

J&K : Flash Floods, Landslides Wreak Havoc In Poonch-Rajouri Belt; 11 Dead, Several Missing



LT NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Jul 19: At least 11 people were killed and seven others went missing as torrential rains triggered landslides and flash floods in the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, prompting a multi-agency rescue operation.

The worst devastation was reported from Surankote tehsil in Poonch district, where most of the fatalities occurred, while rescue teams raced against time to trace the missing amid continuing rain and damaged roads, the officials said.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who was in Delhi for the proposed statehood protest, decided to

cut short his stay in the national capital and return to Jammu in the afternoon in view of the worsening situation across parts of the division following heavy rains.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha reviewed the situation in the rain and flash flood-hit districts and directed officials to ensure immediate relief and assistance to the affected families.

A landslide triggered by torrential rains struck a house in Lower Murrah village of Surankote early Sunday, burying all eight occupants under the debris, the officials said.

While bodies of five persons, including a two-year-old boy Sofian Yasar were retrieved from the debris, a search operation was continuing to trace the remaining missing persons, the

officials said.

Four members of another family were reported missing after their house was washed away by flash floods at Sangla village, they said, adding the missing persons include Abdul Hameed, his wife Sharifa Begum, daughter Areeba and sister Manira Begum.

A 28-year-old woman, Nazia Kousar, was killed when her house collapsed in Noonabandi village. Her Husband, Mohd Hafiz, and three children, aged between two and six years, were rescued with injuries and shifted to a hospital, officials said.

Shahzaib Ahmad (22) lost his life when his house collapsed at Sanglani-Surankote, while a minor girl identified as Iram drowned in a stream at Marhote. An unidentified body of a woman was also fished out from a stream near Dhundak Lathoong bridge, officials said.

One person was killed and another critically injured following collapse of nearly half-a-dozen houses in Haveli tehsil of Poonch district, the officials said.

They said body of a woman was also fished out from a river in Rajouri town which was hit by flash floods following incessant overnight rainfall, forcing hundreds of residents to move to safer locations as floodwaters inundated low-lying areas.

Dozens of vehicles were swept away or submerged after overflowing rivers breached their banks, causing widespread disruption, the officials said.

They said rescue and relief teams, assisted by the local administration, were engaged in evacuating affected families and assessing the damage, while local Congress MLA Ifkhar Ahmad said there was heavy damage to public and private – **Contd. on P2**

LG Addresses Interfaith Dialogue For Harmony Organised By Save Youth Save Future Foundation



LT NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Jul 19: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today addressed Interfaith Dialogue for Harmony in Baramulla, organised by the Save Youth Save Future Foundation. He commended the Save Youth Save Future Foundation for their contribution to the drug-free Jammu Kashmir campaign. He said the young volunteers worked selflessly and took on a great responsibility for a better future for UT.

Geographic Reference
“Through this campaign we have strengthened trust within our families and institutions, reinforced youth's confidence in their future, and sent a message across the country that when a society rises up on its own, it can overcome biggest challenges,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted that this land of Jammu Kashmir embodies harmony and brotherhood.

“For generations, people of different faiths received respect and experienced spiritual peace. It is the lasting legacy of the saints, Sufis, and Rishis who spent centuries teaching our people the power of love, compassion, and unity.

Lal Ded's teachings didn't belong to one religion. Her Vakh spoke directly to the human heart. She never judged people by their faith. Instead, Lal Ded focused on bringing different ways of worship together. Similarly, Sheikh-ul-Alam showed us that true devotion isn't about conflict or division. It is found in compassion and in serving every single human being.

The flourishing rishi-sufi tradition in Kashmir does not proclaim the superiority of one faith. Its message is that all religions and beliefs draw their strength from the same existence, and I believe this teaching is our shared heritage. This heritage does not belong only to Hindus, only to Muslims, only to Sikhs, Buddhists, or Christians. It is the legacy of every citizen born on this sacred land, and protecting this heritage is our moral and spiritual duty. We must safeguard this harmony in the same way we protect our families,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also stated that social and religious harmony is the cornerstone on which a strong society, a strong Jammu Kashmir, and a developed India can be built.

“When the people move in peaceful coexistence then the energy of society becomes the greatest force for development. That is why I – **Contd. on P2**

J&K Congress Stages Sit-In For Statehood; March To LG's Residence Foiled, Dozens Detained

LT NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Jul 19: Dozens of Congress leaders and activists were detained on Sunday as police foiled their march to the Lok Bhavan in Jammu to submit a memorandum addressed to President Droupadi Murmu in support of the demand for immediate restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Executive Branch

The march led by Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hameed Karra came a day ahead of the National Conference's proposed demonstration for restoration of statehood in Delhi.

Before the march, hundreds of Congress workers staged a peaceful sit-in at Maharaja Hari – **Contd. on P2**

Wangchuk Calls July 20 Parliament March India's 'Second Freedom Movement'



LT NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Jul 19: Activist Sonam Wangchuk on Saturday described the proposed July 20 Parliament march as India's "second freedom movement", calling for "freedom from fear" and "freedom from injustice" while urging supporters to make the mobilisation a "big success".

In a handwritten message shared from Safdarjung Hospital through his wife Gitanjali J Angmo, Wangchuk linked "freedom from injustice" to alleged paper leaks and "freedom from fear" to what he described as his "illegal detention".

The note, shared on X through Wangchuk's account, read: "20th July. India's second freedom movement. Freedom from injustice (like paper leaks). Freedom from fear (my illegal detention)." News magazine subscription

It further said, "March to the Parliament. Please make it a big success."

The note was signed off with the words, "Sent through Gitanjali from my illegal detention at Safdarjung."

The reference to "illegal detention" appears to reiterate Wangchuk's allegation that he is being kept at Safdarjung Hospital against his wishes after being forcibly taken away from the Jantar Mantar protest site. The Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) has called for the July 20 Parliament march, demanding accountability over alleged irregularities in competitive examinations, reforms in the examination system and the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Wangchuk, who joined the CJP agitation on June 28, was forcefully shifted to Safdarjung Hospital after his prolonged hunger strike at Jantar Mantar.

Activist Sonam Wangchuk's wife has said she has moved the Delhi High Court seeking permission to shift him from Safdarjung Hospital to a private facility, and will seek an urgent hearing on her plea on Sunday.

Asserting that she has "lost faith" in Safdarjung hospital, Gitanjali J Angmo said she wants to move the activist out of Safdarjung Hospital to a private facility of her choice before his health further deteriorates. In a post on her X handle, Angmo said no family should have to fight the system to choose where their loved one receive medical – **Contd. on P2**

Army Commander Visits Ladakh Frontline, Asks Troops To Train Harder

LT NEWS SERVICE

Leh, Jul 19: Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma visited a frontline division in Ladakh and urged troops to train harder and remain resolute in overcoming every challenge with unwavering determination, an official statement said on Sunday.

During the visit, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, interacted with participants of the Fire and Fury Corps' multi-modal white-water rafting and mountain terrain biking adventure expedition that was conducted in the run-up to the Kargil Vijay Diwas -- observed annually on July 26.

"Army Commander visited a frontline division in the Ladakh Sector. The Army Commander was briefed on measures undertaken towards absorption of niche technologies, induction of next-generation weapons and equipment and adoption of innovative proce-



dures to enhance operational effectiveness," the Northern Command said in a post on X. It said Lt Gen Sharma interacted

with all ranks and appreciated the formation's operational dynamism and innovative strategies curated to meet diverse – **Contd. on P2**

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Floods

property in the flash floods. As a weather advisory warned of moderate to heavy rainfall across Jammu and Kashmir till July 23, the border district of Rajouri and Poonch experienced relentless rain from Saturday evening, leading to overflowing rivers and streams after a night of heavy downpour. Rajouri MLA Ahmed, who was scheduled to participate in his party's protest in support of the restoration of statehood outside Lok Bhavan in Jammu on Sunday, returned to his hometown to assess the flood situation. "I have abandoned my party programme to stand with my people, as the flash floods have caused extensive damage to public and private property," Ahmad said. In a post on X, the chief minister said he is returning from Delhi and would personally monitor the situation on the ground. "In light of the weather warning put out by the meteorological department and the seriousness of the situation unfolding across parts of Jammu division, I will leave Delhi to fly to Jammu this afternoon to personally monitor the situation on the ground," the chief minister said. "Since first light this morning I've been closely monitoring the situation arising from the extremely heavy rain in parts of Jammu, especially Rajouri town & surrounding areas. I've been in touch with the local MLAs of the region. While the situation continues to unfold the first priority of the administration is to safeguard precious lives. The government will do everything possible to aid & assist affected people who have suffered property loss/damage due to the rains & flash floods," he said. Abdullah also stated that the National Conference's planned statehood protest in Delhi on July 20 will continue as scheduled under the leadership of National Conference president Farooq Abdullah. A cloudburst struck the Dawar area of Gurez in north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Sunday morning, damaging a cowshed, washing away a portion of a local link road and disrupting movement in the area. Jammu Kashmir travel According to officials, the cloudburst triggered a sudden surge in the water level of a local nallah, causing damage to public infrastructure and leaving several people stranded on either side of the affected road. Two cows and household belongings remained trapped inside the damaged cowshed following the incident. Soon after the cloudburst, Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel rushed to the spot to assess the situation and evaluate the extent of the damage. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) also launched restoration operations to clear the debris and restore road connectivity at the earliest. A local resident, Ajaz Ahmad Dar, said the cloudburst caused extensive damage to a cowshed and the link road leading towards Mousum, leaving residents stranded due to the disruption caused by the flash floods. Despite the damage, no loss of life or injuries were reported in the incident. Hundreds of pilgrims were left disappointed on Sunday after the Mata Vaishno Devi yatra in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district was temporarily suspended due to adverse weather, though most backed the decision, saying pilgrims' safety must take precedence. Kashmir news portal Many devotees recalled the devastating landslide on the yatra track on August 26 last year that claimed 32 lives and injured 20 others, saying the tragedy underscored the need for caution during inclement weather. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board suspended the yatra as a precautionary measure following an India Meteorological Department (IMD) advisory forecasting heavy rainfall and the possibility of landslides between July 19 and 23. "In view of the inclement weather advisory issued by the IMD, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra shall remain temporarily suspended as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety and well-being of pilgrims," a shrine board spokesperson said. "The decision has been taken in the interest of public safety following forecasts indicating unfavourable weather conditions in the region," he said. Pilgrims from different parts of the country said they were dejected after learning that the pilgrimage had been halted. Many had reached Katra after long journeys, hoping to have darshan of the holy cave shrine atop the Trikuta hills. Some had completed the trek and offered prayers at the bhawan but could not proceed, and were unable to proceed to the Bhairon Temple after authorities closed the route due to deteriorating weather. Jammu Kashmir travel Several pilgrims said continuous rainfall, poor visibility and power outages had made conditions extremely challenging while they were returning to Katra on Saturday night. They said authorities regulated the movement of pilgrims by halting them at safer locations along the route. "We have come from far away and were eagerly waiting for Mata's darshan. Naturally, we are disappointed, but the decision is absolutely right. If the weather is unsafe, the authorities must prioritise the safety of pilgrims," Kamal Kishore, a resident of Indore in Madhya Pradesh, said. He said his group would wait for the weather to improve and complete the pilgrimage once the yatra resumes. "We have faith that Mata Ji will call us again. Safety comes first, and we support the administration's decision," another group member, Sunil Kumar, said. The Shrine Board has advised devotees to avoid undertaking the pilgrimage until further notice and to rely only on official communication channels for updates on the resumption of the yatra. Authorities continue to monitor the weather situation closely, and the pilgrimage will resume once conditions are considered safe for devotees, an official said.

LG

strongly believe that harmony is both a moral necessity for the people and the foundation of economic prosperity and it also a guarantee of a brighter future for coming generations. Jammu Kashmir travel We must strengthen the spirit of equal respect for all religions so that every citizen can progress with equal opportunities. We must reinforce mutual goodwill so that poverty is eliminated from every home. We must unite to promote fraternity so that we can uproot challenges like drug addiction. From the soil of Baramulla today a message should go out that if there is any land in the world that can teach the world that different communities, sects, and faiths can live together in peace, joy, and trust, it is India," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor also called upon youth to believe in themselves. "Believe in your ability. Believe that you can build a future far brighter than the past you inherited. For a long time, this land suffered from the scourge of drugs and terrorism, and that impacted the consciousness, dreams, and futures of the youth. Today I say with full conviction that that era has now ended. Now the youth of Jammu Kashmir have taken the reins of their future into their own hands, and this Union Territory is moving toward a new era of education, entrepreneurship, innovation, spiritual awareness, and national unity. Let us together build a Jammu Kashmir that is stronger, more prosperous, peaceful, and progressive," the Lieutenant Governor said. During his visit, the Lieutenant Governor also met various public delegations. He assured appropriate action on the issues projected by them. Major General Manoj Joshi, GoC, Dagger Division; Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary, Culture Department; Dr. Vinod Kumar, DIG North Kashmir Range; Syeed Fakhrudin Hamid, Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla; Gurinderpal Singh, SSP Baramulla; Wajahat Farooq Bhat, Chairman, Save Youth Save Future Foundation; members of the Foundation; senior officials, civil society members, prominent citizens, people from different walks of life and youth in large number were present. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said conserving nature is the spiritual duty of every citizen, and one should leave the earth in a better condition for future generations. "Conserving nature should be our spiritual duty. Thousands of years ago, our ancestors and sages taught us to revere nature. We called rivers our mothers, regarded trees as life-givers, and the earth was worshipped as a mother-goddess in the Sanatan tradition," Sinha said, addressing an all-faith gathering in Baramulla. City & Local Guides He said it is the duty of the present generation to leave a more favourable environment for future generations. "When we leave this earth, we should pass it on in a better condition for future generations," he said. In the Sanatan tradition, the lieutenant governor said, a yajna represents selfless sacrifice and shared responsibility aimed at fostering global peace. "The view of our sages was always inclusive and compassionate. Today, as the world struggles with divisions and conflict, the prayers rising from this sacred land of Baramulla and the verses of the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita offer humanity a powerful message of peace, goodwill and coexistence," Sinha said. The lieutenant governor said Sanatan tradition teaches one to see God in every person. "Our spiritual tradition removes distinctions of language, region, caste and custom. India is a land where all religions have flourished," he added. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha attended the third edition of the Chinar Book Festival here on Saturday, saying books are like living conversations that force us to think deeply, ask questions, challenge our beliefs, and inspire us to grow. Educational Resources He said this festival is more than just an event and it's a movement to build a vibrant community of readers, writers, and thinkers. "Our goal is to transform Jammu and Kashmir into a national hub for knowledge, culture, and creativity. I hope this book festival will inspire the youth to read every day, protect endangered languages, and use literature as a way to value and respect diversity," the Lieutenant Governor said. "Nothing matches the power of writing. Combined with a strong imagination, it becomes a lasting strength. A vibrant book festival creates such an environment and a welcoming space where literature becomes accessible, inspiring, and meaningful for everyone," he said. The Lieutenant Governor stated that in a very short time, the Chinar Book Festival has become a unique celebration of ideas, transforming into a vibrant intellectual movement across Jammu and Kashmir. "I believe writers and thinkers are like glowing lamps and blooming roses. In many ways, they mirror the majestic Chinar tree. In Kashmir, the Chinar is a living symbol of patience, beauty, and endurance. Writers and their books share this same lasting spirit, guiding human civilisation through the ages. Together, we share the responsibility to restore Jammu Kashmir as a leading hub for education, literature, and youth empowerment," he said.

