



Use tech to fix civic challenges faced by city: L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu to NSUT

New Delhi (Agency)

Delhi L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Tuesday called on Netaji Subhas University of Technology (NSUT) to develop technological solutions for civic challenges such as sanitation, traffic management, road conditions and flooding. He also exhorted the institution to convert research into actionable outcomes.

Chairing the sixth court meeting of NSUT at the Lok Niwas, Sandhu stressed, "The technical university should focus on research that addresses real-world challenges faced by the city." He directed the university to coordinate with expert agencies and facilitate the MCD, NDMC, Delhi Police, Health Department, PWD and Transport Department with technological solutions tailored to their specific requirements.

The L-G also highlighted the need to make AI education future-ready through global collaborations, with a focus on transformative applications, particularly AI-enabled healthcare in government hospitals.

High Court Setback For Arvind Kejriwal In PM Modi Degree Case

Gandhinagar. (Agency)

The Gujarat High Court division bench has dismissed the appeal filed by Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal, upholding the Rs 25,000 fine imposed on him in the Prime Minister Narendra Modi degree disclosure case.

The two-judge bench delivered the verdict after having previously reserved its judgment. The court found no merit in Kejriwal's challenge and refused to interfere with the earlier ruling.

The controversy originated when the Central Information Commission



directed Gujarat University to provide details of PM Narendra Modi's degree. In response, Gujarat University approached the high court to challenge the information commission's order, naming Arvind Kejriwal as a party in the legal proceedings.

A single-judge bench of the high court subsequently set aside the Central Information Commission's order and imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on Kejriwal. Following this, Kejriwal filed a review petition seeking relief from the single judge, but the petition was dismissed.

Seeking further remedy, Kejriwal moved the division bench of the high court to set aside the single judge's order. The division bench heard the matter in detail before reserving its final verdict, which has now been delivered.

INDIA Meet On 'Op Gyanesh Kumar', Sources Reject Attacks On Poll Panel

New Delhi (Agency)

A key meeting of the Opposition INDIA bloc got underway in the Capital on Wednesday to discuss its strategy for cornering Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and the Centre after the recent row over the functioning of the poll panel. The bloc is likely to firm up its action plan for a wider agitation against Kumar and the BJP over the SIR issue.

Government and poll panel sources have, however, rejected the Opposition's criticism and defended the SIR exercise and the CEC.

Leaders and representatives of over 20 political parties are attending the meeting at the Constitution Club.

While Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge will represent the Congress, the Samajwadi Party has nominated two MPs - Harendra Malik and Maulana

Mohibbullah Nadvi - for the meeting. This came after speculation over SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's absence from the meeting. The Congress and SP later clarified that Yadav is busy with the UP Rajya Sabha elections and will send his nominees instead.

Other leaders expected at the meeting include Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee from the TMC, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, Supriya Sule of NCP (SP), CPM general secretary MA Baby, CPI chief D. Raja, CPI (ML) leader Dipankar Bhattacharya, and Independent MP Kapil Sibal, among others.

The meet will also draw up a strategy to launch a nationwide agitation. Protests and public rallies against the Chief Election Commissioner will be held across the country, while an impeachment motion will be moved in Parliament.

The meeting is taking place a day after the Congress Working Committee demanded Gyanesh Kumar's removal, calling him a "puppet" of the BJP.

Speaking at the CWC meeting, Kharge accused the Modi government of systematically and conspiratorially hollowing out democratic foundations over the past 12 years. "The Modi government has systematically and

The meeting is taking place a day after the Congress Working Committee demanded Gyanesh Kumar's removal, calling him a "puppet" of the BJP.

conspiratorially hollowed out the strong democratic foundation that our forefathers built through their sacrifices and dedication over the last 12 years," he said.

"Names are being removed from voter lists through calculated conspiracies, and the Chief Election Commissioner has become a puppet of the Modi government. This runs counter to the ethos and spirit of Indian democracy, which mandates that every eligible citizen's vote be secure and every vote be counted impartially," he added.



Kharge said that with elections in five states in 2027, it is essential to ensure that no voter's right is violated. The Congress President said the party must ensure that every person's vote is secure and elections are fair, so that the common people's trust in India's election process remains intact.

Kharge put forth five major demands at the CWC, noting that all data on changes in electoral rolls be made public, all voters whose names have been deleted should get a chance to appeal, and all political parties should be given electoral rolls in a simple format in time. He also demanded that an independent, time-bound probe be conducted where serious anomalies are found and that the poll process be made transparent so no one feels that

Alleged Illegal Gambling Hub Raises Law-and-Order Questions

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Nandurbar, Maharashtra: Alleged Illegal Gambling Hub Raises Serious Law-and-Order Questions Serious allegations have emerged regarding a large-scale illegal gambling operation allegedly functioning near Khikhada village, under Navapur Police Station in Nandurbar district, close to the Gujarat-Maharashtra border. According to local sources, the alleged gambling network attracts players and book-makers from Gujarat, Nashik, Madhya Pradesh and surrounding areas, with claims that large sums of money are wagered on a daily basis. Sources have alleged that the operation is being managed by individuals identified as Pappu, Rais Sheikh and Suraj



Jaiswal. There are also allegations of links with organized crime and claims that protection money is allegedly being paid to allow the operation to continue. These claims have not been independently verified. The allegations also include claims of illegal liquor, drugs and other unlawful activities being made available around the gambling premises, raising concerns over public safety and the possibility of wider criminal networks operating in the area. Questions have also been raised over the response of the Navapur Police, Local Crime Branch and senior district officials. According to

the report, information about the alleged operation was communicated to local authorities, but significant enforcement action has not been observed. The allegations have prompted demands for an impartial investigation into the alleged gambling network, its financial operations and any possible links with organized crime or public officials. The concerned police and administrative authorities have not, based on the information provided for this report, officially confirmed these allegations. Claims regarding D-Company links, protection payments or police involvement should therefore be independently investigated before being treated as established facts.

Sonia Gandhi Snaps At Digvijaya Singh's Nitish Kumar Mention At Congress Meet

Digvijaya Singh remarked that the INDIA alliance should not have let Nitish Kumar leave in 2024. But Sonia Gandhi asserted that Nitish Kumar was bound to leave anyway.

New Delhi (Agency).

As the Congress Working Committee met on Tuesday to discuss the party's strategy to corner Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the BJP, a former ally's mention by one of the members triggered a sharp retort from the party's matriarch Sonia Gandhi.

Sources told that during the discussions at the CWC meeting, senior leader Digvijaya Singh remarked that the INDIA alliance should not have let JD(U) chief and former Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar leave in 2024.

"The political situation would have been different," Singh told the meeting, according to sources present at the meeting. But Singh's assertion regarding Kumar was promptly shot down by Sonia Gandhi, who, according to sources, said Nitish Kumar was

bound to leave anyway. "He did not wish to remain in the INDIA alliance. It was for the best that he left when he did. That was where



he was headed; he had been actively seeking ways to exit the INDIA bloc," Sonia Gandhi told the meeting. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge concurred with Sonia Gandhi's views

and added: "While he had not intended to bring this up, he would mention that Nitish Kumar had indeed been looking for a way out of the INDIA bloc. His bid to become the convener of the INDIA bloc was merely a charade, given that he had previously told Kharge he wanted to remain active in state politics while supporting the INDIA bloc at the national level." Then Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar officially quit the INDIA opposition bloc on January 28, 2024, when he resigned as Chief Minister of the Mahagathbandhan government and returned to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Kumar, who was seen as a primary architect in uniting opposition parties to form the INDIA bloc, reportedly grew frustrated by delays in finalising seat-sharing agreements and the failure to name him the coalition's convener early on.

Bhagat Singh To Punjab's Water: AAP Widens Its Political Campaign

The clearest example came in Ludhiana, where the AAP government organised 'Jashan-e-Inqilab' at Punjab Agricultural University to mark Bhagat Singh's birth anniversary.

Punjab (Agency).

The Aam Aadmi Party's politics in Punjab is increasingly taking the shape of a full-fledged campaign, with the party moving beyond governance claims to a sharper mobilisation around Punjab identity, youth, nationalism and the legacy of Bhagat Singh.

The clearest example came in Ludhiana, where the AAP government organised 'Jashan-e-Inqilab' at Punjab Agricultural University to mark Bhagat Singh's birth anniversary. The event combined a large youth gathering with music, theatre and cultural performances, while Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann used the occasion to make an extended political pitch around his government's record.

The Punjab Chief Minister linked Bhagat Singh's legacy with his government's claims on education, healthcare, jobs, electricity,

irrigation, women's welfare and protection of Punjab's water. He also contrasted his government with previous regimes, accusing them of ignoring the ideals and sacrifices of the martyrs.

The naming of the Mohali airport after



Bhagat Singh, the 30-foot statue at Nishan-e-Inqilab Plaza and the ₹52-crore heritage complex at Khatkar Kalan were presented as evidence of the government's commitment.

Truck hits pedestrian, 27-year-old dies on way to PGI Rohtak

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 27-year-old labourer died after a truck hit him while he was walking near Basai Chowk Saturday morning. The truck driver fled after leaving the vehicle at the accident spot, police said. According to the complaint filed by the deceased's elder brother Ram Jeevan, the victim, Arun, was unmarried and lived alone in a rented accommodation in Basai village, where he worked as a labourer. Police stated that Arun was walking from Bhawani Enclave side towards Basai Enclave, underneath the Basai flyover, around 6.30 am on Sept 26 when a speeding truck coming from the opposite direction hit him. He suffered serious injuries in the crash. An emergency response vehicle alerted cops at Sector 9A police station about the accident. ASI Sajjan Kumar reached Basai Chowk and found truck number RJ11GA8267 at the spot. The vehicle was taken to the police station and kept in police custody. Arun was taken by ambulance to Civil Hospital, Sector 10, Gurgaon. Doctors referred him to PGIMS Rohtak for further treatment. He died from his injuries while being taken to PGIMS Rohtak. Police later received a brought-dead report from PGIMS Rohtak and reached the hospital. In his complaint, Ram Jeevan, brother of the deceased, alleged that the driver of truck RJ11GA8267 was driving at high speed and in a negligent manner when he hit Arun. Based on the complaint, a case was registered at Sector 9A police station under sections 281 (rash driving) and 106 (causing death due to negligence) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita on Sept 27.

Primary teacher shortage hits schools, Gurgaon has 656 posts vacant

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Uneven distribution of primary teachers across Haryana's govt schools has left hundreds of posts vacant in some districts while others have teachers in excess of their sanctioned requirement. A teachers' association has urged the govt to bring primary teacher (PRT) and junior basic teacher (JBT) posts under a state cadre and introduce a transparent inter-district transfer system to address the imbalance. According to figures cited by the association, Palwal has the highest number of vacant primary teacher posts at 1,017, followed by Yamunanagar with 827, Gurgaon with 656, Faridabad with 579, Ambala with 550 and Sirsa with 474 vacancies. At the same time, some districts have more teachers than required. Mahendragarh has 250 surplus teachers, followed by Rewari with 225 and Charkhi Dadri with 149. Association representative Ashok Jain said the existing district-cadre system restricts teachers to their respective districts, making it difficult to deploy surplus staff in districts facing vacancies. "The govt needs to undertake inter-district adjustment based on the actual requirement of teachers and vacant posts rather than keeping deployment restricted to district boundaries," Jain said. The association has demanded that PRT and JBT teachers be included in the state cadre, followed by an online and transparent inter-district transfer system. Under the proposed mechanism, teachers could be shifted to districts with vacancies based on school-wise requirements and available posts. Jain said the system would help rationalise deployment and ensure that govt schools have teachers according to their needs. The association said the shortage was particularly significant in rural and remote schools, where vacancies can disrupt classroom teaching and affect students' learning.

39 buses seized as cops crack down on safety lapses after fire that claimed 9

Noida.(Agency)

Traffic police seized 39 buses and challaned another 67 in the last three days for violations ranging from safety lapses to regulatory offences. The action, coming days after a bus fire claimed nine lives on Yamuna Expressway, has put passenger vehicles under closer lens, particularly those whose emergency exits, fire equipment or other safety features may not be fit for an emergency. Traffic police checked 1,003 buses



between Sept 27 and 29, examining emergency exits, CCTV cameras, fire-safety equipment, curtains and black film, besides conducting drunk-driving checks. Drivers and conductors were also briefed on passenger safety and emergency equipment. Separately, the transport department launched Operation Kavach 2.0 on Sept 28 against unauthorised and rule-violating buses. Five teams conducted surprise checks across routes, seizing 21 buses on the first day and 18 on Sept 29. Unlike a routine penalty, the buses that have been seized will also undergo technical examination. A bus will be released only after being found compliant with AIS-119 safety norms. If it fails, its registration and fitness certificate could be suspended. The scrutiny assumes significance as recent checks found that sleeper buses are often modified after obtaining fitness certificates and RTO clearance.

Branded PGs & guesthouses set up at homes in Gurgaon's Sushant Lok-3 on govt radar, 30 served notices

Gurgaon.(Agency)

More than 30 buildings in Sushant Lok-3 have been identified for possible enforcement action following a survey by the district town planner (enforcement), with unauthorised PGs, guest houses and other commercial activities operating from residential premises emerging as the main violations. The properties are largely located on bigger residential plots. Several are allegedly being used for activities beyond their sanctioned residential purpose, while some have allegedly carried out unauthorised construction in stilt parking areas. Managed PG accommodation providers, including Stanza Living, are also among those under scrutiny. Officials said show-cause notices and restoration orders have already been issued, with the process completed in several cases. Further action will be taken after examining the

nature of individual violations and compliance with planning regulations.

The survey found a concentration of such properties in F and G blocks, particularly around Hong Kong Bazaar. "In one building in G Block, Stanza Living is operating a PG, while the basement of the same building has been rented to food delivery platform Swiggy," an official said. Residents alleged that the large number of delivery vehicles around the basement has added to parking and traffic-related problems in the area. Residents said the concentration of PGs and guest houses had increased pressure on local infrastructure, including parking, drainage, sewerage, electricity and water supply. They said properties meant for residential use were being subjected to higher-intensity commercial and accommodation-related activities.

Apart from PGs and guest houses, the enforcement department is examining a



farmers' market, commercial offices and other business activities operating from residential properties. District town planner (enforcement) Amit Madholia said the Sushant Lok-3 survey had been completed and the department was

focusing on buildings where commercial activities were being carried out from residential premises. He said the enforcement process had gained momentum following recent Supreme Court directions concerning unauthorised commercial activities.

The action comes amid a wider enforcement drive against commercial use of residential properties in Gurgaon. The department has maintained that its enforcement powers in licensed colonies continue even after such colonies come under municipal limits. Punjab and Haryana high court has previously examined the jurisdiction of the town and country planning department (DTCP) in licensed colonies. The court settled a key issue that had complicated enforcement action for years, holding that the inclusion of licensed colonies within municipal limits does not divest DTCP of its authority to act against building violations.

