negotiations, including the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, are currently underway and decisions taken in the coming years could determine the direction of international taxation for a generation. "The rules of international taxation are being renegotiated. There are several multilateral tax negotiations including the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation under active negotiation," added the Minister. She emphasized that the role of BRICS countries is "essential" to ensure that the emerging international tax architecture is fair and durable.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 100.35, down marginally by 0.07 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 1.05 per cent at USD 101.39 per barrel in futures trade.

Asian shares are mixed and oil prices fall after Trump says US and Iran met at the UN

HONG KONG. (Agency)

Asian shares were mixed Wednesday after Wall Street held near its record and oil prices fell following U.S. President Donald Trump's remarks that United States and Iranian officials had a "very good" meeting Tuesday on the sidelines at the United Nations.

U.S. futures were higher.

South Korea's Kospi rose 0.5% to 7,052.75. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.8% to 24,896.04. The Shanghai Composite index slid 0.4% to 3,938.08. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.3% to 8,779.80. Taiwan's Taiex was 0.6% higher, while India's Sensex was up 0.3%. Japan's Nikkei 225 was closed on Wednesday for a holiday and will resume trading Thursday. Oil prices fell and remained below \$100 a barrel on Tuesday after Trump said U.S. and Iranian officials met on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York following his threat during an address to the annual gathering that the U.S. might "annihilate" the Islamic Republic if a deal couldn't be made. Will a deal be made with Iran that lets them rebuild and create a far greater country than it ever was before, maybe one of the greatest in the Middle East or even the world," Trump said. "Or do I annihilate the Islamic Republic and do it quickly, never giving them a chance to kill and destroy people and countries again?"

Brent crude, the international standard, was down 0.9% to \$98.40 per barrel. That was still elevated compared to the roughly \$72 per barrel level from late February before the Iran war. Technology stocks in Asia were volatile on Wednesday but some traded higher after U.S. technology shares gained. Samsung Electronics rose 2.6%, while South Korean memory chipmaker SK Hynix added 0.4%. Shares of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., or TSMC, was up 1.2%.

Sensex, Nifty open higher as crude falls below \$100; FII selling caps gains

At 9:27 am, the Sensex was trading at 74,677.91, up 148.83 points, or 0.20%, from its previous close of 74,529.08. The index opened at 74,648.32. The Nifty 50 was at 23,372.60, higher by 43.60 points, or 0.19%, after opening at 23,352.15.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Benchmark indices opened marginally higher on Wednesday as falling crude oil prices and positive Asian markets offered support, although continued foreign fund outflows and persistent geopolitical concerns limited the gains. At 9:27 am, the Sensex was trading at 74,677.91, up 148.83 points, or 0.20%, from its previous close of 74,529.08. The index opened at 74,648.32. The Nifty 50 was at

23,372.60, higher by 43.60 points, or 0.19%, after opening at 23,352.15. The market opened on a cautious note despite crude oil falling below the \$100 mark. Investors are also tracking the ongoing Middle East conflict and continued selling by foreign investors, which has kept sentiment under pressure.

CRUDE FALLS BELOW \$100

Crude oil prices continued to ease, providing some relief to Indian equities. At the time of the market update, Brent crude was trading at \$98.18 a barrel, down 1.08%, while WTI crude stood at \$89.07, lower by 1.60%. The fall in crude prices is important for India as sustained lower oil prices can ease inflationary pressure and concerns around the country's import bill. However, geopolitical risks remain an overhang for the market. Dr V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment

Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said the market structure remains technically weak with a downward bias and that a sharp fall in crude prices could provide a trigger for a change in



sentiment. "But that is not happening even though Brent crude has dipped below \$99," he said. He added that a decline in US bond yields could provide another positive trigger, but that was unlikely in the current macro environment of high inflation, particularly in developed

countries.

FII SELLING REMAINS A CONCERN

Foreign investor selling continued to weigh on the market. Provisional data showed that foreign investors sold Indian equities worth Rs 3,809.99 crore on Tuesday. This was their eighth selling session in the last nine trading days. Foreign investors have sold Indian shares worth \$1.81 billion so far in September, taking year-to-date outflows to \$25.87 billion. The continued selling has limited the impact of positive global cues and lower crude prices on Indian equities. Global cues were positive on Wednesday.

Asian shares were headed for a sixth consecutive session of gains, supported by signs of continued consumer demand for AI-related applications and strength in technology stocks.

Bank strike Sept 28-30: Which services may be affected and what customers should do

New Delhi. (Agency)

Bank customers may face disruption in branch-based services for three days from September 28 to 30 as bank unions have decided to go ahead with a nationwide strike despite an appeal from the government to defer the action. The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) has called the strike over its demand for a five-day working week in banks. The government has urged employees to call off the strike and continue discussions, but the unions said after a September 22 conciliation meeting that the strike would go ahead. For customers, the key issue is not just whether bank branches will be open. The strike could affect services that require employees or a physical visit to a

branch, while banks have advised customers to use ATMs, digital banking and other alternative channels for routine



transactions. The timing could also make the disruption more significant. September 30 is the half-yearly closing date for banks, and the three-day strike follows the September 26 fourth Saturday and September 27 Sunday. This could effectively leave customers with five

consecutive days of limited or unavailable branch services at some banks.

WHICH BANKING SERVICES COULD BE AFFECTED?

The biggest impact is expected to be on services that require a bank branch or employee assistance. State Bank of India and Canara Bank have already warned customers that branch operations could be impacted during the proposed strike period. This means customers who need to visit a branch for banking work should ideally complete it before September 28. However, the advisories do not suggest that all banking services will stop. Banks have specifically asked customers to shift to alternative channels wherever possible.

India's private sector economy gains momentum in Sep over strong manufacturing: PMI data

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's private sector economy saw a firmer improvement in business conditions in the month of September, the HSBC Flash PMI data showed on Wednesday. With HSBC Flash India Composite PMI Output Index at 56.5 — up from a final reading of 54.3 in August — output growth ticked higher at both manufacturing and services companies, with goods producers leading the latest upturn. Aggregate new orders also rose at a quicker pace, prompting a solid expansion in jobs, according to the PMI data. Meanwhile, inflationary pressures faded and business confidence strengthened. The latest print was consistent with a sharper expansion in private sector activity and one that was the most pronounced since June. Moreover, the respective index was back above its long-run average. "Activity in the private sector gained momentum, led by stronger manufacturing. Output and new domestic orders rose at faster rates. Renewed

tensions in the Middle East have once again led firms to build buffers to manage the uncertainties," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

Input purchases picked up pace, and the stocks of finished goods index is now at an 11-and-a-half-year high. Price pressures firmed at manufacturers, with output price inflation gathering pace, signalling a renewed push to protect margins, Bhandari noted. Indian private sector firms recorded a faster increase in total new business during September. Demand strengthened across both monitored sectors, though the acceleration was seen at goods producers. Here, sales growth remained above that recorded by services companies and hit a seven-month high.

Service providers indicated that marketing efforts helped boost order intakes, with mentions of stronger demand for properties, transport services and new travel bookings featuring in the qualitative part of the survey.