Army

contingencies. "He commended the troops for their professionalism, indomitable courage and relentless devotion to duty in the challenging high-altitude operating environment. "Felicitating the troops for their invaluable contribution, the Army Commander exhorted all ranks to sustain the momentum of excellence, train harder and remain resolute in overcoming every challenge with a strong determination," it said. Army troops opened fire after noticing a suspicious movement along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Saturday. War & Conflict The small arms firing was reported from the Tarkundi forward area around 10 pm on Friday and continued for nearly one-and-a-half hours. However, there were no reports of any casualties, the officials said. They said the troops guarding the border saw suspicious movement of suspected terrorists, prompting the firing. This was followed by retaliatory small arms fire from across the border. A search operation was launched on Saturday morning to ascertain the presence of any infiltrators, while the area remains under heightened surveillance, the officials said.

Wangchuk

care and that the public health bulletin released by Safdarjung has "conveniently omitted" the actual number with respect to his potassium level. Geographic Reference "Despite repeated requests, the hospital has refused to discharge him or allow us to shift him to a private hospital of our choice. With around 30 police personnel stationed on our floor and well over 100 across the hospital, our movement is severely restricted. It is not medical care. It is illegal detention," she stated. "I have therefore moved the High Court and sought an urgent hearing today, praying for permission to shift Sonam before his health deteriorates further. No family should have to fight the system simply to choose where their loved one receive medical care," it further informed. Wangchuk was on Saturday taken forcibly to Safdarjung Hospital by the Delhi Police on the 21st day of his hunger strike. He has been on an indefinite hunger strike since June 28 in support of the CJP-led protest over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination and the reported deaths of students linked to the controversy. Educator and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Friday asserted that he would "stay alive till July 20 at any cost", even as his indefinite hunger strike entered its 20th day amid a warning from doctors that his prolonged fast has reached a critical stage. The Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) protest at Jantar Mantar over alleged examination irregularities entered its 28th day, with Wangchuk urging people to ensure a massive turnout for the outfit's proposed march to Parliament on July 20. Green Living & Environmental Issues Addressing supporters at the protest site, Wangchuk acknowledged his weakening physical condition but said his resolve remained unshaken. "I am weak from the outside but very strong inside. I am sure all of you are strong from the inside, and outside too. We need this energy for July 20, when we will take out a peaceful march to Parliament. We will go together and present our plea in the temple of democracy," he said. "I will stay alive till July 20 at any cost. If you don't come and July 20 is not successful, I will come back as a ghost," he said in a lighter vein, drawing cheers from the gathering. On Thursday, doctors attending to Wangchuk had warned that his condition had entered a critical stage due to the prolonged fast and that the next phase could be alarming, with the possibility of organ damage if the hunger strike continued.

Congress

Singh Park in the heart of the city and raised slogans in support of the statehood demand. Police barricaded the road at Jewel Chowk, stopping Congress workers from proceeding in a procession to Lok Bhavan to submit their memorandum. A brief scuffle ensued as the protesters attempted to push past the barricades, officials said. They added that dozens of Congress activists and leaders, including Karra, AICC general secretary G A Mir, working president Raman Bhalla and several former ministers and legislators were detained. Earlier, talking to reporters, Karra said the Congress had been campaigning for the restoration of statehood for nearly two years, taking the message to all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir through district-level programmes, hunger strikes and campaigns under the slogans "Chalo Srinagar", "Chalo Jammu" and "Chalo Delhi".

Drass Administration & Ex-Servicemen Welfare Trust Organise Friendly Volleyball Tournament to Mark Kargil Vijay Diwas

Drass, July 18, 2026: In the run-up to the Kargil Vijay Diwas, the District Administration, Drass, organised a friendly Volleyball Tournament at Government Higher Secondary School, Drass, in collaboration with the Ex-Servicemen Welfare Trust (ESWT). The tournament was aimed to promote sportsmanship and unity among the civil administration, police, ex-servicemen and other participating organisations as well as foster a sense of nationalism. The event was attended by Deputy Commissioner, Drass, Imteeaz Kacho (JKAS), Superintendent of Police, Drass, Ishtiyaq Kacho (JKPS), Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Drass, Vishal Atri (JKAS), Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Abdul Samad; Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Abdul Wahid; Block Medical Officer, Dr. Sajjad Hussain, Station House Officer (SHO) Drass, Inspector Mohammad Abdullah, Zonal Physical Education Officer, Mohammad Ishaq; Zonal Education Officer, Mohammad Ibrahim, besides officers from various Government departments, police personnel, ex-servicemen and a large gathering of sports enthusiasts. The tournament saw a large number of spectators. Four teams representing the District Administration, Police Administration, Ex-Servicemen Welfare Trust (Drass) and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL), Drass participated in the friendly tournament. The opening match was played between the District Administration and Ex-Servicemen, while the second match was played between the Police Administration and PGCIL. The Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police captained their respective teams. The winners of the two matches which qualified for the final were Ex-Servicemen and PGCIL. The final match was a high-octane contest played in a highly competitive and friendly manner. The team of Ex-servicemen ended up winning the final match but the PGCIL team put up an impressive show. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Imteeaz Kacho appreciated the participation of all the teams and said that such sporting events strengthen mutual coordination, teamwork and harmony. He paid rich tributes to the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice during the Kargil War. Further, he said they the forthcoming Kargil Vijay Diwas will be all the more important and special from the perspective of creation of the new District of Drass earlier this year. Th Deputy Commissioner assured that such sporting events will become a permanent and routine affair in Drass. The District Administration expressed gratitude to the Ex-Servicemen Welfare Trust (ESWT), Youth Services & Sports Department, Police Department, Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) and all other stakeholders for their cooperation in making the event a grand success.



HELP LINE

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3	DC Changthang	Sh. Nitish Rajora (IAS)	7053991969	(Temporary)	PA to DC – Kunzes Dolma 6005297553
4	DC Nubra	Sh. Mukul Beniwal (IAS)	8800308665	01982-252049	—
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'Over 4,000 killed in human-animal conflict': UP CM calls for raising awareness to minimise deaths

LUCKNOW, July 19: Asserting that Uttar Pradesh is the first state to declare human-animal conflict a disaster, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday called for raising public awareness and also pressed the need for leveraging technology to minimise the loss of lives.

The chief minister also said that over 4,000 people have lost their lives in human-animal conflict, while more than 5,000 others died in natural disasters.

Yogi Adityanath was speaking at the inauguration of the new headquarters building of the Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority in Lucknow.

Referring to the recent death of a 12-year-old boy in a crocodile attack in Bahraich district, Adityanath said, "Barely two days ago, near Bahraich, a crocodile completely swallowed a 12-year-old boy. If we had exercised a little caution...After all, people already know which areas are prone to crocodile activity. It's not as if crocodiles travel vast distances. They generally stay within a range of just 3 to 5 kilometres throughout their lives."

On Thursday evening, Sunil (12), a resident of Tikuri village in Bahraich, went to the banks of the Ghaghara river to relieve himself after helping his uncle, Vijay Raj Singh, with paddy sowing in the fields. Later, a crocodile emerged from the river and attacked him. Speaking about leopards rescued in Bijnor,



Adityanath said, "A day before yesterday, I was in Bijnor. We have rescued 80 leopards in Bijnor in the past two years. I asked how so many leopards ended up here on a large scale. They (officials) explained that their numbers have increased and, secondly, they are commonly found in the sugarcane belt. People have even started calling them 'sugar

leopards'. Now, if a person isn't aware of this, he could easily fall prey to one." If we can raise public awareness by identifying the nature of the threat and the areas at risk, we can prevent the loss of human lives on a massive scale," Adityanath added. The chief minister also emphasised the use of technology to prevent loss of life from

lightning strikes.

Citing the incident in which over 111 people lost their lives in a single day due to storms and lightning, Adityanath said he had expressed his displeasure at the situation and insisted on the use of technology, after which officials devised a plan within three days.

"The result was that while thousands of people were participating in a 'bhandara' (community feast) at the Shakumbhari Devi temple in Saharanpur, an alert was received, and the administration safely evacuated everyone. Moments later, a five-foot-high surge of water came rushing down from the Shivalik Hills. Had there been no alerts at that time, hundreds of lives could have been lost, he said.

"We often act and express our sympathies only after a disaster has struck and caused extensive loss of life and property. However, I believe that prior alertness, preparedness, and awareness regarding disasters can minimise such losses. This should be an integral part of our daily lives. These matters need to be conveyed through school curricula as well as through conversations within families," Adityanath added.

Adityanath said that awareness programmes should be conducted so that even an ordinary citizen is empowered to provide relief during a disaster.

"Disasters do not strike all the time. However,

during periods of calm, we must focus on our own training. Furthermore, if we could visit schools and colleges to educate students and teachers, perhaps by holding a conference for principals at the district level on a Sunday to inform them about the necessary precautions for various disasters, I believe it would constitute a significant service to the nation," Adityanath said.

The chief minister inaugurated the new headquarters building of the Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), built at a cost of more than Rs 200 crore.

He also launched the authority's website and inspected the exhibition set up on the premises.

"Our resolve is to make Uttar Pradesh a state that is fully prepared to deal with every disaster, where every citizen can live with the confidence that both the government and the citizens are ready to face any crisis. This should become a part of every citizen's and the nation's duty," he said.

Stressing the importance of training, he said, "The recruitment process for 45,000 Home Guards is being completed. Those Aapda Mitras who have received training will be given priority in this recruitment. Home Guards will also be mandatorily provided Aapda Mitra training. They are the first responders."

9 dead, 6 injured in blast and fire at illegal firecracker unit in Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad

Nine persons were killed and six others injured in a blast and fire at an illegal firecracker factory in Ramol area of Ahmedabad city in Gujarat on Saturday, officials said. The explosion and the resultant fire occurred at 3.30 pm at the factory located on Ramol-Gatrad road, police said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the incident and announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel announced a financial assistance of ₹4 lakh to the families of the deceased and ₹50,000 to the injured. CM Patel also declared assistance for the families and the injured. The injured persons were transferred to two separate hospitals — Civil Hospital in Asarwa area, and LG Hospital in Maninagar.

"One person was brought dead to the Civil Hospital along with five injured persons. The injured are under-



going treatment," the hospital's medical superintendent, Dr Rakesh Joshi, said.

LG Hospital Superintendent Leena Dabhi said, "Nine persons were brought to the hospital, of whom eight died. The condition of an injured woman is stable." The firecracker unit, set up on an open farm, was operating without a valid licence, joint Commissioner of Police Jaipal Singh Rathore said.

Personnel from the Rapid Action Force (RAF) and Ahmedabad Fire and Emergency Services rushed to the spot and launched

rescue and relief operations, he said.

The official said a case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder and other offences will be registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and provisions of the Explosives Act.

City Crime Branch is carrying out further investigation. In a post by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), PM Modi said, "Extremely saddened to hear about the loss of lives due to a mishap at a fireworks factory in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. My thoughts are with the

bereaved families in this hour of grief."

"Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured. The local administration is providing all possible assistance to those affected. An ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given ₹50,000," the post said.

"The news of the accident that occurred in a firecracker factory in Ahmedabad is extremely heartbreaking. I pray to God that the souls of the deceased who lost their lives in this tragedy find peace. I express my deepest condolences to their family members," Patel stated in the post on X. All necessary assistance and treatment are being provided to the affected by the local administration, he said, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured persons.

"The state Government will provide assistance of ₹4 lakh to the families of the deceased and ₹50,000 to the injured," the Gujarat CM added.

ISRO targets 7 launches this fiscal; next mission within 2 months: Chairman Narayanan

Sriharikota (Andhra Pradesh)

ISRO is targeting seven launches during the current financial year, with the next mission scheduled to lift off within the next two months, ISRO Chairman V Narayanan announced on Saturday.

Speaking at a press conference following the historic maiden orbital launch of Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 rocket, Narayanan stated that two satellites are already fully built, while five to six others are in the final phase of integration.

"This financial year, we have targeted at least seven launches. We will start the launch within two months," Narayanan said. The space agency's upcoming operational schedule includes the first uncrewed mission under the Gaganyaan human space-flight program, alongside the slated satellite launches.

Hailing the successful flight of Vikram-1 by private startup Skyroot Aerospace as a milestone, the ISRO chief lauded the young team -- having an average age of 28 years -- for



achieving a successful orbital mission in their very first attempt. He noted that the breakthrough provides immense satisfaction to the domestic space community and contributes heavily to the "Bharat 2047" vision. Incidentally, both the cofounders of Skyroot Aerospace, Pawan Kumar Chandana and Naga Bharat Daka, were former ISRO scientists. Later, Narayanan likened ISRO's feeling of pride to that of parents witnessing their children excel.

"We are just like parents who get excited and proud to see children studying well and getting first rank," he added.

Reflecting on the evolution of the domestic space ecosystem, the ISRO Chairman highlighted the impact of policy structural updates. "In 2020, the space sector reform was brought, and the startup companies and private sector were allowed to carry out the activities in the space area. Today, for the first time in the country, a private rocket successfully placed the satellite in orbit," he said, adding that the milestone will drive substantial economic growth and foster a strong scientific temper among the youth. He pointed out that when the policy was put in practice, there was only one startup.

"Today, there are 400 startups," he added.

Responding to a question about India's infrastructure capacity to sustain high-frequency private and commercial launches, Narayanan disclosed that ISRO plans to commission its second launch complex at Kulasekarapattinam in Tamil Nadu within the next six months. He pointed out that while Sriharikota possesses comprehensive capabilities, deploying massive launch pads for small satellites in the 300 kg to 350 kg category is logistically sub-optimal.

"Initial launches will go from here. Then we are also building the second launch complex in Kulasekarapattinam. That is getting ready. Within this financial year, we are going to commission [it]," Narayanan stated, adding that the facility is currently in its final phase.

Once active, launch tracking and distribution will be optimised between both spaceports depending on specific payload requirements, he added.

Govt betting on homestays to create entrepreneurs

Lucknow

With rural tourism emerging as a key pillar of Uttar Pradesh's tourism strategy, the state government is betting on homestays to create a new generation of local entrepreneurs.