Allegations of Illegal Liquor Trade and Gambling Dens Raise Serious Law-and-Order Questions

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Kadi/Gujarat: Serious questions are being raised over law and order in the Kadi Highway Four Roads area of Mehsana district, where allegations of widespread illegal liquor trade and gambling activities have reportedly surfaced. Local residents and sources claim that both country-made and foreign liquor are allegedly being sold in and around the busy highway area, while gambling activities are also said to be operating at multiple locations. The allegations have once again brought attention to the enforcement of Gujarat's prohibition laws and the functioning of the local policing system. Residents claim that despite the area being a busy and important public location, illegal activities allegedly continue without effective action, raising concerns about public safety and the implementation of prohibition laws on the ground. Allegations of Chemically Prepared Country Liquor According to information provided by local sources and residents, the alleged illegal liquor trade is not limited to the sale of foreign liquor. There are also allegations that country-made liquor prepared using potentially harmful chemical substances is being produced and supplied in parts of the Kadi region. Residents claim that such



liquor poses a serious risk to public health, particularly among economically vulnerable and labour communities. If the allegations are found to be true, the production and distribution of illegally prepared liquor could pose significant health and safety risks and would require immediate investigation by the concerned authorities. The allegations also raise questions about how such activities could continue in populated areas without detection or sustained enforcement action. Questions Over Local Police and Enforcement Mechanism The most serious questions being raised by residents concern the enforcement machinery. Locals allege that illegal liquor and gambling activities cannot operate openly for an extended period without coming to the notice of local authorities. There are also allegations of an informal payment or "hafta" system protecting illegal operators. However, these claims remain allegations and would require an independent investigation and documentary or official evidence to establish their

authenticity. Questions have also been raised regarding the role of the Local Crime Branch (LCB) and senior district police officials. Residents are asking whether sufficient intelligence gathering, surveillance and enforcement operations are being carried out in the area to identify and dismantle alleged illegal networks. If illegal activities are indeed operating at the scale alleged by local sources, authorities would need to examine not only the operators but also whether any lapses, negligence or possible collusion within the enforcement system have contributed to their continuation. Gambling Activities Also Under the Scanner Alongside the allegations of illegal liquor sales, local sources have also claimed that gambling activities are being conducted in and around the Kadi Highway Four Roads area. Such allegations have generated concern among residents, particularly because gambling-related activities can create additional law-and-order challenges and may attract other forms of criminal activity. Residents are demanding that the authorities conduct surprise inspections and take action wherever violations are established. They have also called for strict monitoring of locations suspected of being used for illegal liquor sales, gambling and related activ-

ities. Public Anger Growing Over Alleged Inaction The alleged continuation of liquor and gambling activities has reportedly created resentment among sections of the local population. Residents say that prohibition laws and other legal provisions should not remain limited to official claims but must be effectively enforced at the ground level. Citizens are demanding transparent action against anyone found involved in illegal liquor production, transportation, distribution or gambling. They are also seeking accountability if an official investigation establishes that any government employee or police personnel deliberately ignored illegal activities or facilitated them. Demand for Immediate Investigation The allegations surrounding Kadi Highway Four Roads now require a transparent and impartial investigation. Authorities could conduct coordinated checks involving the local police, LCB and senior district officials to verify the claims and determine whether illegal liquor or gambling operations are actually functioning in the area. If the allegations are substantiated, strict legal action should follow against the individuals responsible, along with action against any official whose involvement or deliberate negligence is established through evidence.

UP fixes 112-day deadline for land use change, cuts conversion fee

Noida.(Agency)

Local development authorities will now clear land-use conversion applications for plots up to 6,000 sq metres within 112 days. The amended Uttar Pradesh Urban Planning and Development (Assessment, Levy and Collection of Land Use Conversion Charge) Rules, notified by the state cabinet on Sept 15, set for the first time a timeline for disposal of land-use conversion proposals, which earlier involved multiple layers of scrutiny. Under the amended rules, technical scrutiny has to be completed within 22 days after an application is submitted. Property owners would get 60 days to respond to the queries raised after the technical valuation and submit papers. Thereafter, a six-member committee, headed by a development authority's vice chairperson, will have 30 days to decide on the objections and suggestions to the changes proposed over the land parcel. The committee would also comprise the district magistrate and municipal commissioner or their nominated members, a member



nominated by the divisional commissioner and the chief town planner of the development authority. Once all the formalities are cleared and payment is made to allow land use change, final go-ahead would have to be granted within 15 days.

The revised framework, officials said, seeks to cut procedural delays and simplify compliance requirements for land-use change applications and would

greatly benefit developers. For developers, this could mean faster project launches, lower approval costs and greater predictability in timelines. The amendments to land-use conversion charge rules, which seek to improve ease of doing business, allow local development authority boards, like GDA, to change land use for plots up to 6,000 sqm, bypassing the state-level clearance previously required for such

tracts and in many cases dragged on for months. They also halved land-use change and conversion fees to improve ease of doing business.

"Land use change rates from industrial to residential will be 15% of the circle rate, to office use it will be 50% of the circle rate and to commercial 75% of the circle rate," an official from the Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) said.

The new law also slashes interest rates on land-use change rates, when paid in instalments instead of a single upfront lump sum, to 1% per annum plus MCLR (marginal cost of funds-based lending rate) — the minimum interest rate that a bank is legally allowed to lend at — from 12% per annum, which was like an expensive commercial loan.

Land-use conversion rate from agricultural to industrial has been revised to 15% of the circle rate instead of the earlier 20%. Land converted for residential uses will be charged 25% of the circle rate instead of the previous 50%, and institutional uses will be charged 50% of the circle rate instead of 100%.

Partition trauma to 12 terms in Panjab University senate: Education the only wealth of this Punjab family

Harpreet Singh Dua, associate prof at GGN Khalsa College, recently won his sixth term as a Senate member: earlier, his father and uncle were three-time Senate members each.

Ludhiana (Agency).

When Harpreet Singh Dua, 51, an associate professor at Ludhiana's GGN Khalsa College, recently won his sixth term as a member of the Senate — the highest elected decision-making body of Panjab University, Chandigarh — he carried forward a legacy that not many families leave behind: the wealth of education. With their roots in Lyallpur

of 12 terms as PU Senate members together. Speaking to The Indian Express, Harpreet said that seeing his grandparents and parents dedicating their lives to education, he never had two thoughts about being an educator.

His grandfather, the late Ram Narain Singh Dardi, who migrated from Kamalia of Lyallpur, was a poet-writer and had published 24 books. "He was a freedom fighter and also participated in the Punjabi Suba Movement. He spent around 10 years in jail," Harpreet says. "My grandfather was a qualified 'Giani', an academic qualification in older times. He established Guru Angad Dev College in Ludhiana's Field Ganj — the first college to offer degrees like 'Giani' and 'Parbhakar'." Dardi married Tej Kaur, also a partition migrant from Rawalpindi. "My late grandmother was in Class X at the time of partition. She appeared in her matriculation examination in India, and pursued a career in teaching. When my grandfather was in jail, she would take Punjabi classes at his college. She retired as a senior Punjabi language faculty from SCD Government College, Ludhiana," Harpreet says.



(now in Pakistan's West Punjab), the Dua family in Ludhiana migrated to India during partition and decided to accumulate education as their wealth. Not just the men, but even women in the family pursued a career in teaching. And since then, they have been passing this legacy on from one generation to the other. With Harpreet's sixth term as a PU Senate member, the family now boasts

500 kg, Rs 3000 crore, 5 Pak nationals: Massive drug bust near Lakshadweep

Five Pakistani nationals were found aboard the Iranian boat. They have been identified as Mohammad Yakub Balochi, Shakirullah, Faridullah, Ahmed Khan, and Wahidullah Khan, all residents of Peshawar, Pakistan

Ahmedabad (Agency).

A joint operation between the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has led to a massive drug bust. About 526 kg of narcotics, including heroin and methamphetamine, worth Rs 3,000 crore, have been seized from a dhow

25. "The high-seas operation resulted in the seizure of approximately 526 kilograms of high-grade contraband — comprising heroin and methamphetamine — valued at over Rs 3,000 crore in international markets, alongside the swift apprehension of five Pakistani nationals operating the vessel," the statement said. The dhow, its crew, and the seized contraband were sent to Mumbai with an armed escort for joint interrogation and multi-agency legal proceedings. The intelligence leading to the seizure was gathered by the Gujarat ATS earlier this month. On September 10, Inspector JM Patel received information that a Nigerian national held a meeting in Ahmedabad through an intermediary.

During the meeting, an order was reportedly placed for approximately 500 kg of methamphetamine and heroin, which was to be transported by an Iranian dhow named "Azad". The consignment was to be delivered to a Tamil Nadu-based boat in Indian waters in the Mumbai-Kochi-Lakshadweep region, the ATS said.



crewed by five Pakistan nationals. The seizure took place west of the Lakshadweep Islands on Sunday. The Coast Guard said in a statement on Wednesday, "Executing precise sea-air surveillance based on actionable intelligence, Bharatiya Tatrakshak (ICG) assets maintained unyielding tracking before initiating hot pursuit, neutralizing the target, and boarding a suspicious Iranian dhow on September

LPU violence: Student seeks CBI probe; Chancellor Mittal skips unrest query

In a communication to students, LPU said the decision was taken as a precaution amid the circulation of "misleading information and rumours".

Jalandhar (Agency).

A student on Tuesday moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking a CBI probe into the violence and vandalism during protests at Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Phagwara, even as its founder-chancellor and BJP Rajya Sabha MP Ashok Mittal, making his first public appearance since the unrest, refused to comment on the incident, saying he would speak on it "separately". The PIL is likely to be heard by a Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra on Wednesday.

Mittal, who was in Phagwara to attend the party's 'Nasha Mukht Punjab Yatra' rally at Gandhi Chowk, was asked about the violence in which students allegedly vandalised property and blocked a stretch of the New Delhi-Amritsar highway following unverified claims that a female student had been raped on the university premises. "I will speak on it separately, but today will entertain questions only about Nasha Mukht Yatra," he said. He also declined to comment on allegations levelled by former chief minister and Congress MP Singh Channi and Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia that the LPU was being targeted by the AAP government after Mittal left the party to join the BJP.

Meanwhile, the PIL, filed by LPU B.Tech student Ravi Raj, seeks an independent investigation by the CBI into the violence, vandalism and alleged arson and looting on the campus. The plea claims that an unverified post circulated among students on the night of September 26 alleging that a student was raped. It says students subsequently gathered outside a girls' hostel and later blocked NH-44. The petition further alleges that people carrying swords, rods and sickles and with their faces covered entered the campus, broke open gates, damaged CCTV cameras, looted shops and set parts of the university premises on fire. The petitioner has also sought action under relevant provisions of the IT Act over the circulation of misleading information and adequate security arrangements around the university. The High Court agreed to hear the PIL on Wednesday after it was mentioned before the Bench of Chief Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Justice Rohit Kapoor. Meanwhile, the university on Tuesday extended the suspension of offline classes till October 7 and rescheduled the mid-term tests for October 12-17, as students continued to leave the campus following Sunday's violence. In a communication to students, LPU said the decision was taken as a

precaution amid the circulation of "misleading information and rumours". It said the situation remained stable and was being closely monitored, while assuring students that there would be no academic loss or dilution of the academic calendar. Online



classes will be held on October 5, 6 and 7, with attendance compulsory. Doubt-clearing sessions will be held online and offline on October 8 and 9, while students opting for offline sessions can return to campus on those dates. The university said the autumn term academic calendar would be extended

wherever required and end-term practical examinations would be conducted after the theory examinations. Placement drives, however, will continue as scheduled.

LPU is also independently examining videos circulating on social media to establish the sequence of events and identify those responsible for specific acts of vandalism.

Dean of Students Welfare Dr Saurabh Lakhpanpal said, "The matter is under investigation. The various videos regarding the incidents are also being verified by the university at its own level to establish the facts."

The university's exercise is separate from the police investigation, which is examining the wider circumstances surrounding the protest and violence.

Police are also examining CCTV footage and videos to identify those involved in vandalism and damage to property. Additional Director General of Police Praveen Sinha said the investigation was under way and that those involved would be identified and action taken.

Gold coins to mujra parties: CBI's allegations against Haryana IAS officers

Chandigarh (Agency).

Gold coins allegedly delivered to an IAS officer's bungalow. Hotel bills and parties allegedly paid for by a banker. Mujra performances where cash was allegedly showered on dancers. These are among the details that form part of the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) chargesheet in the Rs 504-crore IDFC First Bank fraud case, which allegedly involved the illegal diversion of government funds and a trail of favours for senior Haryana bureaucrats.

According to the central agency, public servants, in connivance with officials of IDFC First Bank and AU Small Finance Bank, illegally diverted funds of eight Haryana government departments and public bodies from empanelled banks into selected branches of the two banks. The CBI chargesheet filed on September 2 cites call records, WhatsApp chats, witness statements, and recovered conversations to map out alleged gratification networks involving senior

IAS officers Vineet Garg, Mohammed Shayin and Pankaj Agarwal.

The allegations range from two 50-gram gold coins allegedly delivered to Garg, to hotel bills allegedly settled for Shayin, and lavish mujra parties allegedly organised for Agarwal. The chargesheet also names Dr Saket Kumar, accusing him of influencing another senior officer in connection with the opening of government accounts with private banks. While Agarwal was arrested and suspended in June, Garg, Shayin and Kumar have not been arrested yet. Garg, Shayin, and Kumar did not respond to text messages or phone calls seeking their comments.

Gold coins delivered to a government bungalow

The CBI has charged Garg with allegedly accepting illegal gratification in the form of two 50-gram gold coins delivered to his residence through a man at the behest of Ribhav Rishi, a former branch manager of IDFC First Bank described as the "principal architect and mastermind of the fraud".



4 Telangana Men Went To Russia For Work, They Were Forced Into Military

The families claim that the men accepted a civilian job offer at a Russian military facility. They, however, were taken to a forested area, given weapons and subjected to military training.

Telangana (Agency).

About six months ago, four men travelled to Russia from Telangana on the promise of a job. Now, their families are seeking the Centre and the state government's help in bringing them back home. They are allegedly trapped at a Russian military camp.

The four men have been identified as Bhukya Ravinder, Bhukya Ashok and Megavath Prakash, from the erstwhile Nizamabad district, and Mohammed Afzal Khan of Kamareddy. According to their families, they paid around Rs 3 lakh each to agents for the employment

held in a forest and allegedly tied to trees when they attempted to leave. Khan asked people to inform fellow worker Prakash's brothers about the situation and the costs involved in bringing them back.

According to Khan's family, the problem began four months after the four men moved to Russia for work. Their passports were changed, and they were taken to the Ukraine border and forced into military service, the family alleged. Khan's father, Abbas Khan, and mother expressed deep distress, stating that their son and the other men are facing severe hardships, physical abuse, and danger in the forest and war zones. They are pleading with the Indian government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and state officials to intervene and help rescue their son and bring him safely back home. "Seven months ago, my father went to Russia and hasn't returned since," Khan's son said in a video message standing beside his mother and sister. "My mother is a person with disability, and I have a younger sister. We are in trouble," he said, asking for help.

Khan's wife said that her husband texts her once in every eight to 10 days, and there has been no other communication. The families have approached the Telangana government's 'Pravasi Pravavani', a dedicated state-level initiative offering help to families of NRIs. The families want the state NRI wing to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Embassy in Moscow for assistance and repatriation. The families have demanded that the authorities establish the men's exact location, ensure their safety and secure their return to India.



arrangements. The families claim that the men accepted a civilian job offer at a Russian military facility. They, however, were taken to a forested area, given weapons and subjected to military training.

In a video message, Mohammed Afzal Khan, one of the four men trapped in Russia, said that they are being confined in a jungle. "We are facing a lot of trouble here," Khan said in a video. "They initially made us do different work, and now, after coming here, they are telling us to do entirely different work. There is a huge problem. They have tied up two or three people." Khan, 44, said they were being

5 dead, several injured after luxury bus collides with truck on Gujarat expressway

Vadodara (Agency).

Five people were killed, and several others were seriously injured when a luxury bus carrying passengers from Surat to Rajasthan slammed into a truck on the Vadodara-Ahmedabad Expressway in Anand district early Wednesday. The accident occurred around 4 am, seven hours after the private bus left Surat. The police said most of the passengers were asleep when the bus collided with the truck, crushing those occupying seats and sleeper berths on one side. "The bus had tried to overtake the truck on the expressway when the accident occurred. Five persons have been killed and the injured have been taken to hospitals. The investigation is underway," G G Jasani, Superintendent of



Police, Anand, said. The police and residents rushed to the spot after being alerted and rescued some passengers. Surat residents

speedy recovery of all those injured: PM @narendramodi," Modi said in a post on X.