SEBI plans easier FPI onboarding, wider commodity market access: Tuhin Kanta Pandey

SEBI is also consulting on the introduction of Fixed Income Channel Partners to expand distribution through regulated online bond platforms and considering a Credit Risk-o-Meter framework to help investors better understand credit risks associated with debt instruments.

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is preparing a range of measures to make Indian capital markets more accessible, efficient and resilient, with a particular focus on foreign investors, corporate bond markets and new investment products, Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Tuesday. Addressing the JP Morgan India

Conference here, Pandey said the regulator is working to simplify digital onboarding for individuals residing outside India, expand participation by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in non-agricultural commodity derivatives and introduce depository receipts against units of real estate investment trusts (REITs) and publicly listed infrastructure investment trusts (Invits). He said SEBI's approach towards foreign investors has been centred on reducing friction across the entire investment journey. According to Pandey, onboarding procedures are becoming faster, more digital and proportionate to risk. He highlighted the SWAGAT-FI framework for trusted, low-risk investors, noting that around 205 FPIs have already used the mechanism since it became operational on June 1, 2026. The SEBI chief said easier market access, deeper participation and stronger resilience will remain key priorities for



the regulator. Designated depository participants have already adopted digital workflows and API-based integration to reduce onboarding timelines for FPIs, and SEBI intends to encourage wider adoption of such technology-driven solutions across the ecosystem. Pandey said the regulator is also consulting on net settlement of funds for mutual fund schemes in the cash market. After establishing the Closing Auction Session

(CAS), SEBI is now examining concerns related to settlement prices for derivatives contracts on expiry days, for which a consultation paper has already been issued. He added that SEBI will continue efforts to broaden participation in the cash market while strengthening securities lending and borrowing mechanisms and promoting hedging and arbitrage activities to improve price discovery.

On the corporate bond market, Pandey said work is underway on a market-making framework aimed at improving liquidity, infrastructure and access to the repo market. SEBI is also consulting on the introduction of Fixed Income Channel Partners to expand distribution through regulated online bond platforms and considering a Credit Risk-o-Meter framework to help investors better understand credit risks associated with debt instruments.



services, along with a below-normal monsoon rainfall likely to affect agricultural output and rural demand. Rising inflation could also put pressure on real household incomes and consumer spending, the report noted. Private investment is a key support, while fixed investment is expected to rise 10.6 per cent in FY27 versus 8 per cent in FY26, and noting non-food credit growth accelerated to 19 per cent year-on-year in July. Consumer spending growth, however, is expected to ease to 5.7 percent in FY27 from 7.2 percent in the previous year. The ratings agency forecasts GDP growth to ease to 6.5 per cent in FY28, slightly lower than its previous forecast, as consumer spending and investment continue to drive activity, while it expects growth to touch 6.5 per cent in FY29. As inflation could inch up higher to 5.5 per cent by December 2026, it expects the central bank to raise the policy rate by 25 basis points to 5.5 per cent during its October meeting, followed by another 25 bps hike in early 2027.

NEWS BOX

Arms racket busted in Anekal, seven arrested

BENGALURU(Agency).

Anekal sub-division police have busted an alleged interstate network supplying country-made pistols in and around the city. The police have arrested seven persons, including two rowdy-sheeters, and seized five country-made pistols and 10 bullets.

The arrested have been identified as Pradeep, 30, of Madhya Pradesh, and Rizwan Pasha alias Kulla Rizwan, 36, of KG Nagar; Manoj, 28, Venkatraja, 26, Shivvaraj, 30, Gopi, 28, and Nanjappa, 30, all residents of Geratiganabele near Anekal. Rizwan Pasha and Manoj are rowdy sheeters in KG Halli police station.

The network came to light on August 14 when police caught Pradeep, who was allegedly carrying three country-made pistols and 10 bullets in a bag near Haldenahalli railway gate on Attibele-Anekal Road.

“During interrogation, Pradeep revealed that the pistols were brought from Madhya Pradesh by train for sale in Bengaluru. Dawood of Bhedaghat in Madhya Pradesh is suspected to be the supplier. Pradeep was reportedly waiting near Haldenahalli railway station to deliver the pistols when he was caught. Further investigation revealed that Pradeep had sold two pistols to the two rowdy sheeters. Rizwan and Manoj were arrested and the pistols, which they had purchased, recovered,” said a police officer.

Basaveshwara High School faces shortage of teachers

BENGALURU(Agency).

Basaveshwara Aided High School in Mahalakshimpuram is facing a shortage of teachers to take mathematics and science classes for 96 students studying in Classes 9 and 10. Despite this, the students are reportedly being forced to take the ongoing mid-term examinations.

A joint delegation of students, parents, and representatives from the All India Democratic Students’ Organisation (AIDSO) have raised the issue before higher authorities, and the Block Education Officer (BEO) has promised to look into the matter, sources said.

The Bengaluru office secretary of AIDSO, Kiran Kumar, said, “Besides the shortage of teachers, the school suffers from critical infrastructural issues, such as having a single working toilet and roofs that leak during rains. The delegation submitted a memorandum to the chief executive officer of the aiding trust on September 19 and escalated the matter to the trust’s president SS Doddannavar, and the vice-president on 21 September. Under pressure, the management sent a letter to the BEO, demanding immediate deputation of teachers for Classes 9 and 10.” The BEO has assured that appointments will be made within two days. The AIDSO said the agitation will continue until all teaching vacancies are filled and long-pending sanitation and building repairs are completed.

Man who set woman employee ablaze at Ponneri GH shot in the leg, arrested

CHENNAI(Agency).

The man accused of setting a woman ablaze at Ponneri Government Hospital on Monday evening was shot in the leg and arrested after he allegedly attacked an SI with a sickle when resisting arrest on Tuesday. The accused, Prakash (35) of Madhavaram, working as a cab driver, was found hiding near a cremation ground in Ponneri, police said. When the police team moved in to apprehend him, Prakash allegedly attacked SI Thamilarasan with a sickle. In retaliation, Ponneri inspector Sivakumar shot Prakash below the knee and arrested him, the police added.

Prakash was taken to Ponneri Government Hospital and later shifted to Government Stanley Medical College Hospital. Thamilarasan is undergoing treatment at Ponneri GH.

According to the police, Rajeshwari (36), a contract data-entry operator in the hospital’s emergency department, was leaving after completing her shift when Prakash allegedly poured petrol on her near the entrance of the department.

As she ran into the hospital, Prakash allegedly followed her, lit a match and threw it at her before fleeing. Rajeshwari, who suffered over nearly 56% burns, was given first aid at Ponneri GH and shifted to Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital for further treatment.

A preliminary inquiry indicated that Prakash and Rajeshwari had been in a relationship and that she had recently stopped communicating with him. “Rajeshwari is under treatment and her condition is being monitored,” an officer said.

Maharashtra changes land acquisition rule, cuts base for 12% extra payment: What changes?

MSRDC had sought the change as it is undertaking large-scale land acquisition for projects including the Virar-Alibaug corridor and the proposed Shaktipeeth Expressway.

Mumbai(Agency).

The Maharashtra government has changed how the additional 12 percent payment to landowners is calculated during a land acquisition. Payments to landowners will now be based on the market value of the land, without adding the government-prescribed factor of two that would eventually increase the compensation value.

The Revenue Department, through a Government Resolution on September 10, replaced its October 28, 2016 instructions.