Thirty-five homestay operators, most of them young people who have chosen self-employment after completing their education, underwent a five-day residential training programme in Lucknow to equip them with professional hospitality and business management skills. Organised by the Manyawar Kanshiram Institute of Tourism Management (MKITM) under the Tourism Department from July 14 to 18, the programme focused on helping participants transform their homestays into professionally managed



tourism enterprises while supporting the state's 'Visit My State' campaign. Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh stated that the initiative reflects the state's focus on skill development, rural tourism and youth empowerment under the leadership of Chief

Minister Yogi Adityanath. "The homestay model is not only creating quality accommodation for visitors but also enabling educated youth to become entrepreneurs in their own villages. By connecting local communities with tourism, we are creating sustain-

able livelihoods while giving travellers an authentic experience of Uttar Pradesh's culture, traditions and rural life. Well-trained homestay operators will play an important role in taking forward the 'Visit My State' campaign," he said. The trainees represented homestays from Prayagraj, Farrukhabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Maharajganj, Bijnor, Saharanpur, Lalitpur, Lucknow, Unnao, Sitapur, Varanasi, Mahoba, Banda and Chitrakoot, reflecting the growing spread of the homestay model across Uttar Pradesh.

Officials stated that the initiative is expected to strengthen community-led tourism by creating a network of professionally trained homestay operators who can offer visitors authentic local experiences while generating new livelihood opportunities in rural areas.

18 students of Mirzapur CoE shine in NEET

Lucknow

Eighteen students from the Centre of Excellence (CoE) at Jai Prakash Narayan Sarvodaya Girls' School in Mirzapur, operated by the Social Welfare Department, have brought laurels to the institution by delivering an outstanding performance in the NEET examination.

Minister of State for the Social Welfare Department (Independent Charge), Asim Arun, said that the success of the students of the Centre of Excellence, Mirzapur, was a remarkable outcome of their hard work, the guidance of teachers, and the department's high-quality free residential coaching system. "The department's objective

is not merely to provide education but to help talented students achieve their goals. I am confident that these daughters will bring pride to society and the nation in the future. Heartfelt congratulations to all the successful students and best wishes for a bright future," he said.

Director of Social Welfare Department, Sanjeev Singh, said that Sarvodaya Girls' School, Mirzapur had been developed as a Centre of Excellence to provide free coaching for competitive examinations such as JEE and NEET to talented girls across the state. A total of 34 students received free residential coaching for NEET. Of these, 31 appeared for the examination and 18 qualified successfully. The successful

candidates are Pooja Ranjan, Shweta Pal, Khushboo, Lakshmi Rawat, Malti, Ankita, Anita, Manisha, Premilata, Ankita Kumari, Komal, Sapna, Anshika, Priyanka, Phool Kumari, Anuradha, Khushi, and Anchal. It is noteworthy that the Social Welfare Department operates 103 Sarvodaya schools across Uttar Pradesh for students from economically weaker families, offering residential facilities for Classes 6 to 12. Along with quality education, these schools also provide free coaching for competitive examinations such as JEE and NEET, creating strong opportunities for talented students from underprivileged backgrounds to advance and achieve their aspirations.

Cashless healthcare service proves a boon for teachers

Lucknow

Within 10 days of launch of the Mukhyamantri Shikshak Suraksha Cashless Chikitsa Yojana, teachers and their families have begun availing its benefits.

So far, 142 pre-authorisations have been approved across the state. The estimated cost of treatment in these cases is approximately ₹37.81 lakh. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath formally launched the scheme on July 8, 2026.

Since then, the scheme has been implemented rapidly to ensure eligible teachers receive access to healthcare services. CEO of SACHI, Archana Verma, said that of the 142 cases approved since the launch of the scheme, 128 pertain to the Basic Education Department, with an estimated treatment cost of ₹34.15 lakh.

The remaining 14 cases belong to the Secondary Education Department, for which approximately ₹3.66 lakh has been approved.

JD(U) plans extensive outreach programmes in UP

Lucknow

Bihar's cabinet minister and Janata Dal (United) leader Shrawan Kumar said the party would assess the ground reality by talking to local leaders in the run-up to contesting the 2027 assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh as a National Democratic Alliance partner.

Addressing the party workers in Lucknow, Shrawan Kumar highlighted the achievements of the Bihar government under Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's leadership over the last two

decades. "Bihar's model of development, good governance and social welfare — particularly our schemes for women, girls and rural development — has become a source of inspiration for other states," he said. Shrawan Kumar urged the party's Uttar Pradesh cadre to take the JD(U) development-oriented agenda to every household in the state.

He said the JD(U) would organise a district-level meeting with its leaders and also convene a state-level meeting.

"A roadmap was finalised to conduct a series of confer-

ences starting from the Assembly constituency and district levels, eventually culminating in a state-level convention.

Senior party leader and national working president Sanjay Jha is expected to attend the final state convention," he said.

The Bihar minister said, "To boost the party's grassroots presence, the JD(U) plans to organise extensive outreach programmes across the state, featuring senior leaders and ministers from the Bihar government." He said the party had initiated a formal review

process, inviting local leadership to submit names of potential and aspiring candidates for the 2027 polls.

"The official list of constituencies the party will contest will be announced following a thorough assessment of these submissions," he added.

JD(U) state president Anup Singh Patel expressed full confidence in the party's momentum, stating that it is committed to contesting the 2027 elections with full strength and aims to play a decisive role in the formation of the next government in Uttar Pradesh.

CM to inaugurate UPSDMA building

Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate the newly constructed headquarters of the Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (UPSDMA) in Lucknow on Sunday, July 19.

Built at a cost of more than ₹200 crore, the state-of-the-art facility has been designed to strengthen the state's disaster preparedness and emergency

response capabilities.

The new headquarters is equipped with modern infrastructure, including a 24x7 State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) to ensure round-the-clock monitoring and coordination during emergencies.

The building also houses a modern auditorium with a seating capacity of over 200 people, classrooms, lecture halls, hostel accommodation, and a library to support training and capacity-building initiatives.

Jantar Mantar Protest – Controversy Amid Claims, Allegations, and Demands for Investigation, An Analysis Raising Several Serious Questions

Ravindra Arya

New Delhi: According to the author's analysis, the INDIA alliance is primarily a political coalition formed with the objective of opposing the ruling government. In a democratic system governed by the Constitution, every citizen has the right to oppose the government. However, when political campaigns, ideological movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and various pressure groups suddenly appear active on a common platform, several natural questions also arise. The article claims that CJP is also a political organization, currently participating in the movement with the Indian tricolour and slogans such as "Inquilab Zindabad," and that its ideological opposition is mainly directed against the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).The author further alleges that several organizations with anti-government or anti-establishment ideologies also appear to be associated with these protests. The report also expresses concern that the possible role of foreign interests, intelligence agencies, and international networks should be impartially investigated. While protesting is the democratic right of every citizen, if questions are raised regarding the funding, ideological direction, or foreign influence behind any movement, investigating such concerns is also a part of the democratic process.According to the report, the movement received widespread support from NEET aspirants as well as various social and caste groups. However, the author claims that repeated tensions and confrontations occurred near the protest site between Left-wing supporters raising "Lal Salam" slogans and Right-wing supporters asking questions, and that some people were allegedly forced to leave the area.Ghanshyam Pathak from Faridabad alleges that he too was driven away because he was wearing a sacred Hindu thread (Kalava) and a Tilak on his forehead. He questions what kind of movement identifies and targets people based on symbols such as the Tilak, Tarazu, and Talwar.According to the author, those who questioned Sonam Wangchuk, his hunger strike, issues relating to Lord Shri Ram and Goddess Sita, or the literature displayed in the protest library were allegedly labelled as "RSS agents," "BJP supporters," and "Godi Modi Media," and were allegedly assaulted and forced to leave the venue.One of the most controversial incidents described in the article concerns Barkha Trehan, who has been vocal on issues related to a Men's Commission. According to the report, she objected to remarks



concerning Goddess Sita and alleged that a fake version of the Ramayana was being promoted through the stage and the "Lal Salam" library. She also questioned why comedian Kunal Kamra had been invited to the stage when students were protesting over a serious issue such as NEET. According to the author, some protesters believed that the movement was gradually shifting away from students' issues and turning into a platform for criticising Sanatan Dharma and Hindu beliefs, as though it were acting under the direction of anti-national foreign intelligence agencies.According to the report, during the controversy, blue ink was allegedly thrown while slogans of "Jai Shri Ram" were raised. The article states that some people believed Sonam Wangchuk's hunger strike was being politically exploited and that the entire movement was being redirected toward identity-based politics. It further claims that a former Supreme Court judge associated with CJP had directly accused others of following a path intended to let Sonam Wangchuk die of starvation. These views, the report notes, represent the opinions of certain supporters of the protest and some commentators.According to the article, Barkha Trehan

later claimed that she was assaulted after expressing her views. She thanked the Delhi Police for safely escorting her out of the crowd and ensuring her security. According to the author, the incident also raised the question of whether ideological disagreement in public protests is now increasingly turning into physical confrontation.The article then presents a broader analysis. According to the author, people from Kashmir, Punjab, Assam, Manipur, the North-Eastern states, South India, and various border regions participated in the protest. During interviews, the author also alleges that some participants were unable to speak Hindi, while questions were raised regarding the presence of certain Bengali-speaking individuals. The author further claims that one woman had covered her face with a burqa, giving the impression that she might have come from Bangladesh as part of an intelligence operation. Similarly, the presence of a Sikh man wearing a blue turban led the author to speculate that he could have been pro-Khalistan. The article also alleges that people from the Manipur border region were present. However, the author acknowledges that these claims require independent verification. According to the author, there were also several influencers who did not know the Hindi language, but he believes that all such matters should be thoroughly investigated.The author further alleges that pro-Khalistan supporters, Left-wing organizations, urban Naxal networks, elements associated with the Popular Front of India (PFI), and certain groups connected with previous protest movements appeared to be active in the demonstration. The report states that all such allegations should be investigated by India's intelligence agencies and security institutions. Referring to the statements and television programmes of Sudarshan News Editor-in-Chief Suresh Chavhanke, the author claims that concerns have been raised regarding the possible influence of the "Deep State," Chinese intelligence agencies, and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in attempting to influence social movements within India. According to the author, considering historical precedents, such allegations deserve a serious and impartial investigation.The article further claims that groups associated with the "Red Salute" ideology, headline Left-wing organizations, Maoist supporters, and urban Naxal networks allegedly use the Constitution as a tool to propagate communist ideology. It further alleges that certain anti-India foreign elements have, in some instances, shared common interests with such ideological campaigns targeting NEET-affected youth. The author's argument is that after security operations

weakened extremist networks and border security became stronger, efforts to expand ideological influence among dissatisfied youth and students intensified.The article also claims that after "caste card" politics began losing its effectiveness, a new strategy based on the "victim card" has emerged, using educational issues—particularly NEET—for political mobilisation. According to the author, this strategy seeks to organize large numbers of young people against the government, while Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has become a major political target.The author argues that the use of national symbols such as the Indian tricolour and slogans like "Inquilab Zindabad" was intended to attract broader public support, while the movement allegedly pursued additional political objectives behind the scenes. According to the author, when the genuine concerns of students become intertwined with a wider political narrative, the possibility of ideological influence increases significantly.The report further alleges that dissatisfied students may be identified and gradually drawn into long-term ideological campaigns. According to the author, data collection was allegedly carried out through symbolic activities such as hunger strikes featuring white shrouds worn across the forehead, accompanied by the beating of traditional drums. The article claims that the protest lobby created a "toolkit" through emotional appeals, symbolic demonstrations, and narratives of victimhood in order to transform public dissatisfaction into sustained political activism. The author further claims that these efforts have already achieved considerable success.The article also alleges that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and other hostile foreign intelligence agencies have, for many years, attempted to exploit social divisions, identity-based politics, and public dissatisfaction within India. It further claims that certain supporters of banned or suspected organizations, including individuals allegedly associated with the Popular Front of India (PFI) under different names, have also attempted to connect themselves with such protest movements.In conclusion, the author expresses the opinion that India's strengthened border security, biometric identification systems, action against illegal funding, and measures to curb illegal infiltration have significantly weakened several hostile networks. According to the author, this is why attempts to influence India are now increasingly being made through information warfare, ideological campaigns, and mass protest movements. The author concludes by claiming that such movements have, to a considerable extent, succeeded in achieving these objectives.



New Delhi

SC to examine Uttarakhand HC's quashing of FIR in Modi Bhawan demolition dispute

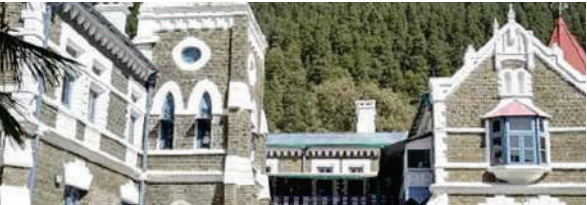
The Supreme Court is set to examine a challenge filed by businesswoman Dr Bina Modi against the Uttarakhand High Court's decision quashing an FIR registered over the alleged demolition of Modi Bhawan number 1 on Camel's Back Road in Mussoorie. The petition raises the question of whether a criminal investigation can be halted solely because civil proceedings concerning the same property are pending.

The dispute relates to Modi Bhawan number 1 where rival claims over ownership and possession are already pending before civil courts. Dr Modi has sought possession of the property, compensation and damages for its

alleged illegal occupation, while the Radha Soami Satsang Beas (RSSB) claims rights over the property based on a 2001 transaction wherein they have purchased Modi Bhawan number 2 which is a separate property and has obtained interim protection in the pending civil litigation.

Rajinder Singh, Advocate representing Petitioner — Dr Bina Modi before Hon'ble Supreme Court, stated to The Pioneer: "I am representing Dr Bina Modi in the matter before the Supreme Court. The case is listed for hearing on Monday and beyond that I cannot comment on anything further before the hearing."

According to the Special Leave Petition, the controversy escalated on the night of 14 February 2025, when Ajay Kumar Sikri, Secretary of RSSB,



Mussoorie, along with others allegedly acting in concert with him and Hari Ram Sharma, proprietor of M/s Rajputana Security Services Pvt. Ltd., and his employee, Mr. Surendra Sharma, entered Modi Bhawan number 1 without authority.

The petition alleges that the residential bungalow was demolished overnight using heavy machinery and that the debris was removed soon thereafter. It further claims that furniture, paintings,

antiques, personal belongings and original title documents worth several lakhs of rupees were taken away from the premises. Dr Modi also alleges that security personnel and bouncers were subsequently deployed to prevent her and her representatives from accessing the property, despite official records continuing to reflect her ownership of Modi Bhawan number 1.

The petition states that repeated complaints to the police did not result in registration of an FIR. It was only after the Judicial Magistrate, Mussoorie, passed an order under Section 175(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, that FIR number 18 of 2025 was registered on 22 April 2025 at Police Station Mussoorie under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita relating to alleged criminal trespass, theft, conspiracy and other offences.