Storm over Mumbai forces 12 flights to land in Gujarat

Vadodara (Agency). A storm over Mumbai on Wednesday turned Surat and Vadodara airports in Gujarat into unexpected stopovers for people flying to the financial capital. At least 12 Mumbai-bound flights were diverted to Gujarat after thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds disrupted landing operations.

Eight of the diverted flights landed in Surat, which included five operated by IndiGo and three by Air India Express, and four others in Vadodara. Officials told this newspaper that the diversions were ordered by the Air Traffic Control as a safety measure as weather conditions made operations difficult around Mumbai. All the flights diverted to Surat and Vadodara landed

safely and were parked at the airports, with their onward departure dependent on weather conditions improving in Mumbai.



Airport authorities said arrangements were made for drinking water, refreshments and other requirements for the passengers. The

four flights diverted to Vadodara's Harni airport were Air India's AI 2447 from Hyderabad, AI 599 from Vijayawada and AI 1780 from Indore, and IndiGo's 6E 329 from Delhi. Officials said that the flights landed shortly after 7.30 pm and were awaiting clearance to fly to Mumbai. A Vadodara airport official said, "The operations in Mumbai have been hampered due to thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds, which have made landing difficult. We are awaiting communication clearing the take off for the flights that are diverted. It is expected to resume in a couple of hours. So far, we have not deboarded the passengers, but we are making arrangements for refreshments and meals."

Chief Election Commissioner immunity can't mean freedom from accountability

High constitutional offices, such as the President of India and state governors, are protected from criminal proceedings during their term of office (Article 361). No criminal proceedings can be launched against the judges of the Supreme Court and of the high courts without the sanction of the Chief Justice of India. However, the President, the judges of the Supreme Court and the judges of high courts can be removed from office through a special procedure provided under Articles 61, 124(4) and 218, respectively, of the Constitution. As far as the Election Commission of India (ECI) is concerned, although the procedure to remove the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) is similar to the one applicable to judges of the higher judiciary, the Constitution does not provide for any protection to the members of the ECI from criminal proceedings. However, the Government of India, through the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, which replaced the previous Act of 1991, has provided immunity to the CEC and the Election Commissioners, not limited to the term of their office, from initiation of criminal proceedings.

There can be two possible reasons for such immunity. One is that they must be free from all external pressures while discharging their constitutional obligation to conduct free and fair elections. The other reason, which the prevailing circumstances suggest, is that this ruling establishment realised that the said office needs such immunity if it is to be used for its partisan political interests, assuring those holding it that their actions cannot be subjected to any criminal proceedings. This perhaps has emboldened the CEC to act in a manner that has now sparked public outrage. A blanket, lifelong immunity for the CEC and the ECs is beyond the constitutional scheme, especially when no such limitless immunity is available to any other constitutional authority in India. This, of course, is a subject matter of challenge before the Supreme Court.

The Act of 2023 also provides that ECs should endeavour to take unanimous decisions; in the absence of unanimity, majority decisions will prevail. An investigative journalist's report recently revealed that the CEC was taking unilateral decisions, resulting in unauthorised deletions and additions of lakhs of voters. This was done through a process reportedly opposed by the two ECs. The most serious objection raised by the two ECs is that the control of the Election Commission's unified portal, ECINET, was centralised, and the deletion of voters was obviously done at the instance of the Commission instead of at the level of the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), Deputy Electoral Registration Officers (DEROs) and the Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) through ERONET. Centralising ECINET appears to have restricted field access. This is evident in Goa, where the 97 eligible voters could not be added to the electoral rolls because the AERO could not access ECINET. The second objection raised by the two ECs is that the CEC unilaterally changed Form 6, which originally did not require voters to give particulars of their parents and grandparents, although the power to amend Form 6 vests only in the central government. The third objection relates to the authorisation to file lakhs of appeals for the further deletion of voters in West Bengal; details of these appeals are still not public. The outcomes of the limited scrutiny of deleted names by the tribunals in West Bengal demonstrate that close to 93 percent of the voters were wrongly deleted. Obviously, directions may have been issued at the level of the CEC for deletion of particular names. Such unilateral actions by the CEC have raised public suspicion that the procedures adopted by him are clearly intended to help the ruling party win elections.

A great personality, committed to nation building

Beyond nation building, Shri Ashok Singhal Ji had two areas that were very close to his heart: education, especially Vedic education, and music. As the MP from Varanasi, I feel very proud that the city I represent, the eternal Kashi, has played its part in Shri Ashok Singhal Ji's life.

There is a beautiful saying, It means the tree does not consume its own fruit, nor does the river retain its waters. Both exist for the benefit of others. Our saints and seers have long taught us that a life devoted to the welfare of those around us acquires a meaning far greater than individual achievement. If there is one person in whom this spirit was constantly reflected, it was Shri Ashok Singhal Ji. Starting September 27, we mark his birth centenary to celebrate an outstanding personality who brought together spiritual pursuit, cultural awakening and decades of dedicated organisational work.

I consider it a privilege that I had innumerable opportunities to interact with Ashok Ji and receive his affection. One of the earliest instances dates back to 1981, when I was a young Karyakarta going about the organisational duties assigned to me. I received a handwritten letter from him. Naturally, it was a noteworthy moment for me. He spoke about an important upcoming programme and gave me a few tasks to complete. Over several decades, I saw him work day and night. He undertook long and often difficult journeys to the remotest areas. He was particularly passionate about travelling across the tribal areas of Gujarat. His mind was constantly occupied with what more could be done for those on the margins of society. Whenever any part of the nation was affected by a natural disaster, Ashok Ji was either among the first to reach there himself or among those guiding Karyakartas in helping the affected. My own experience with him in the aftermath of the 2001 Kutch earthquake was unforgettable. This spirit of compassion and care for others came to Ashok Ji very early in life. He hailed from a very illustrious and prosperous family. His father, Shri Mahavir Ji, was a distinguished administrator. One of his brothers, Shri BP Singhal Ji, went on to become a police officer and later a Member of Parliament. Another brother, Shri VP Singhal Ji, was the Chief Secretary of Tripura when the state was newly formed. Other family members succeeded in commerce and agriculture. But from a young age, Ashok Ji was attracted to something else altogether: the revival of Bharat and bringing glory to Maa Bharti's children.

Growing up in Prayagraj, Ashok Ji would sit for hours on

the banks of the Sangam. The river naturally interested him, but so did the people who came there, including saints, seers and devotees. This nurtured an understanding of India's cultural ethos and strengthened his desire to do something for society. This desire to live for others drew him to the RSS. He embraced every responsibility that came his way with enthusiasm, discipline and a sense of duty.

Shri Ashok Singhal Ji nurtured institutions and movements through persistence and hard work. He was blessed with a formidable voice and an oratory that could hold an entire gathering spellbound. Equally noteworthy was his care



for fellow Karyakartas. Anyone who came into contact with him could not help but marvel at his remarkable simplicity. He shared a deep bond with the Sant Samaj and commanded immense respect among saints and seers across the country. They valued his counsel and listened to him with great regard. My mind goes back to two instances that brought out the legendary persona of Shri Ashok Singhal Ji. The first was in 1993, when the Vishwa Hindu Parishad organised a convention in the USA to mark 100 years since Swami Vivekananda's Chicago address. The vision to host such a conference overseas, the planning and the bringing together of diverse stakeholders revealed Ashok Ji's organisational genius.

The second instance is from 2000. The World Hindu Conference was organised in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. I could see how his presence ignited enthusiasm among the delegates. After my address, his words of

appreciation were a very moving experience for me. I saw yet again how his encouragement filled every Karyakarta with energy.

No mention of Shri Ashok Singhal Ji is complete without recalling his pivotal role in the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement. Who can forget his address at the Boat Club Rally in 1991? Or the defining image of an injured and bleeding Ashok Ji at the peak of the movement? Today, if there is a grand Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, it is because of stalwarts like him who selflessly immersed themselves in the effort to make it possible. He would have been the happiest person on seeing the Ram Mandir take shape in Ayodhya. Shri Ashok Singhal Ji was blessed with remarkable clarity of thought, and one area where it was clearly evident was his belief that our society needs to be harmonious and that the message of brotherhood has to be reaffirmed. He worked towards strengthening social unity and equality. He firmly believed that there could be no distinction of any kind in society and that every individual deserved equal dignity and respect. It was his thought that the first brick of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya would be laid by Shri Kameshwar Choupal Ji, a grassroots VHP Karyakarta from Bihar who hailed from the marginalised sections of society. At a Dharm Sansad in Kashi, he decided that the Dom Raja would be honoured and went on to work with him as part of various community efforts.

Beyond nation building, Shri Ashok Singhal Ji had two areas that were very close to his heart: education, especially Vedic education, and music. As the MP from Varanasi, I feel very proud that the city I represent, the eternal Kashi, has played its part in Shri Ashok Singhal Ji's life. He was educated at BHU and was also known to be a good student. He was closely associated with the Ekal Vidyalaya initiative, which worked to extend basic education to remote villages, especially among tribal communities. He was a voracious reader as well as a good listener, and he always told younger Karyakartas to read as much as possible. Those who knew Ashok Ji closely knew how well he sang. I recall meetings in Nagpur where he would sing the Ekal Geet, leaving everyone mesmerised and setting the tone for the meeting. A video of him surprising everyone by singing during his 90th birthday celebrations in 2015 went viral.

Trump-Xi meeting: A useful handrail in a fractured world

US President Donald Trump speaks with China President Xi Jinping as first lady Melania Trump walks at right, at the National Archives Museum on Friday in Washington

The Washington summit between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping may have produced no dramatic breakthrough, but reducing it to ceremony would miss its larger significance. In a world increasingly riven by wars, trade tussles, technological rivalry and competing power blocs, the leaders of two of its most consequential powers are still talking. That, at the very least, offers a measure of stability.

Xi's warning about the "Thucydides trap" was noteworthy. The danger is not that Washington and Beijing disagree. It is that competition between an established superpower and a rising one could acquire a momentum of its own, particularly as trade, artificial intelligence, military technology and Taiwan become increasingly contested arenas of strategic rivalry. If unchecked, such competition could deepen the fractures already running through the international order. Xi argued that cooperation would benefit both China and the US, suggesting that the "great



rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" and Trump's "making America great again" need not be competing ambitions. The summit did produce some tangible movement. The two sides extended their trade truce by two months and have moved towards tariff reductions covering about \$30 billion in two-way trade through the Board of Trade. The measures fall well short of a grand bargain, but they keep a

crucial channel of engagement alive. At a time when trade tensions could easily spill into a wider economic confrontation, even limited agreements offer some breathing space and a chance for both sides to negotiate rather than escalate. The contrast with Trump's address at the UN General Assembly was revealing. At the UN, the call for peace was framed through American strength and the threat of overwhelming force, particularly towards Iran; in Washington, the language was more measured—rivalry, yes; confrontation, no. That distinction could matter increasingly in an unsettled world.

The world today is not merely multipolar; it is increasingly polarised. Wars in Europe and West Asia, competing trade blocs, sanctions, technology restrictions and a weakening consensus on global rules are making the international landscape more volatile. Against this backdrop, sustained engagement between

The Other India of the Maharajas

Some of the most remarkable experiments in education, social development, public health, and industrial progress took place, not in British India, but in princely states

Last weekend, I was in Kota to commemorate the life of Maharao Umed Singh II who ruled the Hadoti Rajput state from 1889 to 1940. The occasion was the launch of an English translation of Dr Jagat Narayan's book on his life which brings alive a ruler and an era that definitely deserve more attention than they usually receive. Walking through the wide alleys of the magnificent Umed Bhawan and standing in the grand Durbar Hall, I found myself thinking about how easily we have allowed the history of princely India to disappear into a handful of clichés—opulent palaces, elephants and horses, Rolls Royce cars, hunted tigers, debauchery and scandals. Yet, princely India was no mere footnote in our modern history and behind the spectacle was a larger and complicated political world. On the eve of Independence, the nearly 560 princely states accounted for about 40 per cent of the sub-continent's territory, with the princes controlling the destinies of about 25 per cent of undivided India's population. While a vast majority were microscopic estates, a 100-odd states covered more than half a million square miles and contained several million subjects. It was another India, existing alongside the directly British-administered dominions. The princes were not independent and bound to the British paramountcy through treaties. But they were not merely British puppets and had varied degrees of internal autonomy, and held on to their provincial armies and administration. At the Round Table Conferences in London, they were negotiating alongside British politicians and Indian nationalists on a proposed federation of British India and Indian States. Princely troops served in imperial battles in Afghanistan, Africa, China, and the world wars. Indian

cavalry regiments, including the Mysore and Jodhpur Lancers, played celebrated roles in the Battle of Haifa in 1918, when Allied forces captured the Ottoman-held port. Of course, like democratic leaders of today who come in a variety of shades and excesses, princes too had their quirks. That is what possibly prompted Rudyard Kipling to famously comment: 'Providence created a maharajah to provide mankind a spectacle'. Some were indeed extravagant, inept and debased. TIME reported rumours surrounding Bhupinder Singh of Patiala's lavish lifestyle and London visits—huge hotel suites, extraordinary clothing expenses, elaborate food arrangements. His large household, numerous wives, concubines, and children, and legendary appetite for luxury earned him the moniker, 'His Exhausted Highness'. But to reduce all of princely India to such excesses would be like writing the history of modern India solely from its scandals. There was another side to the story. Some of the most remarkable experiments in education, social development, public health, and industrial progress took place, not in British India, but in princely states. The 1931 Census recorded literacy at 33.7 per cent in Cochin, 28.9 per cent in Travancore, and 20.9 per cent in Baroda, compared with 11.1 per cent in Bengal, 10.8 per cent in both Bombay and Madras—all three major British Presidencies. Female literacy at about 15 per cent in Cochin and Travancore was well ahead of most British provinces. Baroda, which started off with a disadvantage with just eight per cent literacy in 1891, against 10 per cent in neighbouring British Gujarat, rose to 21 per cent in 1931 under Sayajirao Gaekwad, leaving

British Gujarat behind at 13 per cent. Mysore under Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar saw unprecedented modernisation—hydroelectric power, industry, banking, engineering, science, and higher education. Umed Singh II too catapulted Kota to modernity and progress. His reign saw fresh land-revenue settlement, several



irrigation reservoirs, city water-supply schemes, agricultural improvements, veterinary dispensaries, and cooperative institutions. An advanced municipal administration was established, whose princely remnants are still seen, just like in Mysore. In 1927, Kota established a cooperative bank that still survives. Education expanded from the first state high school in

1911 to an intermediate college, two high schools, and 109 schools by the end of his reign. A representative Praja Pratinidhi Sabha appeared in 1918, and in 1927 the state prohibited the marriage of minor children—a major social reform in traditional Rajput society. His reign also saw a dramatic reversal of an older political division. Jhalawar, carved out of Kota by the British in 1838, was reorganised. Fifteen of the 17 parganas originally taken from Kota were restored in 1899. Princely courts were also major centres of cultural patronage. Mysore supported musicians, composers, painters, scholars, and writers, and created a public institution of the Dasara celebrations. Baroda patronised Raja Ravi Varma and indigenous crafts. Jaipur's court developed institutions such as the Gunijankhana to support artists. Princely patronage helped sustain classical music, dance, painting, Sanskrit, and regional language scholarship, religious festivals, literature, and crafts. The cultural consequences of the disappearance of princely India deserve consideration alongside the political ones.

Umed Singh, Gaekwad, Wadiyar, Sethu Lakshmi Bayi of Travancore and other rulers inhabited a world caught between two ages. While they inherited an older political and feudal order, they encountered a rapidly changing modern world. They were constantly negotiating with British paramountcy, and at the same time experimenting with modern education, technology, and new demands for administration, social reform, and representation.