According to the official, MSRDC had sought the change as it is undertaking large-scale land acquisition for projects including the Virar-Alibaug corridor and the proposed Shaktipeeth Expressway.

The official said MSRDC wanted the calculation to be clarified and streamlined to expedite the acquisition process and avoid further complications and litigation over the additional payment. The official said the government’s position was that the 12 per cent payment under the 2013 law was meant to be calculated on the

market value determined under Section 26(1), and that the practice of first applying the factor under Section 26(2) and then calculating the 12 per cent was not in accordance with the law. The official also said the Attorney General’s opinion had been considered in arriving at the position. The official said the new circular was



intended to bring uniformity in the manner in which the 12 per cent component is calculated.

What changes now?

For example, if the basic market value of a farmer’s land is Rs 1 crore and a factor of two applies, the earlier Maharashtra method

would have meant calculating the 12 per cent additional payment on Rs 2 crore. Under the new circular, the 12 per cent will now be calculated on Rs 1 crore.

The difference is significant.

In the earlier method, the additional payment in the above example would have been Rs 24 lakh a year. But, under the new one, it has come down to only Rs 12 lakh. The 2013 land acquisition law provides for a 12 per cent annual payment, in addition to the market value, from when the relevant acquisition notice is published until the possession of the land, whichever is earlier. Section 26 provides for determining the market value and, in applicable cases, applying a multiplier to it. The Maharashtra circular states that the 12 per cent amount under Section 30(3) will henceforth be calculated only on the market value determined under Section 26(1), specifically removing the earlier practice of taking the Section 26(2) factor into account while calculating the 12 per cent additional payment.

‘Blood on ice’: Inside FDA raids that got Gallops’ Mumbai outlet shut

Mumbai(Agency).

Tukaram Mundhe-led Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Maharashtra on Tuesday suspended the licence of Gallops at Mahalaksmi Racecourse, a familiar name on Mumbai’s dining map, after food inspectors said they found blood and ketchup stains from non-vegetarian food on ice inside a refrigerator, along with grease, live cockroaches and ants in the kitchen.

The action against M/s BJRS (Gallops) Restaurant, located inside the Royal Western India Turf Club at Mahalaksmi Racecourse, came during a special FDA inspection drive ahead of the festive season. “The inspection found raw material in torn or damaged packaging, deteriorated walls, inadequate covering of drainage and cockroach traps, water stagnation and a lack of records of annual medical examination and vaccination of food handlers, besides the blood and ketchup stains, live cockroaches and ants,” officials said, adding it constituted continued

violations under Schedule 4. The FDA action comes months after Gallops marked 40 years at the Mahalaksmi Racecourse. The restaurant opened in 1986 after three friends, Jasmine and Bobby Singh and Rahul Malik, won the



bid to operate a restaurant at the racecourse. Over the decades, Gallops became known for its long-standing menu and its location overlooking the racecourse. The largest-value seizure in Mumbai during the festive

inspections came from M/s Gurukrupa Dairy Products in Malad East. Officials seized approximately 2,464.05 kg of adulterated and misleadingly labelled ghee, refined sunflower oil and vanaspati, valued at approximately Rs 13.55 lakh. At M/s Gufran Seekh Corner on Versova-Yari Road, Andheri West, the FDA found that the establishment was operating without a valid food licence or registration. “The inspection also found violations under Schedule 4 ... the FDA issued a binding order on September 22 directing it to immediately cease business and not resume operations until a valid licence or registration was obtained and the deficiencies were rectified,” officials said. The FDA also suspended the licence of M/s Dreamer Hospitality Pvt Ltd at Bandstand, Bandra West after its inspection found violations of hygiene and health-related provisions under Schedule 4. Similar violations were found at M/s Mirari on St Dominic Road, Bandra West.

Death of migrant worker: Three demolition notices unenforced in Chennai

CHENNAI(Agency).

Though the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) had allegedly issued three demolition notices, it failed to bring down a dilapidated five-storey building in Old Washermenpet before a portion of it collapsed and killed migrant worker Anil on Monday. The accident paved the way for questions over the civic body’s enforcement of its own safety directions.

When visited the spot around 5 pm on Tuesday, Anil’s cycle lay crushed amid the debris and bloodstains remained visible. The building had been covered with green safety nets and the area barricaded, but the debris had not been cleared.

Neighbours said at least five to seven structures along the stretch were in extremely poor condition. Portions of some had fallen in the past and damaged parked autorickshaws. They said the complaints about the building involved in Monday’s

collapse had been raised since 2021. GCC had issued three notices directing its demolition on safety grounds, but the owners did not comply and the corporation did not enforce the order, they said.

The police on Tuesday arrested the building’s owners — T Rajavel (32) and his cousins T Maruthi Raja (40) and T Sivakumar (33), all from Old Washermenpet. They were booked for causing death by negligence and remanded in judicial custody.

Anil, a native of Rajasthan who had been working in Chennai for the past two years, was cycling home after work on Monday night when a portion of the building fell on him. He died on the spot. Police had initially said Monday’s rain might have weakened the structure. An inquiry is under way to establish the cause of the collapse.

While the residents allegedly asked the owners to demolish the building multiple times, nearly 10 migrant workers employed



at a sweet shop owned by the same family were accommodated in the building. They were evacuated after the collapse and shifted to a marriage hall belonging to the owners. G Janaki (38), a resident, said

issuing notices without ensuring compliance offered no protection to the public. “The corporation must follow up and ensure that dangerous buildings are demolished. If owners refuse, the corporation should demolish them,” she said. Another resident questioned why the debris remained at the site a day after the collapse. The collapse occurred barely two weeks after GCC laid down detailed procedures for identifying and demolishing buildings that pose danger to people. Under the guidelines, buildings found unsafe after an assessment by GCC, IIT-M or Anna University must be demolished by their owners. If an owner fails to comply, the corporation can undertake the demolition and recover the cost. Occupants refusing to vacate can be removed with police assistance.

IIT Bombay alumni seek fair probe into student’s suicide

Sahil Wakode's parents demanded a thorough examination of all evidence and action against those found responsible for their son's alleged suicide.

Mumbai(Agency).

The IIT Bombay Alumni Association (IITBAA) has demanded a fair and speedy investigation into the alleged suicide of student Sahil Wakode, and said there should be no “media trial”, speculation or “nasty conclusions” directed at any individual. Sahil’s parents have demanded the immediate arrest of IIT Bombay Director Professor Shirish Kedare and Professor Suryanarayana Doolla, who has been removed as the dean of Administrative Affairs following protests by students and political activists. A case on charges of abetment and caste discrimination has been registered against Doolla. IITBAA, in a statement on Tuesday, said the institute was going through an extremely difficult period, and its students, faculty members and staff deserve an environment that is equitable,

inclusive, safe, and supportive of their well-being. “We fully support a fair, transparent, and speedy investigation into this tragic event, and urge that all procedures be conducted with complete fairness and without prejudice. We strongly appeal against online speculation, media trials, or nasty conclusions directed at any individual,” it said. “We stand ready to collaborate with the institute to strengthen mental health resources, support campus well-being, and help rebuild trust across our entire community,” the statement added.