The accused subsequently approached the Uttarakhand High Court seeking quashing of the FIR. By its judgment dated 26 May 2026, the High Court allowed the petitions, observing that the dispute primarily concerned property rights already pending before civil courts. The Court held that permitting criminal proceedings to continue alongside the civil suits could affect their

adjudication and relied on judicial precedents cautioning against invoking criminal law in disputes that are predominantly civil in nature. It further observed that any evidence of criminality could be examined after the civil litigation reaches its conclusion.

Challenging the High Court's ruling, Dr Modi contends before the Supreme Court that the existence of civil proceedings cannot by itself prevent the investigation of cognisable criminal offences. The petition argues that allegations of unlawful trespass, demolition of a residential building, removal of valuables and original title documents, and forcible occupation disclose independent criminal offences requiring a full police investigation irrespective of the pending civil suits.

Challenging the High Court's ruling, Dr Modi contends before the Supreme Court that the existence of civil proceedings cannot by itself prevent the investigation of cognisable criminal offences. The petition argues that allegations of unlawful trespass, demolition of a residential building, removal of valuables and original title documents, and forcible occupation disclose independent criminal offences requiring a full police investigation irrespective of the pending civil suits.

DMK can not win on its own, relies on allies: TN Minister Nirmal Kumar



Madurai (Tamil Nadu)

The DMK relied heavily on its allies to secure past electoral victories and is not capable of winning on its own, Tamil Nadu Minister R Nirmal Kumar said on Saturday.

Asking the Dravidian major to give up its attempt to poach ruling TVK legislators in a bid to destabilise the Government, the minister claimed that the Congress and the Left parties, now with the TVK, had moved away from the DMK as they were uncomfortable with its political manoeuvre towards the AIADMK.

He was responding to a question from reporters on the TVK MLA bribery case, in which ten persons were arrested by the Chennai police.

In his complaint, TVK legislator N Elaiyaraja had said that he was offered ₹35 crore to vote against the Government during a proposed no-confidence motion against the Assembly Speaker.

Police claimed that the highly orchestrated political horse-trading was initiated under the codename 'Meghalaya project' to destabilise the C Joseph Vijay-led TVK Government. The target was to make 15 TVK legislators resign to bring down the Government, police said.

1st LoC firing since Operation Sindoor as Pakistan targets Rajouri posts

Jammu

Shattering peace along the Line of Control (LoC), for the first time after 'Operation Sindoor', the Pakistan Army late Friday night resorted to 'unprovoked' firing on the forward Indian posts in the Tarkundi sector of Rajouri district.

Unconfirmed reports claimed that some of the forward Pakistani posts provided cover fire to a heavily armed group of infiltrators sneaking inside the Indian territory. However, alert Indian troops responded swiftly and retaliated after noticing the suspicious movement in the forward areas.

According to local reports, the small arms firing which started around 10.00 pm continued in the forward areas for over one hour. No injuries were reported



during the firing.

Senior army officers of the Nagrota-based White Knight Corps were closely monitoring the prevailing security situation and have directed the local field commanders to stay in a state of high alert. The security forces were already conducting regular searches in Rajouri

after movement of suspected terrorists was recorded in the CCTV cameras.

Massive combing and search operations were launched early Saturday morning to maintain a tight vigil in the area and prevent anyone from sneaking inside the Indian Territory

Till late evening, the Indian Army had not issued any official statement. Official sources claimed it was, for the first time, a major incident of cross-border firing reported post Operation Sindoor in the Rajouri sector.

Last week, Indian Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth visited forward areas along the Line of Control in Poonch, Rajouri & Sunderbani to take stock of the prevailing security situation. Senior commanders briefed the Army Chief on the security situation in the Jammu region.

SC to hear pleas seeking probe into Ram temple donations theft row on July 20

New Delhi

The Supreme Court is set to hear on July 20 a batch of pleas seeking a fair and time-bound probe into the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

As per the apex court's cause list for July 20, four separate pleas related to the issue would come up for hearing before a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Jyomalya Bagchi and V Mohana.

On July 13, the top court agreed to hear these pleas and directed the Special Investigation Team (SIT), constituted by the Uttar Pradesh Government to probe the matter, to submit a status report before it.

The bench had also issued



notice to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust seeking its response in the matter.

"Since it is averred in some of the writ petitions that some FIRs have already been registered and an SIT has been constituted to investigate the matter, we direct the SIT constituted by the State of Uttar Pradesh to submit a status report before this court," the top court

had said.

Narendra Kumar Goswami, one of the petitioners in the case, moved the top court seeking a CBI probe in the case. He has also sought a Comptroller and Auditor General audit of the finances of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, which manages the affairs of the Ram temple.

Ajay Kumar Rai and Dinesh Kumar Yadav, who have filed

one of the pleas in the top court, have said that a CBI-led multi-disciplinary SIT should investigate the alleged financial irregularities and other purported illegalities concerning the affairs and administration of the temple trust.

Besides seeking a Supreme Court-monitored CBI probe, the third petition filed by RJD MP Sudhakar Singh has sought a forensic audit of the entire finances of the Trust. Another petition filed by 'Hindu Dharma Parishad' has sought an apex court-monitored investigation into the allegations.

On June 13, the Uttar Pradesh Government constituted the SIT on a request from the temple trust following allegations of misappropriation of donations received at the Ram temple.

Kolkata

Senior Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday asserted that the party's Amtala office, which was demolished by the local administration, was built legally on purchased land and after clearing all permissions.

Alleging that the administration acted in collusion with the ruling BJP, he also said that the TMC would move the Calcutta High Court against the demolition of the party office.

The South 24 Parganas district administration on Saturday demolished the party office of the TMC MP at Amtala after it was found to be constructed allegedly without an approved building plan and in violation of applicable



rules, a senior official said.

Banerjee told reporters that the action was politically motivated and warned that if there was a change in the Government after the 2031

CPI condemns destruction of Rahul Sankrityayan statue in West Bengal

New Delhi

The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Saturday strongly condemned the destruction of a statue of Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan at Raniganj in West Bengal, describing the incident as an attack on India's progressive and democratic heritage.

In a statement issued on Saturday, CPI General Secretary D. Raja termed the vandalism a "reprehensible act of political and ideological vandalism" targeting one of India's leading scholars, freedom fighters, Marxist thinkers and public intellectuals.

The party noted that Rahul Sankrityayan was not only a renowned literary figure but also a prominent leader of the CPI. It highlighted that he had served as the National President of the All India



Kisan Sabha in 1940 and had dedicated his life to the struggles of peasants, workers and other marginalized sections of society.

The CPI alleged that the incident reflected a broader pattern of attacks on the country's progressive traditions. In its statement, the party blamed the political climate under the BJP-led Government for creating an atmosphere in which such incidents occur, alleging that there are attempts to undermine India's rationalist,

secular and Left traditions and replace them with a communal narrative.

Calling the destruction of the statue part of this larger ideological campaign, the CPI demanded the immediate arrest of those responsible and sought exemplary punishment for the perpetrators. It also called for the statue to be restored without delay.

The party further appealed to democratic, secular and progressive organisations, as well as writers, artists, intellectuals and citizens, to unite in opposing what it described as efforts to erase the legacy of leaders who worked for freedom, scientific temper, social justice and equality.

Authorities in West Bengal had not issued an official statement on the incident at the time of publication.

EDITORIAL

Analysis: Lessons For India As Local Activism Challenges Data Centre Boom In US

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the India AI Impact Expo 2026 on 16 February 2026 in New Delhi. The expo served as the centrepiece of the five-day India AI Impact Summit 2026, held from 16 to 20 February, marking a significant moment in India's pursuit of leadership in artificial intelligence. As India rapidly embraces artificial intelligence—positioning itself as a global leader in AI innovation and deployment—a growing body of research and expert opinion warns of a troubling, blind spot. Sufficient thought has not yet been devoted to the environmental downsides of this technological transformation. Current policies, driven by the imperative of economic growth and digital transformation, have largely sidelined sustainability considerations, even as the infrastructure required for AI strains a nation already under acute water and energy stress. India's AI expansion risks environmental strain, as data centres consume massive water and energy. Weak regulation and transparency could worsen resource crises and social inequities. Artificial intelligence is not an ethereal, weightless technology. It is built on a physical foundation of data centres, high-performance computing clusters, semiconductor manufacturing, and sprawling network infrastructure—all of which demand enormous quantities of energy, water, and land. This is India's AI paradox: the same technologies being deployed to combat climate change are themselves contributing to a resource crisis that threatens the very communities they aim to serve. The United States of America is often described as the "global headquarters of frontier AI innovation". Parallely, the local resistance to data centres in the USA has grown into a significant nationwide movement, with communities across the political spectrum pushing back against the rapid expansion of AI infrastructure. Over 40 states have passed nearly 150 laws attempting to regulate AI and data centres since 2019. This sort of local resistance could be one reason the American tech companies are on the lookout for new locales in other countries, such as India, to develop their Data Centres. As India prepares to champion "Planet Sutra"—a global mandate for sustainable AI—at the 2026 AI Impact Summit, a fundamental paradox lies at the heart of its AI ambition. While the government articulates a vision of

ethical, inclusive, and environmentally responsible artificial intelligence, the rapid expansion of AI infrastructure is outpacing environmental governance at an accelerating rate. India's AI expansion risks environmental strain, as data centres consume massive water and energy. Weak regulation and transparency could worsen resource crises and social inequities. The gap between aspiration and implementation is not merely a policy oversight; it is a structural contradiction that threatens to undermine the very principles India seeks to project on the global stage. Loudoun County, Virginia—often called "Data Centre Alley"—hosts the world's largest concentration of data centres. For years, residents tolerated the low-slung, windowless buildings that multiplied across once-rural landscapes. But as the industry expanded, so did the impacts. The constant hum of cooling fans and backup generators disrupts residential neighbourhoods. Emergency generators, tested regularly, spew particulate matter into communities already burdened by poor air quality. Farmland and historic sites have given way to industrial campuses, with little community input. In 2023–2025, local opposition coalesced into organised movements. Groups successfully lobbied for stiffer noise ordinances, moratoriums on new construction, and enhanced environmental review processes. Several proposed projects were delayed, scaled back, or abandoned entirely. India's AI expansion risks environmental strain, as data centres consume massive water and energy. Weak regulation and transparency could worsen resource crises and social inequities. The communities have also grown sceptical about the "job myth." In Virginia, a legislative audit found that data centres might employ 1,500 workers during construction but only 50 people to maintain operations afterwards. Residents contrast this with alternative land uses—farmland, mixed-use developments, or light manufacturing—that would generate broader economic activity and more sustainable employment. In Arizona, the conflict centres on water—a resource already stretched thin by drought and climate change. Data centres in the Phoenix metro area consume millions of gallons annually for cooling, drawing from groundwater and municipal supplies. Residents, farmers, and Indigenous communities have raised a

Will Iran Talk? War, Oil And The Quiet Winners Of The Conflict

Brig Rakesh Bhatia

The question, will Iran talk?, appears straightforward. However, the indicators from the battlefield suggest that what began as a military confrontation has become a complex strategic contest where the incentives for peace are weak. Even as diplomatic signals are exchanged, there is little evidence of substantive engagement between the two sides. This is not a war moving towards resolution. It is a war settling into a pattern where multiple actors are adjusting to its continuation. The United States, under Donald Trump, entered the conflict with a clear objective of weakening Iran's military capabilities and halting its nuclear ambitions. However, the unexpected trajectory the war has taken reveals a deep dilemma. Washington has demonstrated military strength, deploying additional forces and maintaining operational pressure. Yet, its signalling has been inconsistent. Escalatory threats are followed by conciliatory statements. Diplomatic openings are announced even as preparations for further strikes continue. This reflects that the United States has the ability to fight, but lacks a clear path to victory. It failed to disrupt or dismantle Iran's decentralised economic system. It also failed to ensure stability in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's Calculus: Endurance and Advantage Iran, by contrast, appears to be operating with a different logic. Rather than seeking immediate de-escalation, it is leveraging the conditions of war to its advantage. As reported in 'The Economist', Iran continues to export between 2.4 and 2.8 million barrels of oil per day the same levels as before the conflict. More significantly, it is earning more from these exports due to rising global prices. In spite of sustained military pressure, Iran's economic position has strengthened. Its oil trade has adapted through decentralised networks, IRGC-linked logistics, and complex financial channels that bypass sanctions. In such circumstances, the incentive to negotiate weakens. For Iran, time is not a constraint. It is a tool. The centre of gravity in this conflict is not the battlefield, but the Strait of Hormuz. Disruptions here have had immediate and far-reaching consequences. Iran has used this geography effectively. While other Gulf producers have seen exports decline, Iranian tankers continue to operate through adaptive and often opaque arrangements. This has allowed Tehran to convert geographical position into strategic leverage. In modern conflict, control of energy flows can matter more than control of territory. China's Calculus: Strategic Patience While the United States and Iran remain engaged, China has adopted a position of calculated restraint. Chinese analysts view the war as a strategic misstep by Washington, one that will distract it from East Asia and reinforce narratives of American decline. At the same time, China continues to benefit economically. It absorbs a large share of Iranian oil exports, often through indirect



channels. Financial networks linked to China facilitate transactions, allowing Iran's oil revenues to continue flowing despite sanctions. China has also insulated itself from potential disruptions. It has built significant strategic reserves and diversified its energy mix, reducing dependence on any single chokepoint. For Beijing, the conflict presents an opportunity rather than a crisis. Will China Encourage Iran Not to Talk? China is unlikely to openly oppose negotiations. Such a move would risk direct confrontation with the United States. However, it has little incentive to push Iran towards a settlement. A prolonged conflict serves China's strategic interests. It keeps the United States engaged in West Asia. It opens economic opportunities in energy and reconstruction. It strengthens the perception of China as a stable and reliable partner in contrast to an unpredictable United States. Thus, China's approach is indirect. It does not need to shape Iran's decisions explicitly. The broader strategic environment already favours continuation. Israel's Position: Tactical Gains, Strategic Uncertainty Israel finds itself in a complex position within this conflict. On the tactical level, Israel has achieved certain objectives. Iranian-linked targets and proxy networks have come under sustained pressure. The conflict has reinforced Israel's long-standing aim of keeping Iran's military capabilities in check. However, the broader strategic picture is less certain. Iran's ability to continue operations through proxies, including missile and drone strikes across the region, suggests that its network remains intact. Attacks have continued across

multiple theatres, expanding the scope of the conflict. A prolonged war increases risks for Israel. Multiple fronts, from Lebanon to maritime routes, create a stretched security environment. Thus, while Israel may be achieving tactical success, the long-term outcome remains uncertain. 'The System and the Spoils: A New War Economy One of the defining features of this conflict is the resilience of Iran's economic system. Its oil trade is not controlled by a single entity, but by a network of actors linked to political, military, and commercial structures. Shipping is managed through layered arrangements, often involving IRGC-affiliated entities. Financial flows move through a complex web of accounts across multiple jurisdictions. This decentralised system is difficult to disrupt. Even when individual nodes are targeted, the network adapts. The result is a war economy that not only survives under pressure, but in some cases thrives. This represents a shift in the nature of conflict. Victory is no longer about destroying assets alone. It is about sustaining systems. Implications for India's Security For India, the implications are immediate and significant. Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz affect a substantial portion of India's oil imports, leading to price volatility and economic strain. Maritime security is another critical dimension. Instability in the Gulf and adjoining sea lanes has the potential to affect trade routes vital for India's economy. The China factor adds a strategic layer. A prolonged U.S. engagement in West Asia creates space for China in the Indo-Pacific, directly impacting India's security environment.