Make-up guide to wearing any Lip colour Right



th celebrity pouts glowing green and blue, we show you how to take this red carpet trend into your own make-up looks

Red

Classic and always trending, red is best worn with jet black liquid eyeliner and liberal coats of mascara. However, try keeping the focus only on the lips. Keep your skin natural and dewy with sheer foundation. Ditch the blush and eyeliner and just swipe on a few coats of mascara.

Pink

Baby pink looks great on paler skin tones while deep pink is great if you have dusky skin. To avoid looking too girly, try monochromatic makeup. Use eye, lip and

cheek colours in different shades and textures of pink. The trick works with almost every skin tone.

Purple

The colour is so rich and vibrant, it's best to have subdued make-up on the rest of the face. Sheer-coverage foundation and soft eye make-up will let blue take centre stage. A light dusting of coral blush will complement the deep lipstick hue.

Gold

Although unusual, shades of yellow gold can lend a high-fashion feel to your beauty look. Reach for a high-coverage foundation to create a flawless base. Says makeup artist Clint Fernandes, "On the eyes, play up the

ene rgy of the lip colour by drawing a cat-eye and then tracing over the top of the black line with a white liner pencil to create a dual look."

Green

Whether applied lightly for a sheer look or slicked on heavily for a dramatic effect a la Rihanna, green looks gorgeous. Since the shade tends to hide your natural lip colour, pair it with pink and red hues on the cheeks and eyes. "This will bring back your natural flush to other areas of the face," says makeup artist Priya Kapur.

Orange

The colour complements a sun-kissed glow. When going for an orange lip, apply bronzer wherever the sun would naturally hit your face — on the forehead, highest

points of the cheekbones, point of the nose, chin, and shoulder — to warm up the skin. Sweep pink blush on the apples of your cheeks for a natural warmth and balance.

Silver

This fantasy metallic shade is perfect for dramatic eye make-up. Stick on a set of false eyelashes using make-up glue. A pop of pink blush add drama to the look, while balancing out the cool metallic effect of the lip colour.

Blue

Blue has the ability to make your teeth appear whiter. Keep it simple when wearing blue lipstick by framing the eyes with a thin line of liquid eyeliner and using a sheer, tinted moisturiser. Says makeup artist Poonam Rawat, "The more discreet the rest of your make-up is, the better."

Black

Take away its goth associations, and the colour black gets sophisticated. Keep the skin natural in coverage and finish. Pair the dark hue with a diffused smokey eye and surprise people who expect bold eyeliner.

Picking the wrong sunscreen, using harsh soaps and changing dermatology products frequently are some of the common mistakes women commit when it comes to caring for their skin. Avoid them to attain a healthy skin, says an expert.



Common Skincare mistakes Women make

How to get rid of dark elbows

Dark elbows are always a cause of worry for those who do not know how to lighten the skin around the area. However, it is not a difficult task at all. All you need to do at home is ensure that you are constantly caring for it. Here are a few treatments that you can follow.

Cucumber and papaya paste

This works wonders. Most beauticians recommend using a combination of cucumber and papaya paste on your elbows at least once or twice during the week, depending on how dark your elbows are.

Honey and chandan

You can try using a mix of honey and chandan



(sandalwood) at least once in two weeks to keep your elbows clear and healthy. This mix will make sure that it keeps dead skin cells away from your elbows by exfoliating the area and also nourishing it.

Besan (gram flour) and yogurt

For those who would like to do a daily treatment on their elbows, choose a mix of besan and curd and apply it on the area for a good half an hour. You will notice that within a few days your skin around the elbows have become much clearer and the area also looks healthy and moisturised.

Stay hydrated

Though it may seem strange, but body parts mostly dry out when you do not have enough water. H2O keeps your body nourished and also helps retain the moisture in your skin.

Sonia Mangal, medical director at Myra Skin & Hair Solutions here, has several suggestions in this regard:

- * Inappropriate selection of a sunscreen: Sun exposure is one of the main reasons for visible signs of ageing. A two percent increase in skin damage can age a face by three years. Choose a sunscreen with good UVA protection and a SPF of 30.
- * Ignoring sunscreen in winter or monsoon or in cars: UVA light is not filtered by the window glass of your car (except the tinted glass). Also 50 percent of the exposure to UVA occurs even in the shade. So make sunscreen your best friend and make sure to wear it all round the year, even while working indoors.
- * Using harsh soaps: Use of harsh soaps on the skin can make it dry. Soap-free products are ideal for sensitive skin as they tend to be less harsh and drying.
- * Inadequate sleep: Lack of sleep can cause your body to release the stress hormone leading to lusterless skin, fine lines and under eye dark circles. Take



adequate sleep and follow a regular sleeping cycle for a healthy and glowing skin.

- * Insufficient water intake: Your skin is made up of cells which in turn are made up of water. Inadequate water intake makes the skin dry and flaky. Dry skin has less pliability and is more prone to wrinkling.
- * Wrong selection of products: Never buy a product going by an advertisement or celebrity endorsement. A skin product should be bought after ascertaining that it is appropriate for your skin type and needs.
- * Being impatient towards the results of good products: A big no-no is changing dermatology products every fortnight anticipating miraculous results. The best of the products also require a minimum of two to three

months to afford visible results on your skin.

* Casual attitude in consulting the dermatologist: Don't worsen your rashes, allergies or acne breakouts by applying

over-the-counter products. Consult your dermatologist at the earliest.

* Inadequate diet: Incorporate vitamin C, omega 3 fatty acids and other antioxidants in your diet for a younger looking and firmer skin.





10 tips for

Beauty Sleep

One needs to have a definite sleep schedule. This involves timeliness and the recommended slot spans from 10 pm to 7 am. Seven hours minimum.

Oversleeping on weekends cannot compensate for lack of sleep on weekdays. It won't reverse the damage, nor will afternoon naps. A mid-day snooze must end by 4 pm so that nighttime sleep pattern isn't affected. Keep your mind clutter-free. All of life's important decisions and analysis can wait till the next morning. Don't use your pre-slumber moments to stress about work. Jot down all important tasks for the next day in your diary or on a piece of paper, to keep your mind at ease. You should have a gadget cut-off time. Switch off the TV latest by ten. No matter how tempting, do not message, call or surf social networking sites after 10. Your mind needs time to switch off. Give it a break. Caffeine, alcohol and nicotine hamper a good night's rest. If you have to consume them, give a gap of at least an hour and a half between your last drink/smoke/coffee before bedtime. Opt for comforting rituals like a warm bath, a foot soak that soothe your senses. If all fails and you still have trouble sleeping, try

including a physical exercise into your daily schedule: jogging, yoga exercises or a music and dance class during the day. Always sleep on your back so that your face is not compressed by anything. For those who cannot conquer this for habitual reasons, opt for bedsheets and pillow covers in silk. Silk has the amazing ability to keep us cool when it's warm; and make us feel warm when it's cold outside. This leads to a more relaxing and rejuvenating sleep. Avoid snacking before bedtime, particularly on grains and sugars. They raise blood sugar levels and interfere with your sleep. They also keep your digestive system active, preventing you from falling asleep with ease. Avoid using loud alarm clocks to wake yourself up. If you need a clock to give you a wake-up call, opt for one with a light, soothing tune. It should be just loud enough to wake you up! If you're used to reading before you go to bed, make sure it's pleasurable and slow-paced. Try not to read anything over-

stimulating, such as a mystery or suspense novel, as you may find yourself engrossed for hours, taking away a lot of your sleep time. It is good to sleep in complete darkness. But if

you're living in a lively city, it may be difficult to block out every stream of light using curtains, blinds or drapes. In such cases, opt for an eye mask to block out the remaining light.



5 beauty benefits of Sesame oil



Apart from its culinary use, sesame oil, extracted from sesame seeds, has several health benefits and is even popular in alternative medicine. Here are some of its beauty benefits.

Natural sunscreen: If you didn't get a chance to buy a new sunscreen before heading for a vacation, just carry a bottle of sesame oil. Applying it prevents sun tan.
Heals skin: Applying sesame oil on cuts and wounds helps heal them faster since the oil contains antibacterial properties. Due to its good anti-inflammatory properties, it also helps in curing several skin conditions like psoriasis and eczema.
Helps moisturise: The oil contains essential fatty acids like palmitic, oleic, linoleic, and stearic acid that makes it a good moisturizer. Apply it on a regular basis to keep your skin soft and smooth. You can also add it to your bathing water as it can help treat cracked heels and dry knees and elbows.
Delays ageing: Wanna look younger? Add sesame oil to your diet. Containing antioxidants, vitamin E and sesamol, which help prevent radical damage, sesame oil

helps hold back the ageing process of your skin. Improves circulation: Since it has high viscosity, the oil can seep deep into the skin and nourish it from within. If you want glowing skin, opt for regular sesame oil massage that will improve blood circulation and repair damaged skin cells.



Here's how to wear this trend
Choose the right shade

The perfect way to sport red lips is by choosing the right colour. If you have fair skin, you can opt for a candy-apple red that will suit your complexion.

However if you are wheatish or dark, you can always go for shades with maroon or purple tones in it.

Opt for the right formula

However only selecting the right shade won't be enough. You also need to choose the right formula so that it suits you. If you want your lipstick to last longer, choose a matte red lipstick. For a more modern look, try using a glossy red lipstick



instead. They add a sophisticated touch to your lips. Further if you do not wish to go for a matte or a glossy lipstick, use a tinted one that will protect your lips as well as also add colour.

Ways to apply it

The key to flaunting red lips is by ensuring that you wear it the right way.

Smooth it perfectly: Use a sugar scrub to remove dead skin cells from the area. Follow this up with a tinted moisturiser.

Outline your lips well: To make your

lips pop and also look brighter. With a small brush apply a little concealer on the outside of your lips. Gently blend the outer edge of the line for a natural look. This will help draw attention to your lips and will blend in

How to sport red

Lips

with the natural tone of your skin.

Add the lip liner: Once you are done highlighting your lip line, use a lip liner of the same shade or a shade lighter and outline your lips.

Fill in the colour: After you are done outlining your lips, pick the shade that you choose to wear and apply it evenly on your lips.



Experts suggest smoothening over straightening to re-texture your unruly locks. Find out why

Straightening hair is often our last resort or probably the first remedy to rectify frizzy and fuzzy hair. While a few do this to tame their hair, a majority get their hair straightened to sport a trendy look. But does straightening give your hair a fake texture? Is smoothening hair a better option than straightening?

"Smoothening is always a better option than straightening.

Smoothening makes hair look natural soft, unlike the results from straightening that can give the

Hair Smoothening better than straightening?

hair pin-straight tips, which contributes a fake look," says Theertha Sasidharan, a beauty expert.

Hair stylists can sweep your wavy or curly hair into straight, soft and shiny strands, all with the iron rod and chemicals. "Most of my customers prefer to have a naturally straight hair, which is why we advise smoothening, though the process and duration of the result are the same," says beauty expert Beena.

However, Beena warns that the effects of smoothening are better when it is done on thin hair, than thick locks. Though most of them walk in to get their hair straightened, when informed about the end-results of smoothening, they would not hesitate to experiment and invest in smoothening.

For extremely curly hair, she suggests straightening therapy. "This of course is similar to straightening, but the product used is different," she adds.

4 MP heritage sites, India-South Africa Satyagraha proposal added to UNESCO list

Five nominations from India have been added to UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites, including four heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh and a serial transnational proposal covering locations linked to Satyagraha in India and South Africa.

Delhi. (Agency)

Five nominations from India have been added to UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage, including four sites in Madhya Pradesh and a serial transnational proposal on places linked to Satyagraha in India and South Africa, officials said on Tuesday.

With these additions, India's UNESCO Tentative List now has 78 sites. PIB Culture, in a post on X, called it a "proud milestone" for the country's heritage and said the new entries are Bagh Cave Paintings, Group of Temples of the Chambal Valley, FCaves, Ginnorgarh, and the India-South Africa serial transnational proposal, Sites of Satyagraha.

According to the UNESCO website, Udayagiri hill in Madhya Pradesh contains a rock-cut sacred ensemble developed mainly under Gupta patronage between the late 4th and early 5th centuries. The site includes 20 excavated caves, sculptural panels, inscriptions, circulation paths, rock surfaces bearing early

marks and inscriptions, and associated topographical and hydrological features that together form an integrated ritual landscape.

The Bagh caves are a group of nine rock-cut Buddhist caves on the southern slope of the Vindhyan range on the banks of the Baghni river in western Madhya Pradesh. UNESCO says these caves are the only outcrop of sandstone in an otherwise basaltic region, a factor that influenced their architectural forms and the preservation of mural paintings. Ginnorgarh Fort, described as the principal fortified capital of the erstwhile Raj Gond rulers in central India, and the Group of Temples of the Chambal Valley – Bateshwar, Padavali and Kakarmath – have also been added to the list.

A site must first be placed on the UNESCO Tentative List before it can be considered for World Heritage status.

The fifth addition is a proposed serial transnational property that traces the evolution of Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Satyagraha, from



its conceptualisation in South Africa to its experimentation, consolidation and institutionalisation in India.

UNESCO says the proposed property includes nine components – two in South Africa, where

Gandhi spent 21 years from 1893 to 1914, and seven in India, where he spent most of his life.

The nine components are Pietermaritzburg station and the Phoenix Settlement in South Africa; and the Mahatma Gandhi Satyagraha Smarak, the Sabarmati Ashram, the Mani Bhavan complex, the Harijan Sevak Sangh complex, the Sevagram Ashram, the Aga Khan Palace and the Gandhi Smriti residence in India.

UNESCO says these components represent the evolution of Satyagraha from its inception as a response to racial discrimination at Pietermaritzburg Station, to an exploratory phase linked to communities committed to truth and non-violence at Phoenix Settlement, then to consolidation in India through sites such as

Mahatma Gandhi Satyagraha Smarak, Sabarmati Ashram and Mani Bhavan, and finally to its institutionalisation through Harijan Sevak Sangh, Sevagram, Aga Khan Palace and Gandhi Smriti.

Court refuses bail to Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam in 2020 Delhi riots case for 3rd time

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday rejected the third bail pleas of student activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the case concerning the alleged larger conspiracy behind the February 2020 north-east Delhi riots registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Dinesh Bhatt said it could not modify the Supreme Court's January 5 order directing the two accused to seek bail either after the examination of protected witnesses is completed or after one year from the date of the order, whichever is earlier. The court said it was "bound by judicial discipline" and could not modify the conditions imposed on Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam.

Khalid and Imam have been booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in connection with allegations that they were among the masterminds of the riots, which left 53 people dead and more than 700 injured.

The violence broke out amid protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Activist Khalid Saifi and former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain, among others, have also been booked in the alleged larger conspiracy case, which was investigated by the Delhi Police's Special Cell. Khalid and Imam approached the high court earlier this year after the trial court rejected their bail applications for the third time on July 4. Imam was arrested in the case on August 25, 2020, while Khalid was arrested on September 13, 2020.

Delhi HC imposes Rs 1 lakh cost on lawyer for virtual appearance from moving car

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi High Court has imposed a cost of Rs 1 lakh on a lawyer for appearing virtually before it from a moving car, holding that the lawyer's conduct was in violation of the rules.

Justice Om Prakash Shukla said while the convenience offered by virtual hearings was appreciated, it could not be at the cost of the court's decorum or cause disturbance in the conduct of judicial proceedings.

"When this court has to deal with more than 70 matters in a day, background noise and movement during the hearing are disruptive for this court to proceed," the judge said in the order passed on September 28.

"In view of the aforesaid, a cost of Rs 1 lakh is imposed upon learned Counsel for the Decree Holder, payable to Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee within one week from today," the court ordered. In its order, the court observed that under the high court's Electronic Evidence and Video Conferencing Rules, an endeavour has to be made by advocates not to join proceedings from vehicles except in exceptional circumstances and with permission.