Sahil Wakode (22), a second-year B Tech student in the Department of Energy Science and Engineering, was found hanging in his hostel room on September 18 evening, hours after being caught allegedly using a mobile phone to

access ChatGPT during a mid-semester examination. His parents on Tuesday claimed that he had told them about the caste-based slurs he faced. IIT Bombay



alumnus and activist Sudheendra Kulkarni has urged the withdrawal of the SC/ST Act case against Doolla, claiming the law has been widely misused and

calling for a national debate on its reform. Higher education institutions, including IITs, must continually improve campus life to ease student stress, he said, adding that coaching and peer-support initiatives are needed for students from marginalised communities. Sahil Wakode’s parents, however, demanded a thorough examination of all evidence and action against those found responsible for their son’s alleged suicide. His mother, Sonali Wakode, claimed Sahil had told them that he was being tortured, abused, and humiliated based on his caste. “He specifically told us that Professor Suryanarayana Doolla would say, ‘I am from an upper caste and you are from a lower caste.’ According to what Sahil told us, this had been continuing for around three months,” she claimed.

NEWS BOX

Asian Games: Medal eludes Manu Bhaker as women disappoint in 10m air pistol



New Delhi. (Agency)

Manu Bhaker had three chances to stay alive in the women's 10m air pistol final. She survived each one. But when the moment came to push for a medal, the Olympic medallist could not find the extra shot she needed. Bhaker finished fifth in the final at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games on Wednesday, September 23, as India failed to defend the women's individual and team gold medals they had won in the event at the 2022 Asian Games.

Asian Games Live: September 23 Updates The 24-year-old, who qualified third for the final with a score of 579-20x, remained in the medal hunt deep into the elimination stages. She was in bronze-medal position when she began the sixth series with a stunning 10.8. Bhaker followed the 10.8 with a 9.6 and slipped out of the medal positions, finishing fifth with 181.1. She looked dejected as she walked away from the range, having come through several elimination scares but unable to make the final push for the podium. The result means Bhaker is still waiting for her first individual Asian Games medal. She had won bronze in the same event at the Paris Olympics, along with another bronze in the mixed team event, but the Asian Games podium has continued to elude her.

South Korea's Choo Gaeun won the gold with an Asian Games record of 246.3, while China's Shen Yiyao and Jiang Ranxin completed the podium.

10m AIR PISTOL DISAPPOINTS

For India, the disappointment had begun even before the final. The women's 10m air pistol team of Bhaker, Esha Singh and Suruchi Inder Singh missed out on a medal by the narrowest of margins. India and Vietnam finished level on 1719 points, but Vietnam had 46 inner-10s compared to India's 44 and took the bronze. India had to settle for fourth. It was a significant step down from Hangzhou 2022, where Palak Gulia and Esha Singh won individual gold and silver respectively, while the Indian women also captured team gold.

Ravindra misses; Milne comes in. Who else is in NZ squad to face IND for upcoming T20I series



KOZHICKODE. (Agency)

The Blackcaps have announced a 16-man squad for the upcoming five-match T20I series against India in New Zealand starting on October 22. A notable absence for the home team is Rachin Ravindra, who will miss the T20-leg of the series due to a shoulder injury and is expected to return for the following ODI series.

"We're gutted for Rachin. He's going to play a big role for us this summer, so it's important that he doesn't rush his rehab, but we're optimistic he'll be back for the ODIs," said New Zealand Head Coach Rob Walter. The inclusion of Adam Milne, who has not been part of the team for over a year, was a bit of a surprise. "We're very fortunate with the depth that we've got to call upon, so we'll look to use all 16 squad members throughout the series as we manage workloads. India is a quality team and a challenging opposition, so to take them on in our own conditions in front of Kiwi fans is really exciting. We've got a near full-strength squad that covers all bases, and I'm excited to see how we compete against the current T20 world champions," Walter said. "It's going to be awesome to welcome India to our shores and get summer underway," Walter said. "India is a quality team and a challenging opposition, so to take them on in our own conditions in front of Kiwi fans is really exciting. We hear most of the games are going to be sold-out and it should make for some incredible occasions," Walter said on the prospect of facing India. New Zealand squad: Mitchell Santner (C), Finn Allen, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Lockie Ferguson, Zak Foulkes, Matt Henry, Bevon Jacobs, Kyle Jamieson, Adam Milne, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Tim Seifert and

Asian Games: Rules hurt India again as eFootball medal hopes end in bizarre forfeit

India's Danial Patel and Chinmay Sahoo were handed a 0-0 forfeit win after Mongolia missed check-in for their final Group F eFootball match. The result left India short on goal difference, ending its medal bid without the chance to play.

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's eSports campaign at the Asian Games 2026 ended in frustrating fashion on Tuesday, with Danial Patel and Chinmay Sahoo exiting the eFootball competition without taking the field for their final Group F fixture. Mongolia's failure to meet

the stipulated check-in time resulted in a 0-0 forfeit win for India, but the outcome left them short on the goal difference needed to progress. According to a report by The Bridge, Mongolia's team leader arrived three minutes after the designated check-in deadline, after which the organisers awarded India the match as a forfeit. Patel and Sahoo had previously drawn 0-0 against Uzbekistan, making the final group game important for their chances of reaching the knockout stage.

Asian Games 2026, Day 4: UPDATES

India did collect the points, but the 0-0 scoreline did not improve its goal difference. Uzbekistan had earlier beaten Mongolia 2-0, winning the mobile and console matches 6-3 and 12-0, and that result gave them a sizeable advantage in the group standings. India finished level with Uzbekistan on four points, but the goal-difference equation worked against Patel and Sahoo. They were

also unable to qualify through the best second-placed route, with Thailand and Saudi Arabia taking those spots after finishing with goal differences of +3 and +2



respectively.

The early exit was a major disappointment for Patel in particular. He entered the Asian Games as the reigning Asian eFootball Mobile champion after winning the title at the FIFAe Continental Championship earlier this year, while a medal in Aichi-Nagoya would have given India its first

official Asian Games eSports medal.

A FORFEIT CHANGES INDIA'S FATE

The Indian team did not simply accept the result without raising an objection. Patel and Sahoo asked for the fixture to be played, but the organisers maintained that the forfeit was the prescribed outcome after Mongolia missed the check-in deadline. We protested and said that we want to play the games instead of a forfeit win, but they [officials] said a forfeit win is what the rules say," Sahoo told The Bridge.

India was also given the option of pursuing a formal review, but the team decided against taking that route because it involved a fee of 500 US dollars (around Rs 47,800).

The goal difference remained the central issue. Patel said India would have needed a substantially different forfeit score to remain in the qualification equation. "Unless they gave us a 3-0, 3-0 walkover with a +6 goal difference, we were not qualifying," he added.

Jay Meena assures India's first-ever Asian Games soft tennis medal

New Delhi. (Agency)

Jay Meena assured India of its first-ever Asian Games medal in soft tennis after advancing to the men's singles semi-finals at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Games. Meena defeated the Philippines' Sherwin Nuguit 4-3 in a thrilling quarter-final to book his place in the last four. The Indian player won the contest with a scoreline of 0-4, 4-2, 2-4, 5-3, 2-4, 7-5, overcoming a tough challenge from his Filipino opponent. With all semi-finalists guaranteed a medal in soft tennis, Meena's qualification assured India its maiden Asian Games medal in the sport.