Why Iran's Clerical Regime Has Not Fallen: A Diplomat Juxtaposes Persian Glory And Modern Resistance

Mukesh Bhat

Iran, inheritor of an ancient Persian civilisation dating back more than 4,000 years, occupies a unique position in global geopolitics. With its vast natural resources, strategic geography bridging West Asia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, and a deeply rooted cultural identity, Iran commands attention far beyond its borders. This beautiful country, with a population exceeding 90 million, boasts the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea, and the majestic Alborz mountains. Cities like Tehran feature well-planned roads, lush gardens and parks, universities, and industries. The nation is rich not only in oil and natural gas but also in water and agricultural wealth, including a variety of fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Shiraz, renowned for its breathtaking beauty, has inspired poets like Hafez Shirazi, whose mesmerising words are often attributed to the city's allure. Tehran, once known as the "Paris of Asia," transformed into the Islamic Republic of Iran after the 1979 Islamic Revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. This revolution established a clerical regime and marked a significant shift in Iran's political landscape. Under the Shah, Iran was an imperial republic closely aligned with Western nations, particularly France and the United States. The Shah's pompous nature was evident when he reportedly requested permission from the Indian government to celebrate a milestone in his enthronement at the Taj Mahal—only to be politely declined. India and Iran have enjoyed civilizational linkages for centuries. Maharaja Ranjit Singh reached Tehran during his campaigns through Afghanistan and met the rulers there. The influence of the Persian language—known for its honey-sweet quality—extends to all Indian languages, as it was the court language during Mughal rule. Even Central Asian countries of Turkic origin were heavily influenced by Persian due to contiguous geography and the language's uniqueness. The famous Peacock Throne (Takht-e Tavous), looted by Nader Shah, remains on display in Tehran. Iran, Israel, and the US have been at loggerheads for over four decades since the Islamic Revolution. I witnessed the fervour at Inqilab Square when I landed in Tehran on my first posting after joining the Indian Foreign Service on February 13, 1995. Fiery speeches against the USA and Israel are a common theme in Iranian rallies. It's a different matter that many Iranians continued migrating to the USA even after the revolution, as America remains a favourite destination for aspiring youth. Huge hoardings proclaiming "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" are impossible to miss while passing through the city. Of course, most gatherings are well-orchestrated by the government and its agencies. You also cannot miss the large compound of the American embassy, scarwaled with "Den of Spies." It was under siege after the revolution for 444 days, with 66 American diplomatic staffs as hostages. Processions, demonstrations, and celebrations of the Inqilab (Revolution) or Friday prayers—drawing thousands—were thrust upon the people; voluntary participation by the majority was rare. The clerical regime faced challenges in fostering economic growth and curbing youth adoption of Western values, including dress and partying. It soon realized that stability and sustenance of Islamic tenets and mullah rule required stricter implementa-



tion of Sharia across schools, universities, and government offices. The regime unleashed religious police, backed by the Basij—a nightmare for women, youth, and those rejecting Islamic values like hair covering, unshaven beards, full-sleeve shirts, non-alcoholism, regular prayers, and respect for clerics. I heard and saw harsh punishments, such as marrying young girls found in parks with partners to old mullahs in Qom's theological schools—a city dominated by clerics—or blackening the faces of men in short-sleeved shirts. The regime positioned itself as custodian of the Islamic Ummah (all Muslims worldwide), irking Saudi Arabia (guardian of Mecca and Medina) and Turkey (evoking its Ottoman legacy). Tensions between Sunni-majority Gulf countries and Shia-majority Iran led to occasional open clashes. Population-wise, the Middle East is dominated by Shias due to Iran's 90 million-plus people. Under Khomeini and later Khamenei, Iran enforced strict Sharia through structures like Basij, Pasdaran (IRGC), Guardians Council, and Expediency Council. The system stifled moderate leaders via checks and balances, showing zero tolerance for deviation or criticism of the Rahbar (Supreme Leader). The Majlis (Parliament) Speaker was always a hardcore loyalist overseeing the executive, while a senior cleric headed the judiciary to enforce Sharia. Iranians often view themselves as superior to Arabs in history and culture, declaring so openly. Compulsory Friday prayers, prescription, and constant confrontation with the US and West bred simmering discontent among youth. University students chafed under strict Islamic rules, seeing religious rigidity as an impediment to global scientific and commercial progress. The government curbed free information flow. Hollywood cinemas, and Western music. Even neckties for men are considered haram—no Iranian official wears one. Efforts to introduce science and technology came with caveats, perceived as regressive. Media is strictly controlled, with

state television (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, IRIB) as a government mouthpiece. People watched satellite TV via dishes, risking heavy penalties. The Internet and information revolution had a limited impact. Gossip, internal politics, and rivalries spread via secretive radio, online editions, and periodicals from within and outside Iran. President Rafsanjani in the early 1990s seemed a moderate administrator with influence, but the Supreme Leader ended his two terms per the constitution. His bid for Ayatollah status and spiritual leadership failed; rivals made him head of the Expediency Council as a buffer, but it didn't last. Supremacy of the Leader and the clerical regime remained the cornerstone. Later moderates like President Khatami, elected with youth support for reforms, failed too. Student demonstrations against oppression over four decades met harsh responses, including deaths and imprisonment at the notorious Evin Prison in Tehran. Political analysts have predicted a bloody or non-bloody revolution against the regime for decades, citing discontent from a poor economy—due to internal mismanagement and Western sanctions—and devaluation of the Iranian rial, alienating the powerful Bazari (traders). Anti-establishment voices used banned radio and print media, but reported revolts were short-lived and unsuccessful. Even Khamenei's recent killing during the war sparked no street uprisings. Like analysts over the years, the Trump administration miscalculated the clerical regime's internal resilience—not just religious structures, but Iran's large population, military strength, and anti-US/anti-Israel sentiments instilled over decades. This war proves external forces cannot easily dislodge it, despite eliminating top leadership, including the Supreme Leader and military officials. Iran is no stranger to war; it fought a decade-long conflict with Iraq while sustaining its economy and stability. Iran developed arms focused on Israel, emphasising long-range missiles against its arch-enemy. Gulf nations drew closer to Israel via the Abraham Accords to counter Iran. Despite

sanctions and threats, Iran maintained oil and gas output through ties with China and Russia—following Chanakya's dictum that an enemy's enemy is a friend—for equipment and defense programs. Even Mossad's deep infiltration couldn't sway IRGC seniors. Amid the war, IRGC and Pasdaran maintain full control of law and order, preventing revolts. Killing innocent civilians by the US and Israel backfires, hardening public resolve against regime change. India and Iran share civilizational ties but have navigated tensions. Post-revolution, Iran monitored Muslim issues in India, criticising the Babri Masjid demolition in the early 1990s and expressing solidarity with anti-India elements in Kashmir, where Khomeini portraits hung in Shia homes. In 1995, as OIC head, President Rafsanjani cancelled a scheduled visit to India without reason—ostensibly over Babri. Despite Shia-Sunni frictions with Pakistan, Iran backed it in past India confrontations. Iranians proved shrewd businessmen; no major Indian firms entered energy or construction under the clerical regime. India views Iran as vital for regional energy, transit to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Russia—especially as a neighbour until 1947. Yet relations have been blow-hot-and-cold, strained by India's ties with Saudi Arabia, UAE, USA, and Israel. India persisted with Chabahar Port investment, the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), and oil/gas interests. Imports peaked at \$9 billion in 2018 but fell due to US secondary sanctions. Chabahar advanced slowly; Iran lagged in connecting infrastructure. The Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline stalled over politics and India-Pakistan tensions. Full potential remains unrealised due to Iran's lack of vision and trust. Trade stayed basic: Indian rice, tea, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, and tractors for Iranian crude. Iran's stubbornness troubles neighbours, fearing the export of hardcore Islam. It failed to deepen Central Asia ties despite civilizational links and perpetuates animosity with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It resents US bases in Gulf states like Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. In Bahrain, where Shias outnumber the Sunni royalty, Iran fomented unrest, pushing Bahrain toward Saudi protection. Saudis hate Iran's Yemen role, backing Houthis who've targeted Saudi oil and airports with drones and missiles. Iran has sustained the war for over a month despite leadership assassinations, refusing to bow to the US—an outcome analysts didn't expect. If regime change was the US goal, it failed; Iran fights on, averting unrest. Iranians' pride and rich culture make takeover—like Venezuela's—imprudent. Israel likely influenced US thinking, but the world now sees Iran's military depth. Israel and Gulf states want a weak Iran, but is it feasible? An unstable Iran, with huge oil and the world's second-largest gas reserves, harms global interests. Will the IRGC abandon the fight without revenge on Israel for the killings from Suleimani in 2019 to the Supreme Leader? Why Iran's Clerical Regime Has Not Fallen A Diplomat Decodes A peaceful, progressive Iran—ending support for Hezbollah and Hamas—benefits the region and world. Can the US install a moderate leader meeting Iranian and American wishes? We must wait and watch swift developments. The US pounding of Iran isn't the solution; it risks prolonged regional instability and global recession. Carpet bombing or boots on the ground will only fuel Iranian resistance to regime change, as seen in US interventions in Iraq, Libya, and Syria.

A Fauji's Salute To India's Longest-Serving Prime Minister

Brijesh Chowta

The year was 2013. I had just returned to my ooru (village) after serving the Indian Army. Like many young Indians of my generation, I stood at a crossroads. I knew I wanted to continue serving the nation, but I was still searching for the path through which I could do so. The country too stood at a crossroads. Across India, there was a growing feeling that our nation was capable of much more than what it had settled for. In villages, towns and cities, a different energy was beginning to take shape. People were speaking about aspiration, confidence and possibility. At the centre of that conversation stood Narendra Modi, then the Chief Minister of Gujarat, whose message resonated with millions of Indians who wanted to see a stronger, more self-confident Bharat. And in June 2013, I was given the responsibility of the District General Secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha in Dakshina Kannada. The uniform changed, but the mission remained the same – Nation First. We campaigned not merely for a party, but for an idea. An idea that India could be stronger, more confident, more self-reliant and more respected in the world. A decade later, I had the privilege of taking oath as a Member of Parliament in the team led by the very leader who had inspired millions of young Indians to dream bigger. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi becomes India's longest-serving PM, I find myself reflecting not only on the transformation of the nation, but also on the extraordinary opportunities this period has created for ordinary Indians like me. The last two years have been among the most consequential years in recent global history. The world continues to grapple with geopolitical conflicts, energy security concerns, economic uncertainty and the persistent threat of terrorism. As a Member of Parliament associated with discussions relating to energy and defence, I have had the opportunity to observe many of these developments from close quarters. But what taught me a lot about India's place in the world were the two international assignments entrusted to me during my maiden term in Parliament. The first came in May 2025. In the aftermath of 'Operation Sindoor', I was chosen as part of an all-party delegation tasked with carrying India's message of zero tolerance against terrorism to the world. Our engagements took us across Moscow, Madrid, Athens, Ljubljana, Riga. As a fauji, this assignment carried special significance. For decades, India was often compelled to explain the reality of terrorism that it faced. During our interactions abroad, I witnessed a different reality. India's voice carried weight. India's stand of Zero tolerance against terror found global testimony. More importantly, the delegation demonstrated something that I believe is fundamental to India's strength. Members from different political parties and ideological



backgrounds came together to represent a united national position. Our message was clear. India may debate fiercely within its democratic framework, but when it comes to terrorism, national security and the protection of its citizens, Bharat speaks in one voice. The delegation sent a powerful message to the world. It also sent a message to those who believe India's democratic diversity can somehow be exploited against its national interests. Our diversity is our strength. Our unity in matters of national interest is our greatest force. For me personally though, the assignment meant much more. For it reminded me of my early days in the Fauj. It was just my second year as a young officer of the Indian Army's 8 Gorkha Rifles; but my Commanding Officer chose to entrust me with leading the Ghatak Platoon during counter-insurgency operations in Manipur. And being chosen by PM Modi to be his voice as part of this delegation, even as a first time MP, I was reminded of that same feeling of trust and responsibility. Leadership leaves a lasting impression when responsibility is entrusted with an assurance that speaks in silence. A few months later came my second international assignment. In October 2025, I travelled to New York as part of India's parliamentary delegation to the 80th United Nations General Assembly. The delegation was constituted to represent India's democratic values, engage with lawmakers and policymakers from across the world, strengthen diplomatic ties and carry the

voice of the world's largest democracy led by PM Modi to one of the world's most important multilateral forums. For someone whose first foreign trip happened only after 2014, the experience was deeply moving. As I walked through the halls of the United Nations, I often found myself thinking not of New York, but of home. Standing there as part of India's delegation, I realised that the journey was larger than my own. It reflected the possibilities that millions of Indians had come to believe in over the last decade. What struck me most was the way India was viewed and discussed. Everywhere we went, we encountered members of the Indian diaspora who spoke of Bharat with immense pride. Entrepreneurs, students, professionals, doctors, engineers and community leaders spoke not only about their own journeys, but also about India's growing stature in the world. Today, the Indian diaspora, numbering more than 35 million people, is the largest diaspora community in the world. Their contributions extend far beyond remittances and economic engagement. They have become storytellers of modern India. For decades, embassies told India's story to the world. Today, millions of Indians living abroad tell that story every day. Prime Minister Modi recognised the strength of this community long before many others did. Wherever he travels, one witnesses an extraordinary connection between India and its diaspora. They see themselves not as distant observers, but as active participants in India's growth story. Many of them spoke about the transformation they had witnessed in how India is perceived globally. They spoke about

a country that no longer appeared hesitant on the world stage. They spoke about a nation increasingly seen as a source of solutions, innovation and leadership. That change is visible across multiple dimensions. India's cultural influence continues to expand through yoga, Ayurveda, traditional knowledge systems, cuisine, cinema, technology and innovation. International Yoga Day is celebrated across continents. India's digital public infrastructure is being studied by governments around the world. Indian professionals lead some of the world's largest corporations. Indian entrepreneurs are building globally recognised companies. The respect accorded to Prime Minister Modi by world leaders reflects this larger transformation. Over the last decade, numerous countries have conferred upon him their highest civilian honours. His meetings with global leaders attract attention not merely because of protocol, but because India today occupies a far more significant place in global conversations than it once did. As a veteran, I perhaps viewed these experiences through a slightly different lens. Over the last decade, India has steadily strengthened both its capabilities and its confidence. India's defence budget, which stood at around Rs 2.27 lakh crore in 2014, has grown to nearly Rs 7.85 lakh crore today. Defence exports have risen dramatically. Indigenous platforms, missile systems and defence manufacturing capabilities have expanded significantly. India has moved from being largely dependent on imports towards becoming a nation increasingly capable of designing, developing and manufacturing critical defence systems. The shift has not merely been one of numbers. It has been one of mindset. The world increasingly sees an India that is willing to stand up for its interests, speak with clarity and act with confidence. Whether in matters of national security, diplomacy, technology, energy or economic growth, India today engages the world from a position of greater self-belief. For those of us who have worn the uniform, these developments carry special meaning. National security is not built overnight. It requires patience. It requires investment. It requires institutions. Above all, it requires leadership that remains focused on long-term national interests. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi becomes India's longest-serving Prime Minister, he sets yet another benchmark. Not merely of electoral success, but of endurance. In public life, leadership is often measured through victories. In the armed forces, we learn that leadership is equally about endurance. A difficult mission is not accomplished through moments of bravado alone. It requires discipline. It requires consistency. It requires the ability to hold one's ground through uncertainty, setbacks and adversity. Disarming an adversary requires courage. Outlasting one requires discipline, patience and resolve. Twelve years in office is therefore more than a political milestone. It is a measure of sustained commitment. A form of public tapasya carried out under constant scrutiny and amidst rapidly changing national and global realities.