Justice Shukla underscored that such a requirement was not merely procedural but was intended to ensure that even when lawyers appear virtually, they do so from an environment conducive to the proper functioning of the court.

However, there were no such exceptional circumstances in the present matter and the lawyer's conduct was in violation of the rules, the court held.

Four acquitted in acid attack case

A Delhi court has acquitted four men accused of throwing acid on a woman in Sangam Vihar in 2019, citing "systemic investigative lapses", including an unexplained 18-month delay in FIR registration. Additional Sessions Judge Jaggi said the prosecution "miserably failed" to prove the charges beyond reasonable doubt. The court also flagged the absence of CCTV footage.

Amid row, EC scraps Form 6 annexure in states where SIR is complete

Delhi. (Agency)

The Election Commission has removed an additional SIR-related declaration from the online voter enrolment Form 6 in states where the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has been completed, following a row over the "illegal" changes.

The controversy erupted after a report in The Indian Express said that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had formally objected 14 times over the past 10 months to decisions and orders related to the SIR exercise.

The Commission has clarified that it has not made any legal changes to the original format of Form 6, which is the statutory form used by eligible citizens

to apply for inclusion in the electoral roll. The additional declaration, introduced during the SIR process, required new applicants to furnish details linking themselves, their



parents or grandparents to electoral rolls prepared during an earlier intensive revision. The declaration has now been removed from the ECINET app and portal, as well as the respective Chief Electoral Officer portals, in

states where the SIR has concluded.

Applicants in these states will fill in only the statutory Form 6.

The additional declaration remains available in states and Union Territories where the SIR is still underway.

The move follows a September 26 meeting of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi. After the meeting, the poll panel said the declaration attached to Form 6 was meant specifically for the SIR and that, during the non-SIR period, forms applicable under the Registration of Electors

Rules, 1960, would be used.

FORM 6 CONTROVERSY

The issue became a point of controversy after Sandhu and Joshi raised objections to changes relating to Form 6.

All 4 Lashkar terrorists in this viral pic now dead. How they were hunted down

Delhi. (Agency)

Remember this viral photo of four Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists that went viral after the Pahalgam attack last year. The four, standing

together in combat gear with assault rifles in a forested area, became the face of Pakistan-backed terror in Kashmir. Today, the photograph carries a different meaning. With the killing of top LeT commander Hashim Moosa, also known as Fauji, on Tuesday, all four terrorists seen in the image are dead, gunned down in separate operations by the Army.

Apart from Moosa, the other three were identified as Junaid Ahmed Bhat, Abu Talha, and Suleman Shah (alias Faisal Jatt) - an 'A' category

commander of LeT. The terrorists were behind several major attacks in Jammu and Kashmir over the past couple of years, including the October 2024 Gagangir attack and the Pahalgam



massacre, which left 25 tourists and a local dead.

THE PHOTO THAT WENT VIRAL

The photograph surfaced widely after the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam carnage -

the deadliest terror attack on civilians in India since the 26/11 Mumbai massacre. It offered a rare glimpse of the men part of the Pakistan-linked Lashkar network operating across the Valley and the forested Pir Panjal region.

The picture also acquired significance after investigators later identified Suleman as one of the terrorists involved in the Pahalgam attack. While the source of the viral picture is not known, a report said it was recovered from the phone of Junaid Bhat, who was killed in an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Dachigam area in December 2024. Following the Pahalgam attack, the Army launched one of its biggest counter-terror operations in Kashmir in recent years.

Astonishing U-turn: Congress slams Centre for moving SC over Nicobar project row

The Congress has criticised the Centre's move to move the Supreme Court, seeking a pause in Calcutta High Court proceedings challenging the Rs 92,000-crore Great Nicobar project. The party criticised the project, saying it violates forest rights and environmental norms.

Delhi. (Agency)

The Congress on Wednesday criticised the Modi government for moving the Supreme Court to pause all proceedings in the Calcutta High Court on petitions challenging the Great Nicobar Island Project. The party called it an "astonishing U-turn" and alleged that the government was pressing ahead with a project it says could cause serious environmental damage.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared a screenshot of a media report saying the Union government had approached the Supreme Court to halt further proceedings in the petitions before the Calcutta High Court.

The petitions allege that provisions of

the Forest Rights Act were violated while obtaining consent for the Rs 92,000-crore Great Nicobar Island project. Ramesh said October 5, 2026, was the likely date for the matter to come up in the Supreme Court, while the final hearing in the High Court on one of the petitions is fixed for November 25 and 26, 2026.

In his post, Ramesh said, "The Modi govt has been bulldozing through the Rs 92,000 crore (revised upward from the earlier Rs 72,000 crore) Great Nicobar Island Project. The various approvals under environment and forest laws have been deeply flawed and the impact assessment reports have been pre-fixed and are of dubious value." He said a "faint glimmer of hope" lay in the five petitions filed by citizens and civil

society groups, which are pending in the Calcutta High Court. Ramesh said one of these petitions deals with "serious violations" of the Forest Rights Act,



2006, affecting local tribal communities, and that the Modi government had earlier agreed to the final hearing dates in the High Court.

"But now, in an astonishing U-turn, the

Modi government wants the Supreme Court to stay all proceedings in the Calcutta High Court," he said.

He also said the Calcutta High Court had upheld the right of the petitioner, a former senior official in the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, to file the challenge. According to Ramesh, the Centre had questioned her right to challenge the project, but the High Court rejected that argument.

"Now the Modi government is making the same argument in the Supreme Court which hopefully will allow the Calcutta High Court to proceed on the matter as scheduled," he said. Ramesh further said, "The sad fact remains that even though these.

Buying a TV, AC or fridge?
Here's why you may want to
buy before October 1

New Delhi. (Agency)

If you have already been planning to buy an air-conditioner, television, refrigerator or washing machine, the next few days could be a good window to make the purchase, as several appliance makers are set to raise prices from October 1. Leading consumer electronics and appliance companies are planning price increases of 5-8% on some products ahead of the festive season, reported news agency AC prices are expected to see the sharpest increase, while some manufacturers are also raising prices of TVs, refrigerators and washing machines by around 2-4%. This is also expected to be the industry's third round of price hikes in 2026, with manufacturers facing higher costs for copper, aluminium, steel, crude derivatives and freight, along with currency-related pressures..So, if you were already planning to make a purchase for Diwali or for your home, buying before October 1 could help you avoid at least some of the upcoming price increase. However, consumers may still find older-priced stock in shops for some time after October 1. **WHY ARE APPLIANCE PRICES GOING UP?** The biggest pressure is coming from the rising cost of raw materials. Copper, in particular, has become significantly more expensive. Haier India President NS Satish told PTI that copper prices, which were around \$8,000-\$9,000 per metric tonne last year, have now touched \$14,500. An air-conditioner typically requires 3-4 kg of copper, making the metal a major cost for AC manufacturers.

Sensex, Nifty open higher,
but FII selling keeps market
mood cautious

New Delhi. (Agency)

Benchmark indices opened higher on Wednesday, but persistent foreign investor selling and elevated crude prices kept sentiment cautious. The recovery came after a sharp two-session sell-off, with broader markets and several key sectors showing strength.The Sensex was up 184.53 points, or 0.25%, at 72,713.60 at 9:25 am, after opening at 72,441.15. The Nifty 50 was at 22,734.05, up 17.85 points, or 0.08%, after opening at 22,665. attacks by Yemen-based Houthis militants.The broader market was stronger, with Nifty Midcap 50, Midcap 100 and Smallcap 100 rising 0.80%, 0.96% and 1.01%, respectively. The Nifty 100 gained 0.26%, while the Nifty 500 was up 0.50%. **IT, PSU BANKS LEAD THE RECOVERY** Most sectors opened higher, with Nifty IT rising 1.56%, PSU Bank gaining 1.58%, Media up 1.92%, Oil & Gas rising 1.53% and MidSmall IT & Telecom gaining 2.43%.Auto, Realty, Private Bank and Financial Services Ex-Bank indices also traded in positive territory. Nifty Chemicals was up 2.02%.However, Pharma and Healthcare remained under pressure, falling 0.67% and 1.04%, respectively.Among Sensex stocks, TCS rose 2.36%, while IndiGo gained 1.77%, Tech Mahindra 1.50%, HCLTech 1.22%, ICICI Bank 1.08% and Reliance Industries 0.97%. On the other hand, Sun Pharma fell 1.41%, Adani Ports declined 1.27% and HDFC Bank was down 0.94%.

Tata Trusts restructuring plan
decoded: How Tata Sons could
avoid an IPO

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Tata Trusts has proposed a restructuring of Tata Sons that could take the holding company outside the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) regulatory framework for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and, in turn, potentially remove the trigger for a mandatory stock-market listing. The proposal, announced by Tata Trusts on September 28, involves merging Tata Electronics Systems Solutions Private Limited (TESS) and Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE) with Tata Sons.Tata Trusts, which own 66% of Tata Sons, said the resulting company would have a large operating business alongside its existing role as the holding company of the Tata Group. This, the Trusts said, would mean Tata Sons would no longer qualify either as an NBFC or a Core Investment Company (CIC).Tata Sons currently faces a listing requirement because it is classified as an Upper Layer NBFC by the RBI. The regulator's framework says NBFCs placed in the Upper Layer must be mandatorily listed within three years of being identified in that category.The RBI rejected Tata Sons' application to surrender its CIC registration on September 11, 2026, leaving the company within the regulatory framework. Tata Trusts' latest proposal is now an attempt to change the underlying structure of Tata Sons so that it no longer falls under that framework. **WHAT EXACTLY IS NOEL TATA'S PROPOSAL?** The proposal is to merge two operating businesses, TESS and TCE, into Tata Sons. Tata Trusts said the proposed restructuring would effectively return Tata Sons to an operating model it followed for much of its history, when it had businesses and operating revenues of its own in addition to holdinThe Trusts pointed out that Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) was a business division of Tata Sons until it was demerged into a separate subsidiary in 2004.g investments in other Tata companies.

Wars, tariffs, AI: Why India's growth
story faces a tougher road

India's growth remains strong, but its dependence on imports, a manufacturing sector that has struggled to expand and a fast-changing services economy are exposing new vulnerabilities.

MUMBAI. (Agency)

India is growing fast. The latest numbers have been strong enough to make the usual concerns about a slowing global economy look less urgent. But some of the warnings coming from senior policymakers suggest that the harder part may lie ahead.External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar recently spoke about the pressure on food, fuel and fertiliser

supplies in a world where wars are not just because expensive crude means disrupting trade and supply chains. Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran has raised concerns about energy prices, trade tensions and the disruption artificial intelligence could bring to India's services-led economy.Put together, they point to a vulnerability that India's strong growth numbers can easily hide. India is still deeply dependent on the outside world for many of the things it needs to produce and consume. **FUEL, FERTILISER AND FOOD** Oil is the obvious example. India imported 88.2% of its crude oil requirements in 2024-25, according to the Reserve Bank of India. That dependence has risen from 77.6% in 2013-14. The RBI has also warned that this leaves India vulnerable to global crude price shocks, with implications for growth and inflation.The number matters



industry and affects agriculture. When prices rise sharply, India's import bill rises with them, putting pressure on inflation, the rupee and the current account.The problem becomes bigger when there is a disruption to the physical

movement of commodities. Fertiliser is a good example. India makes a substantial amount of fertiliser at home, but much of what goes into that production still comes from abroad.An Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) study estimates that India's effective external dependence on fertiliser is around 68-70% when imported feedstocks and intermediate materials are taken into account. Around 85% of the natural gas used in domestic urea production is imported, while India also depends heavily on imported raw materials for phosphatic fertilisers.So the vulnerability does not end when the fertiliser factory is located in India. A disruption in energy markets or shipping can still raise the cost of getting that fertiliser to the farm.

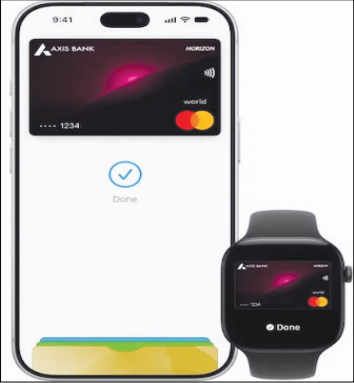
Apple Pay now in India: How will it
work, will MDR charges apply?

New Delhi. (Agency)

Apple Pay has finally entered the Indian market, giving iPhone, iPad and Apple Watch users another way to make card payments at stores, on apps and on websites.With Apple Pay now available in India, users may want to know which cards are supported, where they can use the service, how payments work and whether any additional charges will apply.Here are the key things to know about Apple Pay in India.

WHAT IS APPLE PAY AND HOW DOES IT WORK IN INDIA?

Apple Pay is Apple's digital payment service that lets users add an eligible credit card to Apple Wallet and use it



for payments in stores, apps and on websites.For in-store payments, users can simply hold their iPhone or Apple Watch near a contactless

payment machine after authenticating the transaction using Face ID, Touch ID or the device passcode.The service does not require users to open a separate payment app or enter a PIN or OTP at the checkout.

WHICH CARDS CAN BE USED WITH APPLE PAY IN INDIA?

At launch, Apple Pay is available with Axis Bank-issued Visa and Mastercard credit cards.Users with eligible cards can add them to Apple Wallet and continue to receive the rewards and other benefits attached to their cards.Apple has also said that more merchants and apps will support Apple Pay over time, while support for more cards and payment networks could expand in the future.

The new wage definition and its
impact on ESI cash benefits

Kolkata. (Agency)

The common definition of "wages" introduced by the Code on Social Security, 2020 has an important consequence for Employees' State Insurance that deserves closer examination.The new definition may widen ESI coverage, but it can also result in a lower wage base for calculating cash benefits.

The positive first:

The Code came into force for ESI purposes from November 21, 2025. ESIC itself subsequently stated that the definition of wages under Section 2(88) differs from the former definition under Section 2(22) of the ESI Act and that, as a result, a large number of employees who had earlier remained outside ESI coverage because of their wage levels could now come within the scheme. That expansion of coverage is welcome. The deliberately broad ESI wage concept

The former Section 2(22) of the ESI Act adopted a comparatively broad definition of wages. Apart from remuneration payable under the terms of employment, it included payments in respect of authorised leave, lay-off and certain other contingencies and, significantly, "other additional remuneration" paid at intervals not exceeding two months.The principal exclusions were employer contributions to pension or provident funds, travelling



allowance, special employment-related expenses and gratuity on discharge.

The significance of "additional remuneration"

Payments outside the immediate contractual wage could also enter the ESI wage base when they satisfied the statutory test of periodicity.This wide wage base has to be viewed in the context of the purpose of ESI cash benefits asESI does more than provide medical care. It replaces a part of lost earnings during sickness and maternity and provides income protection in cases of employment injury, disablement and death.

Why are NCR home prices rising so fast?

Buying a home in NCR is getting tougher as prices continue to climb. But what is behind the sharp rise?

New Delhi. (Agency)

Buying a home in Delhi-NCR is becoming an increasingly expensive proposition. Even as housing sales in the region remain almost flat, property prices have continued to move up, with the average rate rising faster than in the other major cities.According to ANAROCK Research, residential property prices in NCR rose 12% year-on-year in the third quarter of 2026. This was the highest annual increase among the top seven cities.Across the seven cities, average residential prices rose 7% during the same period. Bengaluru followed NCR with an 8% annual increase, while prices across the top seven cities rose 1% from the previous quarter.NCR PRICES RISE EVEN AS SALES STAY ALMOST FLAT The sharp rise in prices has come despite a relatively modest movement in housing

sales.ANAROCK data shows that NCR recorded around 13,765 housing sales in Q3 2026. While sales were 3% higher than the previous quarter, they were down 1% compared with Q3 2025.