Meena will now compete in the semi-finals as he aims to continue his historic campaign and secure a place in the gold medal match. Meanwhile, two-Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker advanced to the women's 10m air

pistol individual final at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games 2026, leading India's strong showing across shooting, rowing and canoe sprint events on Wednesday. Bhaker secured her place in the final after



a strong qualification performance, while fellow Indian shooters Suruchi Inder Singh and Esha Singh missed out on a spot in the medal round. In rowing, Balraj Panwar qualified for the men's single sculls final after finishing third in his heat with a

time of 6:52.84 seconds. He finished fourth overall across the two heats to book his place in Final A. The men's double sculls pair of Satnam Singh and Salman Khan also progressed to the final after finishing second in their heat with a time of 6:15.63 seconds. They finished fourth overall across the two heats.

India's Harshwardhan Shaktawat, Varinder Singh, L Naocha Singh Oinam and Arun Singh qualified for the men's kayak four 500m final after finishing third in Heat 1 of the canoe sprint event with a time of 1:29.447.

In canoe sprint, Megha Pradeep finished fifth in the women's canoe single 200m heats to qualify for the semi-finals. Parvathy Geetha and Phairembam Soniya Devi also advanced to the women's kayak double 500m event.

Asian Games: Dreamt of being a cricketer, Jay Meena makes soft tennis history

New York. (Agency)

Jay Meena had once imagined a different sporting life. As a young boy growing up in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh, Meena wanted to become a cricketer. Soft tennis was not part of the plan. In fact, when he first came across the sport at Pioneer Public School, he was merely curious enough to stop and watch. Somewhere between retrieving balls and watching players on the court, curiosity turned into interest. Interest turned into a game. And the game eventually became a career. On Wednesday, that unlikely journey reached its biggest milestone yet. Meena became the first Indian to win a medal in soft tennis at the Asian Games after storming into the men's singles semi-finals in the 2026 edition.

The 24-year-old secured the historic gold by



fighting through a tense quarter-final against the Philippines' Nuguit Sherwin. Meena had to recover from a difficult start, losing the opening game 0-4 before responding with a 4-2 win in the second. He slipped again in the next game, but refused to let the match drift away. Two consecutive wins put him 3-2 ahead, leaving him with an opportunity to close out the contest. Nuguit, however, forced the match further, winning the sixth game 4-2. That took the quarter-final into a seven-point tie-breaker, where Meena found himself under pressure again. He trailed 3-5 and was staring at another agonising exit. Instead, he produced the decisive burst.

Meena won four points in a row to complete the comeback and book his place in the semi-finals - and, with it, India's first-ever Asian Games medal in soft tennis.

STEADY RISE FOR JAY

It was another step forward for a player who had already been steadily rewriting the record books.

CSK break silence amid allegations of match-fixing and playing XI leaks

Chennai Super Kings have broken silence after a report claimed an ex-player of the franchise was involved in corruption and playing XI leaks during the IPL 2025

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have addressed the reports doing the rounds linking the franchise to anti-corruption activity inside the team. The five-time Indian Premier League (IPL) champions have been mentioned in an expose by the Tehelka website, which alleged that an ex-CSK player was providing classified information to bookmakers.

As per Cricbuzz, the CSK board is set to meet in the next couple of days, where a

discussion will take place on the match-fixing expose. The franchise said it has zero tolerance for corruption and will take appropriate measures to get to the bottom



of the case. CSK's response comes after a sting operation by Tehelka created a stir in Indian cricket circles. In the report, a former first-class player alleged that an ex-CSK player was leaking playing XI information to him before matches, which he sold to London-based

bookmakers. Rachit Bhatia, an ex-Ranji player, claimed that he sold the playing XI information to bookmakers for Rs 60 lakh per game during the IPL 2025 season. He told the undercover reporter that he made Rs 3 crore selling the classified information.

Bhatia claimed he could have gotten information on the playing XI during IPL 2026 as well, however, his source was not picked by CSK in the auction. He also claimed he charged Rs 1 crore to help fix matches in the IPL, with a 90% guarantee.

CSK have taken the allegations seriously and are set to discuss the matter in their next Annual General Meeting (AGM). "We have our Annual General Meeting (AGM) coming up. Our board will meet ahead of the AGM. We will discuss the matter," a CSK official was quoted as saying by Cricbuzz.

Harmanpreet Kaur gets second chance to quit as India captain on a high

New Delhi. (Agency)

After leading India to a second successive women's cricket gold medal at the Asian Games, Harmanpreet Kaur has once again ended a major tournament with a trophy in her hands. India beat Sri Lanka by 147 runs in the final in Nagoya on Tuesday, with Smriti Mandhana's 79 helping set up a commanding victory. For Harmanpreet, it was another landmark moment in a captaincy career that has already delivered India's maiden senior ICC title. It has also brought her to another natural point to consider handing over the baton to Mandhana. Last year, she had what looked like the perfect opportunity. India won the Women's ODI World Cup for the first time, finally ending their wait for a senior ICC trophy. Harmanpreet had led the team through years of near misses, and the

triumph offered a fitting way to bring her captaincy stint to a close.

India subsequently suffered an early exit from the Women's T20 World Cup, again raising questions over whether it was time for Harmanpreet to step down. But she remained in charge. Now, after another gold medal, she has another opportunity to leave the role on a high. India have two years before the Los Angeles Olympics and the 2028 T20 World Cup. That gives the team enough time to prepare for a change in leadership and develop the players who could shape its next era.

HARMANPREET'S LEGACY IS ALREADY SECURE

Any discussion about succession should begin with what Harmanpreet has already accomplished. She has been one of the defining figures of Indian women's cricket, from her iconic 171 against Australia in the

2017 World Cup semi-final to leading India to World Cup glory on home soil. The Asian Games gold adds another major



achievement to that record. If she decides to step down now, she would not be leaving because her contribution has diminished.

She would be choosing the timing of the next phase. Diana Edulji believes India should stop delaying that transition. "We are holding back Smriti Mandhana for a long time.

By the time the next World Cup comes along, Harman will be nearing 40, so let's give a good run to Smriti and look at two youngsters as vice-captains. My humble request to Harman would be to let people ask why and not why not," Edulji told Mid-Day.

The former India captain's argument is also about succession beyond Mandhana. India's next captain should have time to establish herself, while the team should simultaneously identify players who can eventually take on leadership responsibilities.

Priyanka Chopra

Wishes Kareena Kapoor On Her 46th Birthday, Says 'There Will Never Be Anyone Like You'

Global icon Priyanka Chopra Jonas extended birthday wishes to fellow Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan on her 46th birthday. The actress shared a picture of the actress and described her as one of a kind.

Taking to her social media account, Priyanka shared a picture of Kareena in a leheriya saree and wrote, "Happy Birthday @kareenakapoor Khan There will never be anyone like you." The picture appears to be from Kareena's recent promotional appearance for her film Daayra. Kareena was seen in a colourful, rainbow-toned leheriya saree.

Kareena's look also carried a nostalgic connection to her sister Karisma Kapoor.

The actress later shared a collage comparing her leheriya saree with Karisma's similar look from the 2001 film Zubeidaa. Karisma had worn the iconic drape in the song "Dheeme Dheeme Gao".