Why India Appointed A Non-Muslim Ambassador To Saudi Arabia, For First Time Ever

Naghma Sahar

The appointment of Mr Vipul as the new Indian ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a historic shift in India's diplomatic strategy. It breaks the established convention since 1948 of sending a Muslim ambassador to the country. In this regard, Vipul is the first non-Muslim Indian diplomat in Saudi Arabia. His appointment is significant not just from a geopolitical lens but also for the underlying signalling. Geopolitically, Saudi Arabia matters to India for reasons that extend far beyond the traditional lens of oil and expatriate labour. Riyadh today occupies one of the most important positions in India's diplomatic landscape. It is a critical energy partner, a leading political actor in the Gulf, the custodian of Islam's two holiest sites, and an increasingly influential economic hub. Under its Vision 2030 transformation agenda, Saudi Arabia has emerged as a centre where investment, technology, infrastructure, culture, and geopolitics intersect, creating new opportunities and strategic considerations for countries such as India. In this backdrop, the appointment of Mr Vipul is a wise choice. A career diplomat from the 1998 batch of the Indian Foreign Service, he brings extensive experience in the Gulf and the wider region, having served in Cairo, Colombo, Geneva, and Dubai, and most recently as India's ambassador to Qatar. His appointment reflects expertise, seniority, and familiarity with a strategically vital region rather than any departure from diplomatic meritocracy. However, more than his professional credentials, it's the fact that he's the first non-Muslim diplomat to head the mission in Riyadh since diplomatic relations between the two countries were established that has gained more attention. In a highly polarised environment, the risk lies less in the appointment itself than in the narratives that may be constructed around it. Since the late 1940s, New Delhi had exclusively selected senior Muslim diplomats for the ambassadorial role in Riyadh and the consul general position in Jeddah. This practice was primarily rooted in logistics; the Indian mission in Saudi Arabia plays a massive role in coordinating the annual Hajj pilgrimage, which sees hundreds of thousands of Indian Muslims travel to Islam's holiest sites. India sends the second-largest Hajj contingent to Saudi Arabia after Indonesia – 1,75,000 is the official Hajj quota. With such a huge number of Indians coming in for Hajj, the role of the consul general in Jeddah and the ambassador in Riyadh becomes crucial in terms of coordination with Saudi authorities. According to senior diplomats posted earlier in the region, the coordination and management of Hajj often requires the ambassador's presence in Mecca and Medina, Jamarat for coordination, as the Saudi management also shifts to these areas. Since a non-Muslim is not allowed in the area where the Hajj pilgrimage is performed, the management of the pilgrimage may be adversely affected if the ambassador cannot be in the area. An example is the fire tragedy in the tent city of Mina in 1997, in which hundreds of Indians died, and the then



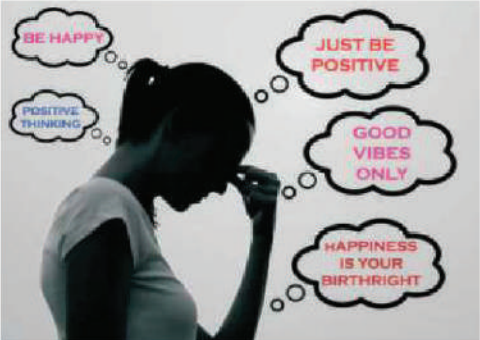
ambassador, Hamid Ansari, rushed to the site of the tragedy for coordination with higher Saudi authorities. However, in recent times, sources indicate that the pool of eligible Muslim candidates has shrunk considerably. This scarcity has occasionally forced the government to extend the tenures of sitting ambassadors or look outside the career diplomatic corps entirely – such as in 2016, when former Mumbai Police Commissioner Ahmad Javed was appointed for the role. India has historically sent many Muslim envoys to Saudi Arabia, not because non-Muslims were incapable but because the combination of linguistic familiarity, cultural comfort and coordination of Hajj pilgrimage often made practical sense. The incoming ambassador has his task cut out. He takes the helm at a complex time for Middle Eastern geopolitics. Beyond navigating broader regional security challenges and ongoing tensions involving Iran, Riyadh is increasingly entering into open economic and diplomatic competition with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – traditionally one of New Delhi's closest allies in the region.

Despite these shifting dynamics, Saudi Arabia remains a cornerstone of India's foreign policy, serving as a critical partner for energy security, bilateral trade, mega-investments, and the welfare of the millions of Indian expatriates living in the Kingdom. The danger today, though, is that nuance is easily lost. One side may say this appointment proves that the 'new India' no longer needs old sensitivities. Another may say the government has deliberately discarded Muslim representation in a symbolic capital. Neither reading is completely fair. This appointment must be seen as an evolution in diplomatic practice and strategic engagement rather than just departing from a set convention. The phrase 'Banana Republic' has had a good run. And I am no longer sure we can use it to describe how the modern republic works, no matter how much decay you think it emotes. The genesis of the term itself no longer serves the outcome it sought to describe. Let me tell you why. The term, once coined by the American writer O. Henry in his 1904 book Cabbages and Kings, was used to describe a fictional Central American country, 'Anchuria', a "small, maritime banana republic"

whose government bent to the interests of a powerful foreign corporation. Over time, the phrase escaped literature and entered political vocabulary as shorthand for a state where power was increasingly concentrated, institutions were weak, and the idea of democracy existed more on paper than in practice. For more than a century, the term has faithfully served journalists, academics, and largely disappointed citizens. It was a useful phrase because everyone immediately knew what it meant. A Banana Republic was where institutions went to die, where narrative-building often became a government's most effective tool of governance. While we always imagined that we would know exactly the moment a republic began to lose its way – larger than life political figures, carefully choreographed displays of institutional strength, constitutions that served more as optional reading material and less as foundational documents – but maybe it is more subtle than we can hypothesise. The modern republic has developed subtler habits and has become increasingly difficult to detect.

Toxic Positivity

“Don’t cry, everything will be alright.” “One should put on a smile every timethey step out of the house, not matter what”. These are phrases often used by people. But are these phrases teaching us healthy ways of living? Probably not. These phases represent toxic positivity. Toxic positivity is the belief that no matter how dire or difficult a situation is, people should maintain a positive mindset. It’s a “good vibes only” approach to life. And while there are benefits to being an optimist and engaging in positive thinking, toxic positivity instead rejects difficult emotions in favor of a cheerful, often falsely positive, facade. Toxic positivity takes positive thinking to an overgeneralized extreme. Having a positive outlook on life is important but we all know that life is not always easy. In situations when life is not easy, it is important to acknowledge your feelings, thought and reactions. These unpleasant emotions are important and need to be felt and dealt with to be able to conquer the stressful situation. The line between positivity and toxic positivity is rather slim. For example in situations such as now, when the world is facing a pandemic, thinking about good thoughts becomes difficult. Even engaging yourself in good thoughts is difficult because you are surrounded by grim news. However, even now, there is an explosion of positivity that expects people to believe, “better days are coming”. To think of it is not untrue. But, toxic positivity takes every event or incident to an overgeneralised level. And also minimalizes our ability to deal with human emotions that are not necessarily positive. Negativity, on the other hand, means having a pessimistic outlook towards life. It involves not appreciating the good things in life and always believing that something bad is going to happen. Such an attitude towards life can be very unhealthy and lead to a lack of hope in life. Now that we understand the difference between toxic positivity and positivity, we can focus on how toxicity can be harmful. Rather than being able to share genuine human emotions and gain unconditional support, people find their feelings



dismissed, ignored, or outright invalidated. It’s shaming: When someone is suffering from something bad or negative in life, their emotions and experience should be validated. However, toxic positivity, like “Thank god, things did not get worse”, although sympathetic, these words can invalidate one’s current experience and make them feel like their feelings are not acceptable. This in turn makes them feel shameful of their emotions. It causes guilt: It makes them feel like if they can’t find a way to feel positive in the face of a tragedy, they’re doing something wrong. It avoids authentic human emotions: “Don’t cry, you are not weak.” Ever wondered why crying is shunned by society. The society wants to constantly put up a positive happy front. It promotes toxic positivity in many ways. And in this process it neglects actually experiencing the “negative” and real human emotions. As people, we don’t acknowledge the importance of experiencing and dealing with every emotion that naturally comes to us. Only when we experience darker feelings, can we appreciate the brighter ones. It prevents growth: It allows us to avoid feeling things that might be painful, but it also denies us the ability to face challenging feelings that can ultimately lead to growth and deeper insight. The “positive vibes only” mantra as advocated by the millennial generation can be

very ignorant of people’s true problems. To be asked to look at the bright side of things when one is going through personal, financial loss or coping with difficult situations, is just cruel and oblivious behaviour. Following can be the signs that you have internalized toxic positivity and the ways to avoid it. ?If you tend to brush off problems rather than face them head on. ?If you feeling guilty often about being sad, angry, or disappointed. ?If you hide your true feelings behind feel-good quotes that seem more socially acceptable. ?If you hiding or disguise yourself from your true feelings. ?If you tend to minimize other people’s feelings because they make you uncomfortable. ?If you shame other people when they don’t have a positive attitude. ?If you try to be stoic or “get over” painful emotions. If the above situations are right for you, then you must introspect. Following can be the ways to avoid toxic positivity, ?Manage your negative emotions, but don’t deny them. Negative emotions can cause stress when unchecked but they can also provide important information that can lead to beneficial changes in your life. ?Be realistic about what you should feel. When you are facing a stressful situation, it’s normal to feel stressed, worried, or even fearful. Don’t expect too much from yourself. Focus on self-care and taking steps that can help improve your situation. ?It’s okay to feel more than one thing. If you are facing a challenge, it’s possible to feel nervous about the future and also hopeful that you will succeed. Your emotions are as complex as the situation itself. ?Focus on listening to others and showing support. When someone expresses a difficult emotion, don’t shut them down with toxic platitudes. Instead, let them know that what they are feeling is normal and that you are there to listen. ?Notice how you feel. Following “positive” social media accounts can sometimes serve as a source of inspiration, but pay attention to how you feel after you view and interact with such content. If you are left with a sense of shame or guilt after seeing “uplifting”.

Importance of rainbow, multicolored diet



The rainbow diet is a health-inspired trend that entails eating fruits and vegetables of different colours every day. White foods help in detoxification and are good for the gut and heart health. Garlic, Onions, Mushrooms, Cauliflower are some heart-friendly foods. Green foods help to strengthen the immunity. Peas, Spinach, Green Capsicum are the best when it comes to strengthening one’s immune system. Yellow foods are beauty foods which help in maintaining skin, bone, and teeth. Bananas,

yellow capsicum, and corn are must have daily foods. Orange foods assist in cancer prevention. Oranges, carrots and so on must be taken regularly. Red foods make healthy blood cells and prevent anemia. Besides, they are rich in vitamins. Red meat, tomatoes, pomegranate, cherries are its prime examples. Purple foods assist in longevity of life. Blackberries, grapes, brinjals should be added to your diet. Choose the food as medicine!

Tobacco quitters are the winners

World no tobacco day is observed every year on 31st May to raise awareness about hazardous effects on all spheres be it human lives or environment. Every year more than 8 million lives are lost due to hazardous effects of tobacco. This year’s theme was “Tobacco: Threat to our environment”. The campaign for this year is aimed to raise awareness among the public on the environmental impact of tobacco – from cultivation, production, distribution and waste. This will give users one extra reason to quit this “gateway substance”. Gateway drugs are substances those, when consumed, give way to harder, more dangerous drugs. Marijuana, alcohol, nicotine and other gateway drugs boost dopamine levels. Gateway drugs also prepare the brain for a response to other substances and increase the brain activity and could make users more likely to seek stronger substances. Research has shown that cannabis use appears to be associated with an increased vulnerability to developing an alcohol use disorder. Adults who used marijuana are 17 times more likely to be regular cocaine users and children who use marijuana are 85 times more likely to use cocaine than non-marijuana users. Multiple studies reveal drinking at a young age affects drug use later in life. Researchers have long recognized tobacco products as



gateway drugs which suggested that children who smoke daily are 13 times more likely than children who smoke less often to use heroin and cocaine. It is a known fact that parents concern about drugs other than nicotine addiction and ignore nicotine use/dependence, but smoking cigarettes at a young age can most of the times lead to experimenting with other addictive substances during their life. Statistics suggest that every day, about 4,000 teenagers smoke a cigarette for the first time and those Adolescents who smoke cigarettes are five times more likely to drink alcohol and abuse cocaine and heroin. In recent times the alarming use of tobacco, hukkas and e-cigarettes among teenagers represents a major public health concern. It doesn’t only lead to various physical, social, psychological problems but is one of the leading cause of preventable death worldwide. Nicotine causes a wide range of side

effects in most organs and systems. Smoking increases their heart rate, heart muscle oxygen consumption rate, and heart stroke. Also increases the clotting tendency which leads to atherosclerosis. Nicotine causes disturbance in sleep and gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, dry mouth, indigestion, loss of appetite and even ulcers. Many studies have shown that excessive smoking can be a casual factor for infertility. Nicotine in the long run can lead to pneumonia, and life threatening lung cancers. Why should you leave Smoking? • When you quit smoking, within 20 minutes, your blood pressure drops to normal, pulse rate becomes normal. Even the temperature of your body goes to baseline. • When you quit smoking, within 8 hours the carbon monoxide and oxygen levels in blood drops to normal. • When you quit smoking, within 24 hours to 48 hours your chances of heart attack decreases. • When you quit smoking, within 72 hours the breathing becomes easier as the bronchus relaxes to normal. • When you quit smoking, within 2 weeks to 3 months the lung functioning improves and circulation of blood also improves upto 30%. • When you quit smoking, within 6 months the lungs functioning improves further and fatigue and shortness of breathe decreases.