The trend was different in some other major markets.Bengaluru recorded around 16,670 housing sales during the quarter, up 12% from a year earlier. Hyderabad saw sales rise 15% year-on-year to around 12,970 units, while MMR recorded around 31,750 sales, up 5% annually.Pune, on the other hand, saw sales fall 6% year-on-year to around 15,690 units. Chennai and Kolkata also recorded annual declines of 10% and 4%, respectively.Across the top seven cities, around 1,00,220 homes were sold in Q3 2026, up 3% from the same quarter last year.

PREMIUM HOUSING IS A BIGGER PART OF NCR'S NEW SUPPLY

One factor that stands out in NCR is the price segment of new homes being launched.The region added around 10,900 new housing units in Q3 2026, down 14% from 12,645 units launched in the same quarter last year.However, more than 34% of the new homes launched in NCR during the quarter were priced above Rs 2.5 crore.This points to a

strong presence of premium housing in the new supply coming into the market. When a larger share of newly launched homes is priced at the higher end, it can also push up the average price of properties in a market.



Across the top seven cities, the largest share of new supply was in the Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore segment, at 34%. Another 24% was in the Rs 1.5 crore to Rs 2.5 crore segment.NCR's supply trend also stands out when compared with some of the other major markets.MMR recorded the highest new supply in Q3 2026, with around 37,500 units launched, up 27% from a year earlier. Hyderabad followed with around 18,950 launches, a sharp

120% annual increase.Bengaluru also saw new supply rise 17% to around 17,720 units.Pune added around 18,730 homes, down 3% year-on-year, while Chennai and Kolkata recorded annual declines of 9% and 4%, respectively.

NCR, meanwhile, saw new launches fall 14% year-on-year.This means the region is seeing fewer new launches even as its average property prices are rising sharply. In contrast, some markets such as MMR, Bengaluru and Hyderabad are seeing both higher new supply and stronger annual sales.

CONNECTIVITY IS ADDING TO THE

PREMIUM

Location is another important part of the NCR housing story.As infrastructure and connectivity improve across different parts of the National Capital Region, buyers are increasingly looking at areas that offer easier access to offices, roads, transport links and social infrastructure. Homes in such locations can command a premium, particularly when they are part of newer projects with better amenities.

NEWS BOX

‘Can’t you demolish?’: Bombay High Court to Mumbai civic body over illegal meat shops

Mumbai (Agency). The Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to place before it a comprehensive scheme to permanently prevent illegal meat, poultry and fish shops from operating within a 10-kilometre radius of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport. Terming the issue “serious”, the court said it could later direct the authorities to provide police protection to civic officers during drives against such shops, to ensure they can carry out enforcement action without intimidation or threats. A bench of Justices Ajey S Gadkari and Kamal R Khata was hearing an interim application filed by Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), seeking compliance with earlier court orders concerning the bird-hit hazard posed by illegal slaughtering, which can attract predatory birds, as well as implementation of the Aircraft Rules. MIAL told the court that earlier directions were not sufficiently complied with for more than a decade and sought a direction to BMC to finalise a scheme.

In drought-hit Maharashtra, Mumbai civic body moves to revive wells for water

CHENNAI (Agency). Amidst concerns of an abysmal monsoon and warmer summers, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has launched projects – from desilting of groundwater resources to study of salination levels in wells – to restore wells across Mumbai in a bid to develop alternative means of water resources. The revival of Mumbai’s groundwater resources has gathered pace, with the state government on Saturday declaring drought in 265 of the state’s 358 tehsils — about three-fourths of Maharashtra. Surrounded by the seas in three directions, Mumbai relies primarily on rainfall brought in by the southwest monsoon winds to cater to its annual water demands. The city draws its potable and industrial water supply through seven lakes, which are replenished during the monsoon season. Before the lakes formed, Mumbai traditionally drew water from a network of borewells and dug wells that served as a key source of water supply. However, with the development of water schemes and dams from the late 1860s, wells became the secondary source of water. In recent years, ground water resources have fallen into disrepair owing to concerns of pollution due to sewage and saline water ingress. However, with the El Niño climatic patterns resulting in below-average rainfall and further raising alarms over warmer weather through February, the BMC has now launched efforts to revive its wells as alternate sources of water and ensure adequate supply until the onset of the next monsoon spell in 2027.

Maharashtra drought: Monsoon not over, but Marathwada turns to tankers as water sources run dry

Jalna (Agency). The monsoon is not over, but in parts of drought-hit Marathwada, villages are already turning to water tankers. With 74 of the region’s 76 talukas declared drought-affected, 277 tankers are currently supplying water to 160 villages, while more villages have begun seeking tanker supplies as local wells and water sources run dry. The administration maintains that water stored in major reservoirs, including the Jayakwadi dam near Paithan, will be sufficient for drinking and other domestic requirements. But in villages, farmers are already watching wells and local water sources run dry, with some spending thousands of rupees a day to keep their crops and livestock alive. In Shahapur in Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, 40-year-old farmer Badrinath Bharat is spending Rs 3,000 a day on two tankers to keep his ginger crop alive. The water is also used by his family and 10 cattle. “I have already lost all of the cotton and maize I had sowed. We have a well but it is dry. For the past 15 days, I am forced to spend on the tankers. I can do this for a month with the hope of some yield... after that I will discontinue,” said Bharat, who lost crops, including tomato, cotton and maize. In Siddhanath Vadgaon village in Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, farmer Sachin Bilwal has been buying tanker water for more than a month, mainly for his family and three cattle. He pays Rs 1,000 for a tanker, which lasts about a week. “I am required to pay Rs 1,000 per tanker and it lasts me a week. We have requested the gram sabha to seek tankers from the government.

‘I’m now Shivalik 2.0’: Former Mumbai Indians cricketer after rape FIR quashed

Vadodara batter spent 20 days in Rajasthan jail after dispute that followed a broken engagement. Through difficult conditions in jail, support from fellow Gujarat cricketers kept him going

Vadodara (Agency). Before dawn one morning in May last year, Shivalik Sharma’s life took a turn he could not have anticipated on a cricket field. A team of the Jodhpur Police arrived to arrest the 27-year-old cricketer based on a complaint of rape filed by his former fiancée after their engagement broke down. Sharma was taken to Rajasthan, where a court sent him to judicial custody. He spent nearly three weeks behind bars. More than a year later, the Rajasthan High Court has quashed the FIR and all consequential proceedings. The left hand batter from Vadodara who had been bought by Mumbai Indians ahead of the 2024 IPL season, is now trying to look ahead, carrying with him what he says has been a difficult life lesson. “I was arrested at 4 am (in May 2025) and taken to Jodhpur. I was taken to court and then sent to jail, where I spent 20 days before I was given bail. I was stunned, it had all come as a bolt from the blue, and it took me some time to understand what was happening,” Sharma said. Once he had recovered from the shock, he began to look at his situation as a

“test”, and turned to his “sportsman mindset”, Sharma said. But it was extremely difficult. ‘Reeking toilets, bad food’ “The 20 days in prison was a test and a lesson of sorts. Life was challenging. There were no fans, and there were no basic personal hygiene facilities such as the simple washing of hands before a meal... Inmates lived next to toilets,



and the drainage was bad,” Sharma said. He recalled that it was raining the day he was sent to prison, and there was a reeking toilet close to his cell. “The environment was bad, the meals were bad, you couldn’t eat beyond a few morsels... I fell sick, there were no

medicines,” Sharma said. Eventually, he found a way to structure his days, Sharma said. “I did feel the [legal] pressure, but when you have to spend time in a place, you need to adjust in some way... So I went to the jail library, and I met a teacher who incidentally was there for a case similar to mine...” He made friends with a few other inmates, with whom he played cricket and volleyball, and went for walks, Sharma said. “I am in touch with the teacher, who remained in jail for almost a year and only recently got bail. I do feel that God was kind to me and I was able to get bail within 20 days,” he said. Sharma’s broken engagement The case against Sharma was filed after the breakdown of the engagement that was fixed by the two families in August 2023. According to Sharma, the problems began after he was selected by Mumbai Indians in the IPL 2024 auction that was held in December 2023. Discussions over money, wedding expenses, and where the couple would live after they were married became increasingly difficult, Sharma said.

Sachin Waze to remain in jail as Bombay High Court stays bail in Antilia bomb scare case

On Wednesday morning, another high court bench recused itself from hearing NIA's challenge to Sachin Waze's bail.

Mumbai (Agency). The Bombay High Court on Wednesday stayed till October 7 the special court’s order granting bail to dismissed police officer Sachin Waze, arrested in the Antilia bomb scare and Mansukh Hiran murder cases of 2021. This means that Sachin Waze will remain inside the Thane Central Prison until the next hearing in the Ambani home bomb scare case. A bench of Justices Girish S Kulkarni and Neela K Gokhale was hearing an appeal by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) against the special court’s September 29 order. In its appeal, the NIA claimed that the special court’s ruling was “erroneous” and “illegal”. Sachin Waze has been in custody since 2021 and was booked for offences, including murder,



criminal conspiracy, and other offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) along with provisions of the UAPA and the Arms Act. He was granted bail by a special Mumbai court on

Tuesday. The high court has also asked the state government lawyer to intimate the jail authorities about the stay order. During the hearing today, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh for the NIA argued that Waze’s act in 2021 was a terrorist act. Justice Kulkarni-led bench noted that while Waze’s lawyers had appeared before the earlier bench, despite notice being issued to them by NIA, he was not represented before it. Therefore, the bench adjourned the hearing and noted, “We are inclined to grant an ad-interim stay to the said order till the adjourned date of hearing.” Earlier, the NIA struggled to find a bench to hear its challenge to Waze’s bail order as two High Court benches recused themselves from hearing it.

2 Congress leaders arrested for protest outside CEC’s Agra home, booked for murder attempt

Police said they arrested Congress state general secretary (organisation) Anil Yadav and Mathura district president Mukesh Dhangar and booked them for attempt to murder

Lucknow (Agency). Agra Police on Monday arrested two Congress leaders for attempt to murder after a group of Congress workers gathered near the ancestral residence of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar in Agra to protest and allegedly defaced the walls of the house. Police said they arrested Congress state general secretary (organisation) Anil Yadav and Mathura district president Mukesh Dhangar after they chased their vehicle while they were allegedly trying to leave Agra for Delhi. S-I Gupta said that after receiving information of a crowd gathered outside the CEC’s house in the Vijay Nagar area of

Agra, he, accompanied by a constable, reached the spot and found around 15–20 people raising slogans and behaving aggressively. “Home Guard Dinesh Kumar, who was deployed for security at the residence, tried to prevent the crowd from entering. However, the protesters surrounded him and entered the premises through the main gate without permission. When Home Guard Kumar again tried to stop them, the protesters pushed him, and he fell on the ground. The protesters struck him on the head with a hard object, after which he became unconscious,” a police officer said, adding that the S-I wrote in the complaint that



Dinesh Kumar is elderly and suffers from a heart ailment. According to the S-I, the protesters refused to leave the premises

despite being asked to do so and obstructed police personnel in discharge of their duty. He accused the protesters of using abusive and provocative language against the CEC, police, and the administration. The protesters continued raising slogans until additional police personnel arrived at the spot, the FIR stated. “We have arrested two persons in connection with the case. Both have been named in the FIR,” said Agra Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Manoj Kumar Yadav. Police are examining CCTV footage to identify other people who may have been involved in the alleged protest.

UP headmaster, wife killed: Blood-stained axe found, bodies 100m apart

A government school headmaster and his wife were found dead at their home, located on the premises of a school, in Sultanpur on Tuesday. Police are examining CCTV footage and possible enmity.

Lucknow (Agency). A government school headmaster and his wife were killed at their home, located on the premises of a private school, in Uttar Pradesh’s Sultanpur, police said. Police received information on Tuesday morning that the bodies had been found in Kumbhi Dariya village, under the jurisdiction of Kadiyur police station. The victims were identified as Mukesh Singh, 48, acting headmaster of a junior high school, and his wife, Vineeta Singh, 45, who ran the private school. School employees found the couple lying in pools of blood. Police said preliminary investigation suggested that the attackers first killed Vineeta and then turned on Mukesh when he tried to flee. Vineeta’s body was found about 100 metres from her husband’s. Mukesh had sustained an injury caused by a sharp-edged weapon to his neck, while his wife had a

similar injury to her head. An axe bearing blood stains was recovered from the crime scene, though police are yet to establish whether it was the murder weapon. Probe so far Superintendent of Police Vineet Jaiswal said it was not immediately clear whether the killings took place on Monday night or Tuesday morning. Police said robbery did not appear to be the motive behind the killings. During investigation, police found that the almirah in the victims’ room had been opened. However, jewellery and other valuables were found intact. A licensed rifle was also found on the premises. The couple had lived in the house, located on the outskirts, for three decades.

Mukesh was the youngest of three brothers. Police said their initial probe revealed that

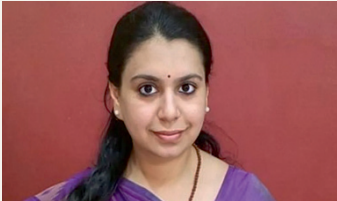


he was involved in a land dispute with some distant relatives who lived in the same village. The two sides had reportedly

clashed over a minor issue some time ago, following which complaints were lodged by both parties. Mukesh’s two brothers, who live in Lucknow and Ghazipur, told police that they were not aware of any specific reason or motive that could have led to the killings. Mukesh was actively involved in local teachers’ union politics and was contesting a teachers’ association election. Vineeta had previously contested a panchayat member election but lost. The couple is survived by their 20-year-old son, Abhyuday, who is studying at a university in Delhi. Police have registered a case against unidentified persons and are looking into call details records of the couple.

Divya Mittal, UP officer who resigned from IAS, announces entry into politics

Lucknow (Agency). Nearly a month after she took voluntary retirement, former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer Divya Mittal on Monday announced that she had decided to enter politics, saying she wanted to become the “voice” of people whose concerns often fail to reach the government. The Uttar Pradesh-cadre officer said she would not stand “under any flag” and sought public support. In a social media post, the 2013-batch IAS officer said she took time to decide on her next step after resigning from the civil services. “I resigned from IAS last month and left many questions behind. This is a big task, and I was gathering courage. Today I have come to answer. What next? The answer is politics,” she said. Mittal said her decision was driven by a desire to represent people



whose voices do not reach government offices. She raised questions about schools sanctioned but never constructed, land allotted on lease but never handed over, poor roads and the deaths they cause, and the future of students amid examination paper leaks. Recalling an inspection in Lahuria Dah area of Mirzapur, where she served as district magistrate, Mittal said she had expected a woman there to ask for a pension or a house. Instead, the woman, who did not even have a drinking water connection at home, asked for a school in her village. The former IAS officer said she sanctioned the school, but construction had not begun even three years later. “Tell me, what wasn’t available? Funds, rules, or approvals? Everything was available, but there was no intent,” she said, adding that she wanted answers on such “invisible schools”.

NEWS BOX

Asian Games 2026: Priya Ghanghas wins bronze in women's 60kg boxing



New Delhi. (Agency)

India's Commonwealth Games 2026 gold medalist Priya Ghanghas settled for a bronze medal at the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya on Wednesday after losing to China's Yang Chengyu in the women's 60kg semifinal. This is India's 55th medal at the Asian Games 2026, having won eight golds, 21 silvers and now a 26th bronze medal has been added to the tally.

Yang looked more aggressive in the start of round one, while Priya launched some counter-punches and landed a few one of them. Halfway into the round, Priya looked more effective and did some damage with her combination punches. However, Yang ended the first round with a solid punch, and judges voted in her favour 3-2, as per ESPN.