For the uninitiated, Kareena and Priyanka were once touted as rivals. During an appearance on Koffee with Karan in the show's initial seasons, Kareena had taken a dig at Priyanka's accent, asking, "Where did she get that accent from?"

Priyanka, in another episode, later responded with equal wit, saying, "The same place her boyfriend gets it from," referring to Kareena's then-boyfriend Saif Ali Khan, who had studied in the UK.

Over the years, both actresses have maintained that there is no bad blood between them. Talking about Priyanka Chopra and Kareena Kapoor's collaboration on movies, the two have shared screen space in Abbas-Mustan's 2004 thriller Aitraaz, which also starred Akshay Kumar. Priyanka had earned great response and acclaim for her negative role as Sonia Roy. Kareena played Priya Malhotra, Raj aka Akshay Kumar's supportiv



Ayushmann Khurrana Explains Why Yeh Prem Mol Liya Is 'Not India, But Bharat's Film'



Actor Ayushmann Khurrana has called Sooraj R. Barjatya's upcoming musical family entertainer Yeh Prem Mol Liya as a movie for Bharat and not India, drawing parallels to the culture and traditional USP of all Barjatya movies.

At the music launch of the movie on Sunday, composer Himesh Reshammiya took over the stage for a live performance. The film's leads, Ayushmann Khurrana and Sharvari, who also added charm to the title track launch, heaped praise on Reshammiya's musical brilliance, revealing how they feel connected to his music.

"In every show, this age has become suddenly, 'woh budha hogaya hai'. What do you want to troll? Uske wajan par, uske looks par, uske khaandaan par, kisi ke smile par, kisi ke flop par, kisi ke maa banne par, aap apni upbringing dikha rahe ho."

Ayushmann Khurrana said, "Kamaal ki baat ye hain ki Himesh ji emotion samajhte hain aur mass ko samajhte hain. Hindustan ki janta ko jitna acha ye samajhte hain shayad hi koi aur composer samajhta hoga aaj ke daur mein. Jab pehli baar main narration sunne gaya tha Sooraj sir se aur unhone narration sunayi, tab maine bola ki title "Yeh Prem Mol Liya" kaise hai, aur infact Twitter par bhi sab jagah title ye kaise hai? Tab sir ne ye title track play kiya and I was convinced ke isse behtar title nahi ho sakta. Ye title itna unique hai, ye India ki nahi ye Bharat ki film hain. Aur ye Bharat tak isliye pahochegi kyu ki isme collaboration hain between Sooraj Barjatya and Himesh Reshammiya." (The amazing thing is that Himesh ji understands emotions and he understands the masses. He understands the people of India as well as perhaps no other composer does in today's time. When I first went to Sooraj sir to hear the narration and he narrated the story to me, I said, "How is the title Yeh Prem Mol Liya?" In fact, on Twitter and everywhere, people were also asking, "How is this title?" Then sir played the title track, and I was convinced that there could not be a better title. The title is so unique. This is not just a film for India, it is a film for Bharat. And it will reach Bharat because of the collaboration between Sooraj Barjatya and Himesh Reshammiya) Sharvari said, "Mere liye bahot hi zyada special experience tha, aur kaun nahi jaanta Himesh sir ki melodies! Hum ne bachpan se suni hain aaj bhi sunte aa rahe hain and it is such an honour.

Shah Rukh Khan Visits Lalbaugcha Raja With Gauri Khan And Suhana, Seeks Bappa's Blessings



Shah Rukh Khan was spotted visiting Mumbai's iconic Lalbaugcha Raja during the ongoing Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations. The superstar arrived at the pandal with his wife Gauri Khan and their daughter Suhana Khan, drawing plenty of attention from fans gathered at the venue. The family was accompanied by SRK's manager Pooja Dadlani and a team of security personnel. As soon as the actor arrived, crowds around the pandal were seen trying to catch a glimpse of him and capture the moment on their phones.

Shah Rukh Khan Seeks Bappa's Blessings

Inside the pandal, Shah Rukh was seen offering prayers to Lord Ganesha. The actor bowed before Bappa and sought blessings, while Gauri and Suhana were also seen with folded hands as they joined in the prayers.

The video that has gone viral on social media shows them offering prayers with folded hands during the aarti.

Shah Rukh Khan, Gauri And Suhana's Festive Looks

For the occasion, Shah Rukh opted for a navy-blue kurta-pyjama and sported a tilak on his forehead. Gauri kept her festive look elegant in a yellow ethnic suit, while Suhana chose a dark green traditional outfit.

The family's appearance at Lalbaugcha Raja quickly became a talking point among fans, with videos and glimpses from their visit making the rounds on social media.

Fans Gather To Catch A Glimpse Of SRK

Given Shah Rukh's massive fan following, his arrival naturally created excitement around the pandal. People gathered outside hoping to see the superstar, while several fans were spotted clicking pictures and recording videos as he made his way inside. Shah Rukh Khan's visit to Lalbaugcha Raja is not his first. In September 2023, the actor visited the iconic Mumbai pandal with his younger son AbRam and manager Pooja Dadlani to seek Bappa's blessings.

Tamannaah Bhatia

Says The Vvaan's Chhathi Maiya Song Left Her Emotional: 'I Started Welling Up'

Tamannaah Bhatia has opened up about filming the Chhathi Maiya song for her upcoming film The Vvaan, saying the sequence gave her a deeper understanding of Chhath Puja and the cultural meaning attached to the festival. Speaking at a promotional event for the film in Delhi, Tamannaah said the makers were particularly conscious about representing the festival with dignity and staying respectful to its traditions. The actor also recalled how shooting the sequence became unexpectedly emotional for her.

Tamannaah Says Chhath Puja Was Presented With 'Great Respect'

Speaking about Chhathi Maiya, Tamannaah credited director Deepak Kumar Misra and writer-producer Arunabh Kumar for the care they brought to the sequence. "For the first time in Hindi cinema, Chhath Puja has been presented like this. Genuinely, Deepak and Arunabh sir, they understand this so well, and they have so much respect, and they so strongly feel about it that while we were shooting, they made sure that everything was taken care of and it was shot beautifully and shot with great respect," she said.

For Tamannaah, one of the most important elements of the festival is the idea of gratitude. "Chhath Puja stands for gratitude; it stands for being grateful for everything that we have, the ups and downs in life, all of it together,

and I feel like they have encapsulated that in a song which we have got a lot of love for and feel extremely grateful," she said.

The actor also thanked the makers for allowing her to be part of the song, adding, "So, thank you for making me a part of this."

Arunabh Kumar Says The Vvaan Celebrates Bihar And Purvanchal

TVF founder Arunabh Kumar, who has written and



produced The Vvaan, said the film draws heavily from the culture of Bihar and the Purvanchal region. "The Vvaan is real, authentic, and honest to our culture, yet as cinematic and spectacular as it can get on the big screen. It is inspired by the rootedness of TVF. We want to give a tribute to our history, mythology, and culture through this film," he said. The film's Chhath Puja sequence appears to be one of the ways the makers have tried to bring that cultural setting to the screen.