Pre Menstrual Dysphoric disorder

Pre Menstrual Dysphoric disorder (PMDD) is a very severe form of premenstrual syndrome (PMS). Every month, it creates a variety of mental and physical symptoms during the week or two before your menstrual cycle. It is sometimes referred to as ‘severe PMS.’ PMDD develops during your menstrual cycle’s luteal phase. This is the interval between ovulation and the start of your menstruation. Most people’s luteal phase lasts around two weeks, however it might last longer or shorter. During this period, you may suffer PMDD symptoms every day or only for a few days. What are the symptoms of PMDD? Many people who can have periods suffer some moderate PMS symptoms. These symptoms are significantly severe if you have PMDD and can have a serious influence on your life. PMDD can make it difficult to work, socialise, and maintain healthy relationships. It can also lead to suicidal thoughts in rare circumstances. Emotional experiences • Mood swings. • Feeling upset or tearful. • Lack of energy. • Less interest in activities you normally enjoy. • Feeling hopeless. • Suicidal feelings. • Feeling angry or irritable. • Feeling anxious. • Feeling tense or on edge. • Feeling overwhelmed or out of control.

• Difficulty concentrating. Physical and behavioural experience • Breast tenderness or swelling. • Pain in your muscles and joints. • Headaches. • Feeling bloated. • Changes in your appetite, such as overeating or having specific food cravings. • Sleep problems. • Increased anger or conflict with people around you. • Becoming very upset if you feel that others are rejecting you. Because PMDD is associated with your menstrual cycle, you are unlikely to suffer symptoms if you are pregnant. However, the symptoms may return once you begin ovulating again. What are the causes of PMDD? Although the specific origins are unknown, experts suspect that PMDD is caused by being too sensitive to variations in hormone levels. According to new study, PMDD is linked to greater sensitivity to the natural hormonal changes that occur throughout your monthly menstrual cycle. There is evidence pointing to additional probable causes of PMDD, as well as things that may aggravate your PMDD. Some of these potential causes include: Genetics According to some study, heightened sensitivity to changes in hormone levels may be caused by genetic differences. Smoking According to some studies, smoking might affect your hormone

sensitivity. Trauma and stress Other studies have found that in certain situations, PMDD is associated to stressful and traumatic prior events, such as mental or physical abuse. Stress may also aggravate your PMDD symptoms. Is PMDD a mental health problem? PMDD is typically classified as an endocrine condition, which means it is a hormonal disorder. However, in addition to physical symptoms, patients with PMDD have a variety of mental health symptoms such as despair, suicidal thoughts, and anxiety. For these reasons, it is classified as a mental health condition in the DSM-5, one of the primary manuals used by clinicians to categorise and diagnose mental health issues. Finally, keep in mind that how you interpret your symptoms and experiences is entirely up to you. The most essential thing is that you receive the assistance you require and deserve to help you cope with the impact of PMDD on your life. How is PMDD diagnosed? To get a diagnosis of PMDD the best place to start is visiting your doctor. To help them understand your symptoms your doctor may: • Ask you to keep a detailed record of your symptoms for at least two months, to see if your symptoms have a pattern over time. This may be in your diary or they may give you some daily questionnaires to fill out.

Breast Cancer- What You Need to Know!

May 28th is celebrated as the International Day of Women’s Health, also called the ‘International Day of Action for Women’s Health’. It is observed to raise awareness about women’s health & well-being and their right to health. Regrettably, howsoever we may try to smother it, the fact remains that women’s health suffers globally due to various factors like lack of prioritizing the health of women, gender-based discriminations in the form of domestic violence, workplace exploitations & underpayments, relatively scant access to healthcare especially the essential sexual & reproductive health services etc. Amongst all contemporary health care issues, cancers are becoming new-age epidemic globally with around 18 million new cases being detected annually & 9.6 million deaths per year. 1 in every 4 deaths is due to cancers. Unfortunately, cancer diagnosis and treatment suffer hugely due to various factors including public ignorance regarding various subtle signs and symptoms, social taboos related to this disease, myths created by society and sense of denial in people. And when it comes to something like breast cancer, further delays are caused by shying away from discussing this issue, lack of female surgeons available in conservative societies, fear of loss of an organ which it is identified with femininity, & fear of side effects of chemotherapy (especially hair loss in women), causing a huge obstacle in seeking proper and timely advice & treatment. Breast cancer has become the most common cancer in women especially urban women & the number one killer in the reproductive age group. Around 2.3 million new cases are being diagnosed every year across the globe and about 1 million deaths occur due to breast cancer; 70% of these deaths are happening in low-mid income group countries and 30-50% of cancers are preventable. In India breast cancer accounts for around 2 lakh new cases annually with close to 1 lakh deaths. The ominous fact is that, in India as compared to West, 60 % of breast cancers are diagnosed in advanced stage. In Kashmir, the Regional Cancer Centre (State Cancer Center), SKIMS, mentioned in one of their studies that roughly 15 new cases are being registered every day, which comes to around 4500-5000 new cases every year. The figures are obviously an underestimate since a huge



number of patients are not entered in cancer registries across the globe due to limited number of active cancer registries and huge variations in access to such healthcare facilities and opting for alternative treatments or no treatments at all. Breast cancer can start in any part of the breast, ducts, lobules or stromal tissue. Ductal Carcinoma is the commonest type with majority being invasive ductal carcinoma NOS (of no special type.) If diagnosed in Stage 1, the overall 5-year survival rate is close to 90-95% while for the as same cancer diagnosed in Stage 4 the survival drops down to 20-25%, hence, the urgent need for creating awareness, and screenings and early detection. It needs to be noted that majority of breast cancers (90%) are sporadic which means can happen to anyone

without any family history of breast cancers!

Breast Screening: Screening is testing to find cancer in people with no signs and symptoms. It includes: • Self breast examination (done by the woman herself). • Clinical breast examination (CBE) by a trained healthcare professional. CBE can pick 4.6-10.7 % of breast cancers missed out on mammograms. • Digital X ray mammography usually for age greater than 40 years. • Ultrasound of breast & armpits (Sono-mammography) usually for less than 40 years of age. • MRI: It shows limited indications. **Signs & Symptoms** Some people may not have any signs or symptoms at all.

However, various people have different symptoms. Some of the warning signs of breast cancer could be: • New lump in the breast or armpit. • Thickening or swelling of part of the breast. • Irritation or dimpling of breast skin. • Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast. • Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area. • Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood. • Any change in the size or the shape of the breast. • Pain in any area of the breast.

Although 70-75% of the lumps are noncancerous and pain in the breast could be just cyclic mastalgia (pain coming with menstrual periods) but that needs to be evaluated and ruled out by a trained healthcare professional.

Risk Factors

Gender: Being a woman is the main risk of developing breast cancer. Male breast cancer accounts for less than 1 % of breast cancers.

Aging: Risk increases as a woman grows older, especially 50 years & above. However, the breast cancer in India is striking a decade earlier than in western population and we are seeing a lot of young age breast cancers.

Race: African American (Black) women are more likely to die of this cancer; Ashkenazi Jews at a higher risk.

Long reproductive period: Early start (before 12 yrs of age) & late cessation of menstruation (after 55 yrs).

Physical inactivity: Women with no or less physical activity have slightly higher chances of getting breast cancer.

Obesity: Increased body weight especially after menopause increases chances of having breast cancers.

Taller Women: Taller women have been seen to have slightly increased chances of having breast cancer. Though no direct link has been established but it is thought to be due to growth hormone like effects.

Denser Breast: Denser breast has slightly increased chances of having breast cancer due to increased glandular tissue.

Personal history of breast cancer: Past history of having had breast cancer increases the chances of having breast cancer in the remaining same breast or in the opposite breast.

Previous chest irradiation: Patients who have received radiation therapy on chest for any disease eg Hodgkin’s lymphoma before the age of 30 years.

Bharat Bhhagya Viddhaata Box Office Collection Day 2: Kangana Ranaut's Film Sees Growth After Haryana Declares Film Tax-Free

Mumbai: Kangana Ranaut's latest film Bharat Bhhagya Viddhaata recorded growth at the box office on its second day after a modest opening on Friday.

What's Happening

According to trade tracker Sacnilk, the film earned an estimated Rs 1.45 crore nett on Saturday, registering a 45 per cent increase from its Day 1 collection of Rs 1 crore. The film's total gross collection now stands at Rs 2.93 crore.

The film also witnessed improved footfall across theatres on Saturday. It recorded an overall occupancy of 22.03 per cent in India. Morning shows reported 6.08 per cent occupancy, which gradually increased through the day. Afternoon shows saw occupancy rise to 22.38 per cent, while evening shows recorded 25.54 per cent. The highest turnout was during the night shows, which registered 29.92 per cent occupancy.

Background

The film received an additional boost after Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced that it would be made tax-free in the state.

During an interaction with the media, CM Saini said, "I have said that such motivational films, which inspire us, should be watched by all of us. We will declare this 'tax-free' in Haryana because this inspires us and makes us feel our duties."

Reacting to the announcement, Kangana Ranaut said, "The Haryana CM has done a good job in empowering women in the state. Likewise, he has now given us the opportunity by making our film tax-free so that it can reach every citizen of Haryana." Director Imtiaz Ali's Main Vaapas Aaunga released in theatres on June 12. However, the film featuring Diljit Dosanjh, Vedang Raina and Sharvari trails behind Kartik Aaryan and Sara Ali Khan's Love Aaj Kal 2, on its opening day.

Main Vaapas Aaunga collected Rs 1.15 crore net and Rs



1.38 crore gross in India on its opening day across 2,302 shows, recording an 11% occupancy, as reported by Sacnilk.

The film performed well below Ali's romance drama Love Aaj Kal 2 (2020), featuring Kartik Aaryan and Sara Ali Khan, which had collected Rs 12.40 crore net and Rs 18 crore gross in India on its opening day. Despite being panned by critics at the time, that 2020 release had managed a decent opening.

Main Vaapas Aaunga also features Naseeruddin Shah

and Sanjay Suri in key roles. The film follows a 95-year-old man who suffers a stroke while trying to rush to Pakistan. As he drifts in and out of recollection, his grandson pieces together fragments from a pre-Partition past, even as the old man struggles to find peace in his final days.

India Today, in its review for the film, wrote, "What remains is a visually handsome drama weighed down by its pacing, weakened by an unconvincing romance and burdened by ideas that are more questionable than

profound. The longing is real. The emotion is sincere. The storytelling, unfortunately, never catches up (sic)."

Besides Kriti Sanon, her sister Nupur Sanon and mother Geeta Sanon sold four apartments in Mumbai's Andheri for a combined ₹8.9 crore, according to property registration documents reviewed by Square Yards.

The buyer is filmmaker and casting director Mukesh Chhabra. The Sanon family acquired the four apartments between 2013 and 2017 for approximately ₹4.31 crore. With the latest transactions valued at ₹8.9 crore, the family realised an appreciation of around ₹4.6 crore, translating into a capital gain of nearly 107% over a holding period of nine to 13 years, according to Square Yards. Property registration documents show that the sale was executed through four separate transactions, registered on April 24, 2026.

Two larger apartments in Raheja Classique, Andheri West, sold for ₹3.23 crore each. The units have a built-up area of 654.23 sq ft each and include one car parking space each.

Both transactions attracted stamp duty of ₹19.41 lakh and registration charges of ₹30,000 each.

The remaining two apartments in the same building sold for ₹1.21 crore each.

These units have a built-up area of 246.06 sq ft and attracted stamp duty of ₹7.29 lakh each, along with registration charges of ₹30,000 per unit.

According to Square Yards, Geeta Sanon purchased the two larger apartments in July 2013 for a combined ₹1.40 crore, while Kriti and Nupur Sanon acquired the other two units in June 2017 for a combined ₹2.90 crore, bringing the family's total acquisition cost to about ₹4.31 crore. In terms of work, Kriti Sanon will next be seen in Homi Adajania's Cocktail 2, a spiritual sequel to the 2012 film Cocktail.

Aamir Khan, Kareena Kapoor, Salman Khan And Others Attend Lagaan 25th Anniversary Bash



Mumbai: Lagaan, one of Bollywood's most iconic films, is marking its 25th anniversary on June 15. Ahead of the milestone, Aamir Khan joined director Ashutosh Gowariker, along with members of the cast and crew, for a special celebration in Mumbai on Saturday. The reunion paid tribute to the Oscar-nominated classic and its enduring legacy in Indian cinema.

The event was attended by Aamir's industry friends, including Salman Khan. The actor turned heads with his rugged look, which brought back memories of his Tere Naam days. His short-cropped hair and trimmed beard, paired with a black leather jacket, tank top, distressed jeans and boots, gave off a relaxed yet striking vibe.

In a video from the event, Aamir Khan was seen greeting Salman warmly as soon as he arrived. The two shared a hug, exchanged smiles, and posed together for photographs. The duo last worked together in the classic comedy Andaz Apna Apna. Kareena Kapoor also made an elegant appearance at the celebrations. The actress looked radiant in a blush-pink traditional outfit detailed with gold accents. She accessorised her ensemble with emerald earrings, bangles and a sleek bun.

The event brought together several Bollywood personalities to celebrate Lagaan's legacy. Spotted at the gathering were Juhi Chawla with her husband Jay Mehta, Sophie Choudry, Vir Das, Sunil Grover, Zoya Akhtar, Kajol and Shenaz

'Treasure. Judge me all you want, but first, hear me out. Two days ago, a full 25 years after its release, I finally watched Lagaan. As an entertainment journalist, my colleagues had already given me a fair share of grief for somehow never having seen it. Yes, I am guilty. But do I regret watching the film in 2026? Absolutely not. In fact, my only regret is not watching it sooner.

Rarely do we have the luxury of time after surviving a nine-hour workday and a two-hour commute. Even if you do muster the energy to put something on when you get home, you usually watch half and save the rest for later. But Lagaan didn't give me that choice. People had warned me it was an endurance test – a massive runtime to watch at my own caution. Yet, three hours later, as the clock struck 2:00 am, I sat in the dark, filled with an overwhelming surge of pride and love, fighting back tears, so my roommates wouldn't wake up.

As the only modern Indian film to secure an Oscar nomination, Ashutosh Gowariker's 2001 masterpiece is on the cusp of a historic milestone: its silver jubilee on June 15. Aamir Khan has even hosted a grand event to celebrate every bit of this legacy with the cast and crew. For those like me – and for the Gen Z and Gen Alpha cohorts who dismiss it as just another three-hour patriotic drag – please do yourselves a favour and catch its re-release in theatres on June 12. Prove yourselves wrong. Because Lagaan is so much more than a

patriotic film.