In the second round, Priya and Yang traded hits after the Chinese launched a flurry of punches to start the round. Yang took the second round 4-1. In the final round, Priya struggled to land her punches, and Yang maintained a solid defence. The Chinese took the final round as well 4-1, with the Indian settling for the bronze. To start off the day, the Indian archery trio of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Chikitha Taniparthi and Prithika Pradeep secured a sensational gold medal for the nation, beating China in the final of the women's compound archery team event.

Indian archers were absolutely clinical in the title clash against China, beating them 238-234. India maintained their lead right from the first rotation, giving Jyothi her fourth Asian Games gold and a first Asiad gold medal to Chikitha and Prithika. Also, archers Chikitha Taniparthi and Sahil Jadhav clinched the Gold medal in the compound mixed team event at the Asian Games 2026 after defeating South Korea in a thrilling shoot-off on Wednesday. The gold medal win also earned India a qualification quota for the compound mixed team event at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Virat Kohli show sets up India for series win, West Indies seek answers in Guwahati



NAGOYA. (Agency)

India will be looking to put in another dominant showing, but Guwahati could offer the West Indies one last chance to push back before the series slips away. After being blown away by Virat Kohli and Shubman Gill in the opening ODI, the visitors arrive at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium with plenty of questions to answer. For India, the mood is markedly different. Kohli's sublime century and Gill's fluent hundred powered them to a comfortable eight-wicket victory in Thiruvananthapuram, putting the hosts 1-0 up and firmly in control of the series. The second ODI now gives them an opportunity to finish the job while allowing several of their key players to build further momentum. Kohli's unbeaten 139 in the first ODI was another reminder of his ability to take control of a chase. He found the boundary with remarkable ease and, alongside Gill, ensured India were never really in danger after West Indies posted a competitive total. The former India captain will have another landmark in sight in Guwahati. His century in the opening ODI took his tally of international hundreds against the West Indies to 13, level with Sunil Gavaskar. Another hundred would take Kohli past Gavaskar and make him the leading century-maker against the Caribbean side in international cricket. The record, though, is likely to be secondary to India's larger objective. With the series there to be sealed, the hosts will want another clinical performance and will be wary of allowing West Indies back into the contest. Rohit Sharma, meanwhile, will be looking to get some runs under his belt. The veteran opener made 32 in the first ODI and gave India a rapid start before falling to Jayden Seales.

Dominant start, nervy finish: Sahil, Chikitha's perfect 10s seal Asian Games gold

India's compound archers Sahil Rajesh and Chikitha Taniparthi won the Asian Games mixed team gold medal after beating South Korea in a shoot-off. The victory also secured India's quota places for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, where compound archery will make its debut.

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's compound archers Sahil Rajesh and Chikitha Taniparthi secured Olympic qualification for Los Angeles 2028 after winning the Asian Games mixed team gold medal on Wednesday, surviving a nervy shoot-off against South Korea's Choi Yonghee and Park Jungyoon.

India had looked to be cruising towards gold after a near-perfect start, but a late

wobble allowed South Korea to pull level at 157-157 and force a shoot-off. The Indian pair held their nerve when it mattered most, shooting a perfect 10-10 combination to put the pressure back on their opponents. South Korea could not match them. One of their archers hit a 9, handing India the gold medal and completing a second archery triumph of the day. The victory also carried significance beyond the Asian Games podium. Compound archery will make its Olympic debut at Los Angeles 2028, with the mixed team event among the new events on the programme. The Asian Games champions were guaranteed one men's and one women's quota place for LA28, making the gold medal in Okazaki a direct route to Olympic qualification for India. India had entered the final against a South Korean pair that had already shown just how high the scoring could go. Earlier in the competition, Choi and Park had combined for a world-record score of 160, hitting all 10s across their 16 arrows. The

Koreans therefore arrived in the final with the weight of that performance behind them. India, however, started without any visible sign of being overawed. Sahil and Chikitha were perfect through the opening



two ends, hitting all eight arrows into the 10-ring to score 80 out of 80. South Korea, by comparison, dropped two points after shooting two 9s to finish the opening phase on 78. The Indian pair had established a two-point advantage and appeared to be moving towards a comfortable victory. Sahil was

regularly speaking to Chikitha between shots, helping her settle and line up her arrows as the pair tried to build on India's strong start. The gold was also significant for the Indian archery contingent, which had already won a title earlier in the day.

But the final changed in the third end.

Both Indian archers dropped a point, with the pair finishing the end on 38 out of 40. South Korea took advantage of the opening, maintaining their composure and continuing to find the 10-ring with remarkable consistency. The margin that India had built up began to disappear. By the final end, the Koreans had almost completely erased the deficit. India needed to hold its nerve, but another 9 left the door open. South Korea capitalised and the scores were level at 157-157 after 16 arrows apiece. The final had gone from a seemingly comfortable Indian victory to a one-end shoot-off.

IND vs WI: Centurion Justin Greaves ruled out of 2nd ODI due to calf injury

New Delhi. (Agency)

West Indies opener Justin Greaves, who struck a sensational hundred against India in the 1st ODI at Thiruvananthapuram, has been ruled out of the 2nd ODI due to a calf injury. Greaves dominated the proceedings against India in the opening match of the series, taking on the fast bowlers and giving the West Indies a terrific start alongside John Campbell. The pair added 135 runs in the first 20 overs.

HOW WAS JUSTIN GREAVES INJURED?

Greaves' cover drives were a treat to watch as he methodically tore apart the Indian fast-bowling attack. The batter, however, struggled with an injury through much of his 108-ball stay. In the first 10

overs of the match, he pulled his calf and needed treatment from the physio. "Justin Greaves has been ruled out of the second game of the ODI series against India after sustaining a calf injury," Cricket West



Indies said in a statement. Greaves picked up the injury during his innings in the opening match of the series," it added.

IND vs WI: 2nd ODI Preview

The hot and humid weather in Kerala made life difficult for the fast bowlers, while Greaves also struggled to maintain his intensity throughout his innings.

Greaves was eventually dismissed after completing his century in the 36th over, by none other than Kuldeep Yadav, who helped India fight their way back into the game. Kuldeep's 4/40 helped India recover from a difficult start and restrict the visitors to 295 for 7. In reply, India dominated the chase, courtesy of Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli, who added 151 runs between them. Gill anchored the innings, while Kohli went on a blistering run, helping India chase down the target in just 41.4 overs.

The second ODI of the three-match series will be played in Guwahati on September 30.

Asian Games: Jyothi's redemption, Chikitha, Prithika's spark power golden archery start

New Delhi. (Agency)

India had a reputation to defend as they stepped into the archery ring on Wednesday, September 30. They were coming into the business end of the women's team compound competition. They had ended South Korea's dominance over the sport at the Asian Games in Hangzhou last time around. In Nagoya, they were expected to continue their dominance and had an interesting lineup for the contest. Jyothi Surekha Vennam needs no introduction. A former national-level swimmer, she eventually found her calling in archery after taking up the sport at a young age. Her progress was rapid, and she soon established herself among the leading compound archers in the world. n concludes. Her biggest breakthrough came at the 2023 Asian Games, where she produced a historic campaign by winning

gold in the women's individual, women's team and mixed team events. With three titles in a single edition, she became the first Indian archer to achieve the feat at the Asian Games. But she needed redemption



after losing to 14-year-old Kang Yeon-seo of Korea and thus, relinquishing her compound individual crown. There was the youthful spark from Chikitha Taniparthi and Prithika Pradeep. Coming from a farming family, Chikitha

was introduced to archery by her father, who encouraged her to take up the sport after reading about it in a newspaper when she was in Class 2. She formally began training in 2018, and what started as an early interest soon developed into a passion. She made her international breakthrough in 2025 and quickly became an important part of India's compound archery team. At the 2025 World Archery Youth Championships in Winnipeg, she won the Under-21 women's individual gold, becoming the first Indian woman to claim the title in the event's history. Prithika took up archery as a hobby in Class 5, drawn to the sport because it was new and exciting. What began as a recreational activity soon grew into a serious interest, prompting her parents to enrol her in professional coaching from Class 6. Their support helped her make the transition from a school-level hobbyist to a competitive archer.

Pragyan Ojha likely to become India's next chief selector after Ajit Agarkar's departure



New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India left-arm spinner Pragyan Ojha is likely to become India's next chief selector following Ajit Agarkar's departure, reported PTI on Tuesday, September 29. Ojha, 39, is currently serving as the interim head of the four-member selection committee.

Ojha was among the four selectors who held a lengthy discussion with India head coach Gautam Gambhir in Guwahati on Tuesday, a day before the second ODI against the West Indies. Shiv Sundar Das, Ajay Ratna and RP Singh were also part of the meeting, while outgoing chief selector Agarkar was not present. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Barsapara Stadium while the West Indies went through their training session. The Indian team was taking a day off after travelling from Thiruvananthapuram to Guwahati. The presence of the entire selection committee during a bilateral series is not commonplace, with the discussion understood to have centred on India's upcoming tour of New Zealand and the squads that need to be finalised for the series.

WHO IS PRAGYAN OJHA?

Ojha, who played 24 Tests for India, took interim charge of the selection committee after Agarkar's departure. He is now in line to take over as the full-time chief selector. The selection committee has a busy period ahead, with India scheduled to play five T20Is, five ODIs and two Tests during their New Zealand tour from October 22 to November 27. The selectors also need to finalise the India A squad for a three-Test tour of New Zealand, which begins on October 24. The New Zealand tour will begin with a five-match T20I series, with the opening game scheduled in Christchurch on October 22. A five-match ODI series will follow from November 4, before the two-Test series begins in Wellington on November 19.

Argentina's post-Messi era begins against Bolivia, coach discusses future of No. 10 jersey

BUENOS AIRES. (Agency)

With the iconic No. 10 jersey unassigned, Argentina will face its first test of the post-Lionel Messi era when it hosts Bolivia in a friendly on Wednesday. As the 39-year-old legend gets set for his farewell match with Argentina next week, coach Lionel Scaloni is already looking toward the future.

Facing the immense challenge of replacing Messi, the coach remained pragmatic: "We'll find a way to play differently." "That's what these matches are for — to experiment," Scaloni said Tuesday ahead of the game against Bolivia at the Kempes Stadium in Córdoba. "That said, our core style still revolves around controlling the ball. From there, we'll see how we adapt."

Scaloni has opted to field strikers Julián Álvarez and Lautaro Martínez together up front — a tactical combination he had previously avoided. Scaloni sopped short of

confirming the starting lineup, but Argentina is expected to field most of the players who featured in the World Cup final against Spain. Anticipate changes include Agustín Gaíaz starting at right-back, Exequiel Palacios replacing the suspended Enzo Fernández (following his red card in the final), and Valentín Barco slotting in as a third midfielder. Nicolás Paz, currently playing for Italy's Como, will take on the playmaking duties in Messi's absence.

Will anyone wear the No. 10 jersey? Scaloni confirmed at Tuesday's press conference that no player will wear No. 10 for now — Messi's jersey number when he lifted the 2022 World Cup trophy and throughout most of his 207 appearances for Argentina.

Messi's farewell match is Oct. 6 against Benin in Buenos Aires. "We aren't obligated to assign it for these matches, so we won't give it to anyone until Leo's farewell game,"

the coach said. "The idea is for someone to eventually take it on, given how special it is to wear. We just haven't decided who yet." Messi announced the end of his



international career in late August. In his final World Cup — the sixth of his career — he played eight matches and scored eight goals. He concludes his national team career as Argentina's all-time leading scorer with

125 goals, 21 of which came in World Cup tournaments.

Scaloni set to continue

Scaloni is close to renewing his contract, which is set to expire on Dec. 31.

"The important thing is that the desire is there," the coach said. "I had to step back, re-evaluate, and look closely at the sporting side alongside the financial aspects. I needed to analyze what lies ahead. In the end, we're excited about the future, and that shared enthusiasm paved the way toward an agreement." Scaloni had previously hinted he might step down following the World Cup final defeat on July 19. However, he recently met with Argentine Football Association president Claudio Tapia to negotiate an extension through the 2030 World Cup, which Argentina will co-host.

Ahaan Panday's Sister

Alanna Panday

Gets Emotional As She Reveals 2nd Baby's Gender With Ivor, River

Ahaan Panday's sister, Alanna Panday, and her husband Ivor McCray are set to welcome a baby girl. The couple, who are already parents to their son River, recently hosted an intimate gender reveal and shared glimpses of the celebration online.

Alanna Panday to welcome a baby girl

Alanna and Ivor cut into a cake together to find out the sex of their second baby. The pink filling revealed that they were expecting a daughter, leaving Alanna visibly emotional as she broke down in tears. Their son River was also part of the special moment. For the celebration, Alanna wore a lemon-yellow dress, while Ivor kept things understated in a beige shirt. Their son River joined them in a yellow shirt, adding to the family's coordinated look for the special occasion.

The couple kept the décor understated, opting for a soft palette of ivory, cream, beige and butter yellow. Pleated off-white curtains served as the backdrop, while the minimal setup kept attention on the family and the cake. There were no conventional



pink-and-blue gender reveal decorations. The highlight of the setup was a tall, round cake finished with cream frosting, textured ridges and delicate pearl-like and pale-yellow embellishments. Alanna and Ivor cut into it together, revealing a pink centre and confirming that they are expecting a baby girl.

Sharing the video on Instagram, Alanna wrote, "Can't wait to meet you." Soon after she shared the happy moment, her post was flooded with sweet reactions. Bipasha Basu commented, "Best news ever." Alanna's mother, Deanne, wrote, "My baby girl is having a baby girl congratulations." Anusha Dandekar wrote, "Congratulations beautiful." Banita Sandhu dropped teary-eyed emojis.

Alanna Panday and Ivor McCray got married on March 16, 2023, in an intimate white wedding ceremony in Mumbai. The couple welcomed their first child, a son, in July 2024.

'Woh Jiske Saath Hai...': Sunita Ahuja's New Remark Goes Viral Amid Govinda-Komal Rani Dating Rumours



Sunita Ahuja's recent remark on Govinda about his alleged relationship with Roopa co-star Komal Rani has stirred quite a lot of controversy. Now, a new remark by Ahuja has surfaced. In a recent conversation, Sunita was asked about Govinda's recent visit to Lalbaugcha Raja with Komal, and she said that she would not want to speak about it much.

Speaking to Sarish Media, Sunita Ahuja said, "Govinda ke baare mein, na uske co-star ke baare mein kuch nahi bolna hai. I am seeing he is happy; God bless him. Jaisi usko zindagi jeena hai, woh jeeye." "Kyunki mujhe yeh sab par focus nahi karna hai. I just pray to God ki woh jahan bhi hai, jiske saath bhi hai, khush hai aur khush rahe. Mera main focus is mera kaam. I don't want to fall into controversies again and again," she further added and concluded by asking people not to waste time on such matters.

Komal Rani Slammed Sunita Ahuja

With the constantly growing chatter around her equation with Govinda, Komal recently broke her silence in a long note on her Instagram Story. Komal slammed Sunita for an alleged conspiracy against her and said, "Jo aurat apne hi pati ko salon se jaan se marne ki koshish kar rahi ho, aisi auraton ki badduayen kisi ko nahi lagti. Nobody ever can be a homebreaker in an already broken house. People in our country are not so foolish that they would run after a crow, just because someone told them the crow has taken your ear. I don't understand what kind of pain a woman is going through, where, instead of trying to heal it, she seems to enjoy putting it on display in public. Is this really pain, or is it a carefully thought-out conspiracy?"

She further added, "To constantly mentally harass a man, stop him from working, force him to sit at home and waste away, isolate him completely, and drive him to the point of death. I don't think any good and devoted wife could treat her husband so terribly. Are women like this mentally unwell, or are they simply too clever for their own good, fully aware that what they couldn't accomplish behind closed doors, they can achieve by going public and gaining people's sympathy? Stop using my name to serve your agenda. May God protect every decent man from such cunning women."