NEWS BOX

Israel denounces 'grotesque absurdity' of Macron UN remarks on West Bank

JERUSALEM.(Agency)

Israel shot back angrily Tuesday at French President Emmanuel Macron who criticised Israeli actions in the West Bank by saying Hamas was not active in the territory that is home to the Palestinian Authority. "The grotesque absurdity of Emmanuel Macron's statement is staggering," said a statement by the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is expected to deliver a defiant address to the world body on Thursday. "Hamas terrorists carry out attacks against Jews almost every day. They have murdered countless Israeli civilians in Judea and Samaria," it said, using the Biblical name for the West Bank, which Israel seized in 1967. Netanyahu's office pointed to the shooting death on Sunday on the eve of Judaism's holiest day of Yom Kippur of an Israeli settler in the West Bank. Israel said that the victim, father of six Netanel Shukrun, also had French citizenship. The Israeli military said it arrested the Palestinian gunman at a hospital and troops later raided his village. A minister in Netanyahu's government called for his execution under a new law. Extremist Israeli settlers frequently attack and steal from West Bank Palestinians. The United Nations said there were about six settler-related violent incidents against Palestinians or their property daily through mid-2026 in the territory. Macron in his speech to the United Nations deplored the humanitarian situation in Gaza -- from which Hamas led the October 7, 2023 attack, the deadliest ever against Israel -- as well as actions by Israel in the West Bank. "What is our credibility worth if we remain inactive on Gaza? Some claim that peace has been achieved, but this has not opened up humanitarian deliveries. It is a spectacle that shames us all," Macron said. "Look at what is happening in West Bank, where there are violations every day. In the name of what? Hamas has never struck in the West Bank."

This year, with shifting political winds, Canada gets more of the spotlight on the UN's stage

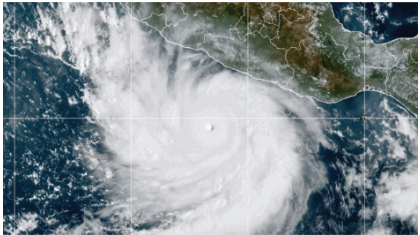
UNITED NATIONS.(Agency)

For years, Canada was a trouper in the drama of international affairs. An adept and experienced contributor, it didn't often draw the spotlight when world leaders gathered at the U.N. each September. This year, the nation of 41 million has a new posture on the planet's biggest diplomatic stage. Since a watershed speech to the World Economic Forum in January, Prime Minister Mark Carney has become a leading voice of what he and some others call "middle powers." He has urged them to band together to update and preserve the international order, and protect their own interests, in an era of flexes by the United States and other global giants. And he has shown himself willing to walk the walk when faced with U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff's insults and cavalier talk of annexation. Carney rejected what he said were unacceptable U.S. trade demands and walked away from talks last month. Bluntly hedging his country's decades-long bet on U.S. trade and partnership, he has been courting other prospects — Canada might even become the European Union's first associate member. "Partners are working with Canada because Canada's predictable, reliable and principled in a world that's anything but," Carney told Canadian media at a news conference at the U.N. Tuesday as the General Assembly's big meeting got into full swing. It's the international community's premier gathering of the year. And to Carney, it's an opportunity to demonstrate Canada's vision of "values-based realism" that's "both principled and pragmatic" — part commitment to such values as freedom, human rights and sustainability.

Hurricane Polo churns off Mexico's Pacific coast as 'one of the strongest storms ever'

MEXICO CITY.(Agency)

Hurricane Polo grew into one of the most powerful Pacific cyclones in decades on Tuesday, and it was expected to skirt Mexico's southwestern coast as a Category 5 hurricane. Polo was an "extremely



dangerous" storm with maximum sustained winds of 175 mph (280 kph), the Miami-based National Hurricane Center said in an update from an NOAA Hurricane Hunter aircraft that was sent into the cyclone. It was the third Category 5 hurricane of the Pacific season, following Genevieve and Lowell earlier this year. Category 5 is the

highest level on the Saffir-Simpson scale, reflecting that a storm has maximum sustained winds exceeding 157 mph (253 kph). Polo was centered 215 miles (345 kilometers) south of Zihuatanejo, Mexico, and nearly stationary over the Pacific Ocean on Tuesday evening. The hurricane center update said Polo was expected to travel in a generally west-northwestward direction over the next several days.

"One of the strongest storms ever" in the Pacific. The hurricane set residents of Mexico's Pacific coast on edge once again after being walloped by powerful cyclones a number of times in recent years. Beaches emptied out and dark clouds swirled above choppy seas, while Mexican authorities temporarily suspended classes in a number of areas on Tuesday. National Hurricane Center data shows that Polo has reached speeds comparable to only a few hurricanes to form in the region in recent decades, primarily Hurricane Patricia, which reached 215 mph (346 kph) in 2015.

Nolan Wells' family pushes back after grand jury declines to recommend charges in his death

Wells' mother, Christine Wonsley, said at a news conference Tuesday that she didn't understand how the grand jury concluded that her son had likely drowned given the autopsy findings.

JACKSON, Miss.(Agency)

A grand jury has declined to recommend charges in the death of Nolan Wells, a Black college student who was found dead two days after a July 4 boat trip and party on an island off the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The district attorney announced the grand jury's findings late Monday after months of intense speculation about how

the 18-year-old went missing from the party and why Wells' friends left the island without him. Wells' family immediately pushed back on the findings that said there was no evidence of criminal conduct, saying they still didn't have answers about what happened. Scrutiny of the investigation started almost immediately, as a photo of Wells surrounded by white friends on a boat from the day he went missing fueled online speculation that racial dynamics played a role in his death. People launched accusations and rumors as they grappled with Mississippi's history of racial tension and what it means to be a Black person in a majority-white setting. The day had started with the group of friends piling into boats and heading to the popular, uninhabited Horn Island for a gathering of a few hundred people. It's still

unclear what happened after several of the friends left around 3 p.m. because their boat was taking on water. They said Wells



decided to stay behind. Wells' family rejects report's findings. The grand jury said in a redacted report posted to the district attorney's office Facebook page that Wells' death was "consistent with drowning." The grand

jury noted the state's autopsy report, which hasn't been made public, and an independent one commissioned by Wells' family both found bruising on the back of his head but couldn't determine the cause of death. Wells' mother, Christine Wonsley, said at a news conference Tuesday that she didn't understand how the grand jury concluded that her son had likely drowned given the autopsy findings. "How can a jury come to the conclusion of drowning, despite knowing that there was trauma to his body, and despite hearing many inconsistencies?" she said. Lawyers for Wells' family, including civil rights attorney Ben Crump, said the grand jury's report yielded more questions than answers. They accused District Attorney Angel Myers McIlrath of ending the investigation despite not determining what caused blunt-force trauma to Wells' body.