Vidya Balan Reunites With R Balki For New Tamil Film 17 Years After Paa: 'New Beginnings'



Vidya Balan is stepping into a new Tamil project with filmmaker R. Balki, marking the duo's reunion nearly two decades after their last film together. The actress recently hinted that work on the yet-to-be-titled project has begun, sharing a behind-the-scenes glimpse on her Instagram Stories.

Vidya Balan To Star In R Balki's New Tamil Film

In the photo, Vidya Balan can be seen holding a script while sporting glasses and a long braid, giving fans a peek at her look for the new film. She captioned the post, "New Beginnings #NewTamilFilm with #Rbalki," confirming the start of her latest project with Balki. Check out the behind-the-scenes glimpse below!

Vidya Balan And R Balki's Reunion After Paa

Vidya Balan and filmmaker R Balki last worked together on Paa, the 2009 film starring Amitabh Bachchan. The upcoming Tamil project marks their first reunion since then.

While Vidya has not shared any details about the film's plot, her post has already generated interest around the project. For now, the makers appear to be keeping the details closely guarded, with the actor's social media post offering the first indication that production is underway.

What's Next for Vidya Balan?

The Tamil film is one of several projects lined up for Vidya. She will next be seen as Kantha in Jailer 2, starring Rajinikanth. The film is set to arrive in theatres on October 15, 2026.

Last week, the makers of Jailer 2 unveiled Vidya Balan's first-look character-introduction teaser, introducing her as Kantha in the film. While details about her role have been kept under wraps, the 47-year-old actress will reportedly play Mithun Chakraborty's eldest daughter in the film.

Vidya also has an untitled comedy with Akshay Kumar in the works. Directed by Anees Bazmee, the film features Raashii Khanna as well and is scheduled for a December 4, 2026 theatrical release.

Aishwarya Rai

Kisses Simone Ashley As They Reunite At Paris Fashion Week, Fans Say 'Sisterly Vibes'

At L'Oréal Paris' Le Défilé in Paris, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan stepped onto the runway looking like a modern-day royalty. The actress wore a dramatic two-piece velvet gown by Yara Shoemaker from the designer's Fall/Winter 2026-27 couture collection. Away from the stage, Rai had a cute reunion with Bridgerton star Simone Ashley. Videos of their interaction are now going viral on the internet.

In the video, Aishwarya warmly greets Simone with kisses before taking a seat beside her. The two are seen holding hands as they chat, both dressed in black outfits. They also pose for a picture together. Later, during the final ramp walk, Aishwarya and Simone are once again seen holding hands.

The video soon made its way across social media, with fans loving the warm bond between Aishwarya and Simone. One fan wrote, "They are giving sisterly vibes." Another commented, "Love watching Aish interacting with all these girls at the L'Oréal event every year." A third added, "Such girls girl moment." Another fan called it "One of our favourite moments," while one more wrote,

"Aishwarya looks so happy with Simone."

Meanwhile, last year too, Simone and Aishwarya shared a fun moment at Paris Fashion Week when they posed for a goofy selfie together. Simone later posted the picture on Instagram, and it quickly caught the attention of fans, who flooded the comments with love for the duo.

Taking to Instagram, Ashley shared a selfie with



Aishwarya on her Stories. In the picture, the two were seen posing together in their vanity space, dressed in elegant black outfits as they got ready for the big event. On the work front, Aishwarya last appeared in Mani Ratnam's 2023 film Ponniyin Selvan: II that ended up collecting Rs 344 crore worldwide.

NEWS BOX

Paris Eiffel Tower says chief to step down after uproar over removing women staff

PARIS, France.(Agency)

The operating company that runs the Eiffel Tower said Tuesday its chief would step down at the end of this year in the wake of a controversy over the removal of women staff during a visit by a Hindu religious group. Patrick Branco Ruivo, who has been director general of the Paris landmark since 2018, would leave his job at the end of the year after an internal probe revealed that "operational flaws and shortcomings" in organising the visit led to the "unacceptable" removal of women staff, the company SETE said in a statement. The removal of women staff during a visit by the Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) spiritual movement on September 5 prompted a staff walkout and the closure of the monument for a day, as well as an outcry across political spectrum in France which prizes secularism and gender equality. At the time, SETE acknowledged the Hindu delegation had requested the visit be organised so as to limit "interactions with women" and said that "these conditions should not have been accepted". "The coming months will allow us to prepare for the leadership transition under the best possible conditions," said Ariel Weil, SETE's board chairman.

'Female employees sidelined'

He said he was demanding the creation of a "dedicated protocol department" and the implementation of a new set of measures and training programs to promote gender equality.

The Eiffel Tower, which is owned by the city of Paris, says it receives nearly seven million people a year. The Socialist mayor of Paris, Emmanuel Gregoire, had lambasted the move to remove women staff as an "absurd, unjust and unacceptable decision" and ordered two separate probes.

'She Said It Was Consensual': US District Attorney's Shocker In Cornell Case

TRENTON .(Agency)

A US district attorney has released new disturbing details about a Cornell University student's alleged fraternity gang rape, explaining why he reopened the investigation after accuser "Jane Doe" filed a civil lawsuit against the seven Chi Phi fraternity brothers and the school. Tompkins County District Attorney Matthew Van Houten also detailed the accuser's statement submitted to campus police in November 2024, about a week after she claimed seven men drugged and raped her during an hours-long assault at their Ithaca house. In the copy of the statement accessed by NDTV, Houten said that Doe's 2024 testimony to police presented a different version of events from the details in the new civil complaint she filed against the seven accused and the university, while insisting that "it can take years of therapy and healing for victims of sexual assaults to fully process and understand what happened to them."

He also blamed his extraordinary move of putting Doe's 2024 testimony in the public domain on people flooding his office with phone calls and emails seeking answers. "While I generally refrain from commenting publicly on criminal investigations, the community outrage stemming from the incomplete news and social media coverage requires that I provide an answer to why the investigation resulted in a lack of criminal charges," he said.

What Jane Doe's 2024 Statement Said

According to Houten, Doe's sworn six-page statement in November of 2024 did not allege that she was drugged against her will or gang-raped. "On the contrary, Jane Doe's statement described her participation in drug use and sexual conduct as voluntary, conscious, and consensual," he claimed. In her statement to the cops, Doe, who was 20 years old at the time, had said that on the evening of October 19, 2024, she walked to the Chi Phi Fraternity to meet one of the accused, who was her friend.

Iranians face soaring prices for medicine as the US blockade and sanctions hit hard

Supplies are also strained because medicines are smuggled to neighboring Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, where prices are higher, state media reported.

TEHRAN.(Agency)

Medication prices are soaring in Iran and some treatments have become hard to find, leaving patients and their families scrambling as a U.S. blockade and stepped-up sanctions squeeze the country's pharmaceuticals industry. Some medicines have more than tripled in price, further squeezing Iranians' finances seven

months into the country's war with the United States and Israel. Prices for food and other goods have skyrocketed even as unemployment has risen and the currency, which hit a record low this week, has lost half its value. The war has become an economic endurance test. Iran has tried to push world energy prices higher with attacks on the region's oil shipping routes; the United States, in turn, has aimed to wreck Iran's economy by blocking its ports since June and slapping it with increasingly tough sanctions. Iran's pharmaceutical industry is vulnerable because of its reliance on imports. So far there has been little sign of major shortages of medicines at Iran's hospitals, but the difficulties are showing at pharmacies. Gholamreza Rahmani, a Tehran welder, and his wife recently scoured several pharmacies over two days hoping to fill prescriptions for four medicines for their 12-year-old daughter, who was having stomach troubles. "Each one would have one or two items, not all of

them," he said, noting that they couldn't find one of the medicines anywhere. The search cost him two days of wages because he couldn't go to work. "My daughter's illness and the loss of income



are like scissors, cutting from two sides," he said. Iran's pharmaceutical industry needs imports. Iran produces more than 80% of its medicines domestically, according to official statistics, but many of those rely on imported raw materials. Before the war, most medicines and

pharmaceutical components were brought in by sea, but the American naval blockade has cut off shipping, Bahman Sabour, a member of the Tehran Pharmacies Association, told local media. Medical importers switched to more expensive air routes. But that access has been threatened by new U.S. sanctions on a number of Iranian airlines, which led to some international flights being halted. U.S. sanctions don't directly target medicines, but financial sanctions in place for years also hurt the pharmaceutical supply because international banks and companies often will be overly cautious and refuse transactions because they fear running afoul of sanctions, said Reza Majdzadeh, a professor at the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Essex in England. "A medicine may be perfectly legal to sell to Iran, but a bank may refuse to process the payment," he said. "A pharmaceutical or shipping company may simply decide that dealing with Iran is not worth the risk."

US to hike EB-5 Green Card fees

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

The US has decided to drastically increase fees for immigrants seeking to invest in America and eventually claim permanent residency under the EB-5 investor programme which remains one of the most reliable ways for Indian entrepreneurs and families to obtain Green Card. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) finalised a rule on Tuesday that seeks to more than double the fees for applying to the EB-5 visa. The rule will be effective from November 30. The US EB-5 Immigrant Investor Programme grants permanent residency (a Green Card) to foreign investors and their immediate families who invest capital into a US commercial enterprise and create 10 full-time jobs for American workers. The filing fee for Form I-526, used by standalone investors, will rise from USD 3,675 to USD 7,615. The fee for an initial Form I-526E petition, used by investors participating through an approved

regional centre, will increase from USD 3,675 to USD 7,850. Initial I-526 and I-526E petitions will also include a USD 75 technology fee. Regional-centre investors must



additionally pay the programme's investor integrity fee. The fee for Form I-829, filed by investors seeking to remove conditions on their permanent resident status, will increase from USD 3,750 to USD 5,000. Charges imposed on regional centres will rise more sharply. The fee for an initial Form I-956 application seeking regional-centre designation will increase from USD 17,795 to USD 44,115. The charge for

Form I-956F, used to seek approval of an investment in a commercial enterprise, will rise to USD 42,675 from USD 17,795. The annual fee for Form I-956G will decrease from USD 3,035 to USD 2,165. The final rule also establishes Form I-527 for certain investors seeking to amend older Form I-526 petitions. The new filing will cost USD 10,330. Announcing the new fees, USCIS said in a press release that the agency is largely funded by the fees it charges, rather than taxes. ng applications, conducting background checks, verifying eligibility, detecting fraud, and maintaining programme operations must be paid by those who use the immigration system," the release said. However, like most employment-based immigration categories, EB-5 visas are subject to annual caps and country limits.

As demand from India has increased dramatically over the past decade, a backlog has developed that affects how long investors may wait for a Green Card.

Morocco's king appoints the country's first female prime minister

CASABLANCA, Morocco.(Agency)

Morocco's King Mohammed VI on Tuesday named Urban Planning Minister Fatima Zahra Mansouri as the country's prime minister, making the 50-year-old attorney the first woman to hold the position in the

Muslim kingdom. Mansouri, who until her nomination also was the mayor of Marrakech, was tasked with forming a new government, the Royal Palace said in a statement. The announcement came four days after results of parliamentary elections were announced, with Mansouri's centrist Authenticity and Modernity Party, or PAM, the highest vote-getter. Mansouri, the second woman to serve as prime minister in the Arab world after Najla Bouden in Tunisia, is expected to build a coalition in coming days to form a government. Morocco's electoral system makes it difficult for a single party to win an absolute majority. Her government is expected to make billions of dollars in investments linked to the 2030



FIFA World Cup, while seeking to deliver on promises to fight inflation, raise wages and create jobs. The Moroccan Constitution gives the king, who is the country's highest authority, the power to appoint the prime minister, but he must choose from the party that wins the most seats in parliamentary elections. That was a

change successfully pushed by Arab Spring protesters in 2011. Before that, the king could name the prime minister without any such restriction. Mansouri joined PAM upon its creation in 2008 by Fouad Ali El Himma, a childhood friend and close adviser to the king. A law graduate from the University of Montpellier in France, Mansouri became one of the party's top leaders in 2024. She twice served as mayor of Marrakech and was a member of parliament. Mansouri is the daughter of the "pasha of Marrakech" Abderrahmane El Mansouri, a senior local official who was also Morocco's ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. He headed Marrakech's bar association and was a landowner.

Two Indian nationals charged with selling fake Ozempic in US

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

Two Indian nationals have been charged with conspiracy and smuggling related to an alleged transnational counterfeit prescription drug distribution scheme in a US federal court in Florida. The indictment by a federal grand jury in the Middle District of Florida alleges that Swapandip Roy, Vicky Ramancha, and their co-conspirators sold counterfeit Ozempic to distributors in the United States at deeply discounted prices. Roy was extradited from Italy to the United States and made his initial appearance in court in Tampa, Florida, on Tuesday. The duo faces a 71-year jail term if convicted. According to court documents, beginning in at least July 2023 and continuing to April 2024, Roy and Ramancha allegedly obtained counterfeit Ozempic from unauthorised sources in China. The counterfeit Ozempic allegedly distributed by Roy, Ramancha, and their co-conspirators included counterfeit packaging, package inserts, pen labels, and needles meant to deceive downstream

customers into believing they were purchasing authentic Ozempic authorised by the manufacturer. The scheme continued even after the FDA seized some of the counterfeit Ozempic in December 2023 and issued a public warning regarding the products. Roy and Ramancha are charged with one count of conspiracy to commit smuggling and to defraud the United States, three counts of smuggling, and two counts of selling counterfeit drugs and holding counterfeit drugs for sale. "If convicted, Roy and Ramancha each face a maximum penalty of 71 years in prison," a statement from the Department of Justice said. "Counterfeit prescription drugs--especially common ones--threaten the health and safety of every American who depends on the integrity of our pharmaceutical supply," said Assistant Attorney General A. Tysen Duva of the Justice Department's Criminal Division. "These defendants allegedly exploited people's health to pay themselves. We will keep pursuing anyone who seeks to deceive American consumers."

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

G20 trade ministers are set to open talks Wednesday in the United States, in meetings strained by President Donald Trump's tariffs as Washington targets partners regarding forced labor and overcapacity. The gathering of officials from the Group of 20 major economies -- which includes China, India, Russia, Japan, Germany and France -- takes place in the Midwestern city of Milwaukee. But analysts expect the two days of talks to be deadlocked as Trump's tariffs weigh on relationships while China rejects concerns about its exports, which critics see as driven by excess industrial capacity. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer defended Washington's approach at a Tuesday roundtable in Milwaukee, saying the administration "is not anti-trade." He added that countries are facing similar challenges with global overcapacity and "non-market policies." This week, key US trading partners like Canada and the European Union are also expected to push for deeper trade ties outside the United

States. "Don't expect any breakthroughs in Milwaukee," Josh Lipsky of the Atlantic Council think tank told AFP, noting Trump's preference for bilateral negotiations. Even as G20 partners will be anxious to find ways to cooperate with the world's biggest economy,



"they will also be under pressure to voice their concerns with tariffs," added former US trade official Wendy Cutler, now at the Asia Society Policy Institute. The United States holds the rotating presidency of the G20, which comprises 19 nations plus the EU and

the African Union. Trump has unleashed a barrage of tariffs on trading partners since last year, separately targeting sectors like steel and autos. Although the Supreme Court struck down Trump's country-specific tariffs in February, Washington has since alleged insufficient action against forced labor to slap new tariffs on 60 economies.

These include China, India and the EU.

The president's sectoral duties remain intact too, straining ties. And Washington is investigating 16 partners over excess industrial capacity, a complaint commonly levied at China. Critics say this floods markets, unfairly suppressing prices.

But ongoing US probes go beyond the world's number two economy, bringing the threat of more tariffs to the EU and G20 countries like Japan and South Korea. Cutler expects some countries will "mince no words" regarding the investigation, feeling "they are being unfairly targeted." China "will continue to deny the issue of exporting overproduction," by trying to convince others that it is doing good by providing high-quality and low-priced goods, she said.