US sanctions tighten grip on Iran's airlines as flights to Iraq, Oman cancelled

TEHRAN.(Agency)

Ever tighter US sanctions intended to cripple Iranian aviation come into force on Wednesday, after Washington vowed to "shut down" Tehran's carriers and punish anyone doing business with them. In their first acknowledgement of disruption, Iranian media reported late Tuesday that flights to the Iraqi and Omani capitals would be cancelled the following day, but other routes would be unaffected. The new measures, announced by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Monday, follow earlier aviation sanctions as well as his threat of an "economic D-Day" meant to force the Islamic republic into submission, after military means of ending the Middle East war stall. It remained unclear what their full impact would be, as the Iranian

aviation sector has already been targeted for years by various



sanctions. The Tasnim news agency cited a civil aviation spokesman as saying that "Baghdad and Muscat airports will no longer accept Iranian flights" starting Wednesday. "Other international flights, including Istanbul, will operate as scheduled and as usual, and at present there are no problems with these flights,"

Tasnim reported. According to Tasnim, Iran's aviation authorities are in talks to reroute Baghdad flights to Najaf, a major destination for Iranian pilgrims. Earlier in the day, flag carrier Iran Air said it had "not received any notification or official instruction from the civil aviation authorities of Turkey, the Republic of Azerbaijan, or Iraq." On Monday, however, Georgia barred Iranian carriers, while the airline Mahan, a private Iranian operator, said it suspended service to Turkey at the request of its government. The Iraqi government has not publicly announced plans to enforce a ban, but several sources, including a senior government official, told AFP that Baghdad would comply with the US measures. Iraq is a top destination for Iranian airlines, mainly transporting pilgrims between holy sites.

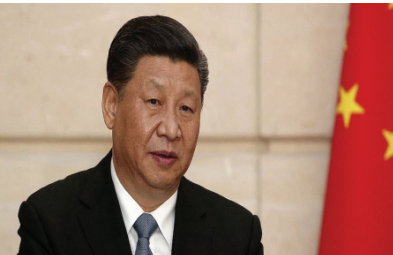
China's Xi kicks off state visit to Washington on Wednesday with a rare planeside welcome from Trump

The White House has not released many details about Wednesday's greeting, but Trump is expected to participate in an arrival ceremony at the base with Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan.

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

When Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives in Washington on Wednesday, he's expected to get a rare greeting from President Donald Trump, who will be on the tarmac to welcome his counterpart's plane instead of waiting for him to drive up to the White House. Trump's decision to greet Xi at Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington rather than receiving him at the executive residence shows how far the U.S. president is going to

honor China's leader as he makes his first state visit in more than a decade. The White House has not released many details about Wednesday's



greeting, but Trump is expected to participate in an arrival ceremony at the base with Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan. The salutation will kick off a three-day visit that's expected to be saturated with pomp, even by White House standards. The state visit, complete with a formal state dinner at the White House on Thursday, is supposed to reciprocate for the ceremonial grandeur that marked

Trump's May visit to China. But it's also a showy patina at a time when tensions between the two geopolitical rivals are high over trade, artificial intelligence, Trump's war with Iran and China's designs on Taiwan. Beyond using the visit to try to keep "strategic stability" between the two countries, Trump seems to be pulling out all the diplomatic stops to show off for Xi. He has lavished praise on him as a "great leader" and described a warm relationship with the man he has called a friend. That's all while he's given Xi a pass on many issues.

Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, criticized the "lavish welcome." He said during a speech on the Senate floor on Tuesday that Trump should not have invited the Chinese leader "based on all of the troubling issues we have with President Xi and the Chinese Communist Party."

ICC to issue war crimes verdict against Central Africa rebel leader

THE HAGUE.(Agency)

The International Criminal Court hands down its verdict on Wednesday against a former Central African Republic rebel commander accused of torture and imprisonment as head of a feared prison unit. Mahamat Said Abdel Kani, 56, faces seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for atrocities allegedly carried out as the CAR spiralled into civil war in 2013. Said was a top commander of the mainly Muslim Seleka rebel group that ousted president Francois Bozize and plunged one of the world's poorest countries into a bloody sectarian conflict. He ran the Central Office for the Repression of Banditry (OCRB) detention centre in the capital Bangui where prosecutors allege horrific acts of torture and deprivation were inflicted on prisoners. Some were "whipped with horsehide whips or sticks with metal wires", "burned, or had their ears pulled with pliers and partially ripped off," ICC judges said when confirming the charges against Said.

A frequently used torture method was "arbatachar", in which prisoners' hands, elbows, and feet were tied tightly together behind their backs.

Conditions in the prison were dire, with small and overcrowded cells that were hot and dark with no air holes or windows, the ICC said. Prisoners were denied food or water and some drank their own urine out of thirst, according to the court. There was a cell dubbed "the hole" directly under Said's office, where people were held in "dreadful conditions", said the court.

"This cell was dark and so small that detainees were prevented from lying down, with the floor covered with waste, faeces and urine due to the absence of access to hygienic facilities," the ICC said.

"Some detainees were left bleeding with their hands tied," added the court. Said, sometimes known by his subordinates as "Colonel", oversaw this maltreatment and personally participated in the beating of at least one prisoner, according to the ICC. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges, allegedly carried out between April and August 2013. Then chief prosecutor Karim Khan told judges it was "as straightforward a case as is likely to come before this court". He encouraged it, he facilitated it, but he also took part in the beatings and mistreatment," Khan alleged in hearings in 2021. Anti-Balakas

The Seleka overthrow of Bozize sparked a catastrophic civil war in the country of some five million people, with thousands of civilians losing their lives and war crimes alleged on both sides. Bozize set up militias dominated by Christians and animists, known as "anti-Balakas", to regain power.

'You should not be here,' Trump tells CNN at UN as standoff with media outlets persists

NEW YORK.(Agency)

On a day of high-stakes diplomacy on the global stage, President Donald Trump began his United Nations visit by telling a prominent U.S. journalist, "You should not be here." "It's an honor to be here," Trump said as he entered U.N. doors Tuesday ahead of his speech to the General Assembly and faced Kaitlan Collins of CNN, a frequent target of his ire. "I'm surprised that CNN is here covering me. You should not be here covering me. You said you weren't going to cover me." As Collins noted later on air, CNN said nothing of the kind. The administration had banned CNN from White House grounds days earlier — along with MS NOW and Politico — and removed the network from pool duty. But CNN had been admitted into the U.N. as regularly credentialed media. In any case, the tense moment was a stark reminder of how dramatically the bitter conflict between Trump and news outlets whose coverage he objects to as "fake news" has escalated in just a few days. The current ban was the subject of a joint lawsuit filed

Monday by the three outlets, asking a judge to find the administration's move unconstitutional. The White House had until Tuesday to respond, and a hearing is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon. Trump says he has a right to "clean out fake news."



Later Tuesday, Trump doubled down on his remarks and said negative coverage was dangerous for the country. Asked whether he would allow the outlets back in if the court rules against the White House, he said, "Well, it probably will, because this is a judge who's not a particularly fair judge." He was referring to U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly, whom he

appointed in 2017 and who ordered a CNN journalist's access restored in a similar case in 2018. "So you never know," Trump added. "I think we have a right to clean out fake news." Trump's comments echoed others he's made since announcing the ban Friday. He has referred to "purposely negative stories," but cited no specific stories — only generally "fake news" — as justification for the ban. The ban and lawsuit are part of a long-running conflict between the president — especially in his second term — and media outlets he finds unfavorable. Trump has responded in the courtroom, or with regulatory action. He's also lashed out at individual reporters in person or over social media, sometimes in strikingly personal terms — as he has with CNN's Collins, most recently in a speech at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

On air, after her exchange with Trump on Tuesday, Collins said: "We never said we were not going to cover the president. We will do our best to cover him each and every day."