I might offend the generation before me, but the main reason I avoided the movie for so long was the assumption that it would be a dry history lesson on the British Raj, with cricket merely serving as a background gimmick. A gimmick? I couldn't have been more wrong. To Gowariker, Khan and fellow film buffs everywhere, I offer my deepest apologies. Twenty-five years later, Lagaan invokes the exact same raw emotions it did at the turn of the century. It is a cinematic marvel that champions humanity, community, and resilience, all while quietly dismantling deep-seated truths about colonialism, casteism, religion, and nation-building.

As a cinephile, no film has ever done to me what Lagaan did.

It begins innocently enough, in the village of fictional Champaner shimmering under a relentless 1893 sun. Those opening frames pulled me in like a warm, dusty embrace – fields of gold turning to barren dust, and villagers dancing in quiet defiance against a sky that refuses to bless them. Priya Sachdeva Kapur remembered her late husband, businessman Sunjay Kapur, with an emotional note on his first death anniversary on June 12. Taking to social media, Priya shared a photo and reflected on the void left behind after his death last year. Priya wrote, "A year without you. Still the first thought in the morning and the last thought at night."

After Crossing Rs 330 Crore Worldwide, Mohanlal's Drishyam 3 To Release On Prime Video On June 18



New Delhi: After setting the box office ablaze with a record-breaking theatrical run, Drishyam 3 is now gearing up for its digital premiere. The highly anticipated third instalment of the acclaimed thriller franchise will begin streaming on Amazon Prime Video this month.

Drishyam 3 will start streaming on Amazon Prime Video from June 18, 2026. Alongside the original Malayalam version, the film will also be available in dubbed Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada versions.

The OTT release comes less than a month after the film's theatrical debut, giving fans another opportunity to experience the gripping thriller from the comfort of their homes. Released on May 21, Drishyam 3 went on to achieve a worldwide gross of Rs 330 crore within just 30 days of release, scripting a remarkable chapter in Malayalam cinema history.

Reflecting on the franchise's journey, Mohanlal expressed gratitude to audiences around the world for their support.

Sharing a note on X, the actor wrote, "Carried Across Generations. What began as a story from Kerala found its way across languages, borders, and millions of hearts. Thirteen years and three chapters later, this journey continues to create history. Thank you for making it your own."

Actor-filmmaker Farhan Akhtar, who is currently embroiled in an unresolved dispute over Don 3 with Ranveer Singh, is reportedly shifting his attention to upcoming project about composer RD Burman. Ranveer's abrupt exit from the film allegedly caused significant losses to Farhan's production house, Excel Entertainment, and the matter is yet to be settled.

Amid this, Farhan could be set for another biographical drama after Bhaag Milkha Bhaag and Toofaan, as reported by Pinkvilla. He has been approached to play legendary music composer RD Burman, also known as Pancham Da, in a biopic being developed by Neeraj Pandey, the report claimed.

The producers are keen to cast actor-director Farhan in the lead role in the

upcoming Neeraj Pandey directorial. The film is being envisioned as a tribute to the iconic composer, whose songs continue to connect with audiences across generations.

The report said Neeraj has been developing the biopic for some time and that the script is moving ahead quickly.

While attributing a source, the report claimed that Farhan is in discussions to play RD Burman and is enthusiastic about bringing Pancham Da's life to the screen.

The source added that if the project goes ahead as planned, Farhan will undergo extensive preparation for the role. The same source also said the makers have secured the rights to several RD Burman compositions that defined an era of Indian cinema, and that music sessions have already begun to ensure the best possible versions of the original songs are used in the film.

Salman Khan's nephew, Ayaan Agnihotri, has stepped into Bollywood's music space with his first-ever playback track, C'mon Baby, from Bandar, directed by Anurag Kashyap. Opening up about his debut in an interview with NDTV, Ayaan aka Agni described the experience as "surreal" and spoke about navigating the industry, balancing indie and film music, and handling expectations that come with his family name.

Agni also shared a candid piece of advice he carries that comes from Salman Khan that continues to shape his approach to music and fame. Agni is the son of Salman's sister Alvira Khan Agnihotri and director Atul Agnihotri.

Speaking about landing his first Bollywood track, Agni said the opportunity came unexpectedly when he was heard at a private gathering. "Honestly, it still feels surreal. Nikhil (Bandar co-producer Nikhil Dwivedi) heard me at a private gathering, believed my voice was right for this, and gave me a shot. I went in without expectations, and it came together. I feel genuinely lucky; this industry doesn't hand out opportunities like this easily." Seema Sajdeh, who divorced Sohail Khan in 2022, recently addressed rumours of getting back together after they were spotted at a Pune wedding.

BUSINESS

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Britannia sharpening regional playbook to take on local rivals: MD & CEO Rakshit Hargave

NEW DELHI, July 19: Biscuits maker Britannia Industries is strengthening its regional strategy and localising products to compete more effectively with the emerging regional players, Managing Director and CEO Rakshit Hargave said. Britannia, which also makes cakes and breads, has created smaller, empowered teams and increased localisation efforts to respond to growing competition from regional brands that are gaining traction in local markets, he said. "We are localising our product, we have created a team of many Indians, we are empowering regional teams," Hargave said on the sidelines of an event organised by industry body FICCI. History Hargave said local companies with regional products are a "reality" and require a differentiated competitive approach.



"If we have to compete with them, we have to compete with them on an even scale," he said. He did not comment on the pricing strategy but said Britannia enjoys the strength of a nationally recognised brand; success at the consumer level depends on matching local competitors on factors such as pricing, taste and packaging. "So whether it is price, taste, packaging and its expectation, you have to compete. Because on the ground, I might have a more famous brand, otherwise everybody is equal," Hargave said. Large companies operating in the packaged food space are facing stiff competition from several regional food brands which are expanding their footprints across states, intensifying competition in categories such as biscuits, snacks and bakery products. They are offering aggressive pricing, better distributor margins, and products tailored to vernacular taste

preferences. When asked about the demand environment, Hargave said inflationary trends remain uncertain, and the industry continues to monitor developments closely. "So, the inflation, which happened as a result of the (high) crude, is still there. Now we have to see how it develops. We are all saying it is unpredictable," he said. Hargave also highlighted the growing importance of quick commerce as a channel for innovation and premiumisation, noting that it caters largely to urban and younger consumers. "By nature of the geography and the disposition, you will see more premium products, more experimental products being bought," he said. He added that quick commerce offers companies an opportunity to test new products and adjacent categories with lower risk and faster consumer feedback.

Assam Govt CMAAA scheme empowers 99,971 entrepreneurs

Guwahati In a major boost to self-employment and the State's entrepreneurial ecosystem, the Government of Assam has covered a total of 99,971 beneficiaries across the State through the first two phases of the Chief Minister's Atmanirbhar Asom Abhijan (CMAAA). Launched on September 23, 2023, the flagship entrepreneurship promotion initiative provides crucial financial assistance, Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) training, and continuous hand-holding support to aspiring entrepreneurs to foster sustainable livelihood opportunities, officials said on Friday. Under the first phase (CMAAA 1.0), a total of 25,277 beneficiaries were covered, comprising 25,056 under the General Category and 221 under the Professional Category. All selected candidates received their first tranche of financial assistance to set up their ventures. Subsequently, 12,976 beneficiaries have been sanctioned and disbursed the second tranche in the form of an interest-free loan based on their performance and eligibility. The remaining 12,313 beneficiaries will undergo evaluation in a phased manner. The parameter for the evaluation matrix includes financial performance, record-keeping, employment generation, and productivity to receive the second tranche. Meanwhile, the momentum has significantly scaled up under CMAAA 2.0, where the State Government has extended the first tranche of financial assistance to 74,694 beneficiaries. This cohort includes 74,144 general category candidates, 206 professionals, and 344 Operation Black Board (OBB) teachers, with the latter group receiving one-time financial assistance of ₹2 lakh each. To strengthen entrepreneurial capacity, mandatory EDP training has already commenced across all districts for all 74,694 beneficiaries under CMAAA 2.0 and is slated to wrap up by July 31, 2026. While 75 per cent of the approved financial assistance has already been disbursed as the first tranche, the remaining 25 per cent will be released upon successful completion of this training. The initiative is also actively driving financial inclusion. So far, 1,325 beneficiaries have applied for institutional finance under various Government-sponsored credit-linked schemes like PMEGP, PMFME, and PM MUDRA, with 329 beneficiaries already successfully availing the credit. Senior officials emphasised that the effective convergence of CMAAA with institutional credit remains essential for transforming beneficiaries into sustainable entrepreneurs capable of expanding businesses and generating jobs. In line with this, the Government has directed all banks to accord the highest priority to the initiative to ensure tangible outcomes. An official release from the Department of Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprises stated that the progress achieved under both phases marks a significant milestone toward creating an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem, aimed at turning Assam's youth into "job creators rather than job seekers" to realise the vision of a self-reliant 'Atmanirbhar Asom'.



India, Japan Step Up Cooperation to Fast-Track Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed

New Delhi, July 19: India and Japan have reaffirmed their commitment to expediting the Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) Project, with bilateral discussions progressing positively to ensure the earliest possible commencement of high-speed rail services in the country. According to official information, construction of the high-speed rail corridor is advancing rapidly, with the first section of the project targeted to become operational in 2027. To facilitate the early launch of services, both countries have agreed that initial operations will begin using an Indian high-speed train. Japan will subsequently supply its next-generation E10 Series



high-speed trains in the early 2030s. The E10 Series is currently under development and is expected to bring advanced technology and

enhanced passenger comfort to the corridor. The implementation strategy reflects the shared objective of India and Japan to operationalise the Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Project at the earliest possible date. The project continues to stand as a key symbol of the strategic partnership between the two countries, combining Japanese high-speed rail technology with India's rapidly expanding transport infrastructure. Officials said the continued cooperation between the two nations is expected to accelerate the project's completion and pave the way for a modern, efficient and sustainable high-speed rail network in India.

Axis Bank Q1 net profit jumps 22% to ₹7,632 cr

Mumbai Axis Bank on Saturday reported a 22.23 per cent jump in consolidated net profit for the June quarter at ₹7,632.31 crore. The bank had reported a consolidated net profit of ₹6,243.72 crore in the year-ago period. On a standalone basis, the third-largest private sector lender's net profit jumped 23 per cent to ₹7,114 crore. Its core net interest income grew 8 per cent to ₹14,646 crore, on the back of a 19 per cent jump in advances and a decline in net interest margin to 3.46 per cent from 3.80 per cent in the year-ago period. The bank's net interest margin in the January-March quarter stood at 3.73 per cent. A 38 per cent growth in corporate loans led the advances growth, while retail loans grew by just 8 per cent during the April-June period, the bank said. The overall non-interest income comprising fee, trading and miscellaneous income stood at ₹6,735 crore, down 7 per cent from the year-ago period's ₹7,258 crore, mainly due to a 62 per cent drop in trading income. From an asset quality perspective, the gross slippages declined to ₹5,566 crore in the reporting quarter from ₹8,200 crore in the year-ago period, but were higher than the ₹4,675 crore in the quarter-ago period. The overall provisions declined to ₹2,223 crore in the quarter under review from ₹3,948 crore in April-June 2025. The gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio inched up to 1.28 per cent on a quarter as compared to March-end's 1.23 per cent. Axis Bank's overall capital adequacy stood at 16.67 per cent as of June 30, 2026.



Minister Mallabaruah reviews Kaziranga wildlife tourism plans



Guwahati Forest Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah on Saturday chaired an extensive review meeting with tourism stakeholders at Kaziranga National Park to discuss preparations for the upcoming wildlife tourism season and long-term conservation. Addressing the media, Mallabaruah asked stakeholders to submit their written recommendations within 10 days to finalise the upcoming tourism roadmap. He stressed that the Forest and Tourism departments will work together to ensure balanced development while keeping ecological integrity the foremost priority. While ruling out year-round tourism in core area due to annual flood cycle, the Minister said department will explore off-season activities to sustain local livelihoods. He also noted that boosting revenue through better hospitality infrastructure would directly fund habitat management. Cabinet Minister Keshab Mahanta, MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa and of Forest and District Administration officials were also present.

ICICI Bank Q1 profit jumps 13.8% on high loan growth

Mumbai ICICI Bank on Saturday reported a 13.88 per cent jump in June quarter consolidated profit at ₹15,440 crore, up from ₹13,558 crore in the year-ago period on the back of faster credit growth. In an exchange filing, the second-largest private sector lender said its standalone net profit grew 15.95 per cent to ₹14,804 crore for the April-June quarter on a standalone basis, up 15.95 per cent from ₹12,768 crore in the year-ago period. The net interest income (NII) increased 12.7 per cent on-year to ₹24,384 crore in the quarter under review, on the back of a nearly 20 per cent jump in advances and a slight widening in the net interest margin to 4.36 per cent. Its Executive Director, Sandeep Batra, said the bank was able to buck a system-wide trend and report an expansion in NIMs courtesy of an income tax refund and also the repricing of term deposits. Going forward, channelling in inflows from the FCNR(B) will be "dilutive" on the NIMs front, he said, but the bank is confident of keeping it "range-bound" for FY27. Declining to share a target on the FCNR(B) front, Batra said the bank has activated its international network and is also looking for partners to ramp up and make the FCNR



(B) a success. The bank did not offer guidance on its comfort level with the maximum leverage that it is planning for, saying that it depends on a number of factors, including the call taken by its local partners as well. In the quarter under review, the other income, excluding treasury income, increased by 16 per cent on year to ₹8,425 crore for the reporting quarter, and the bank also reported a treasury gain of ₹151 crore. The deposit growth came at 14 per cent for the lender. From an asset quality perspective, the gross non-performing assets ratio improved to 1.38 per cent from 1.67 per cent a year ago and 1.40 per cent at the end of March this year. Fresh slippages came at ₹5,500 crore, which was down from ₹6,200 crore in the year-ago period but higher than the preceding quarter. Bank officials explained that there is seasonality every year, where the first quarter tends to have higher stress primarily because of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) accounts.

NHPC chief calls for collective green action

Faridabad With the aim of promoting environmental conservation, sustainable development, and public participation, a grand 'Van Mahotsav' was jointly organised on Saturday in the campus of PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 2, Faridabad, by NHPC Limited and the school management. The event was held under the aegis of the 'Mission LIFE' and 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 3.0' campaigns, focusing on the theme "One Child – One Sapling." Bhupender Gupta, CMD-NHPC, graced the event as the Chief Guest. The occasion was also attended by Director (Projects) Sanjay Kumar Singh, Director (Technical) Suprakash Adhikari, Director (Finance & Personnel) Mahesh Kumar Sharma, Chief Patron of the NHPC Mahila Kalyan Samiti Shikha Gupta, Samiti Patrons Soma Adhikari, Rinku Sharma, and Kendriya Vidyalaya Principal Mamta Shekhar, along with other senior NHPC officials, school teachers, and students. In his keynote address, Bhupender Gupta congratulated the school community on the successful organisation of the programme. He stated that "Mission LIFE," launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, inspires citizens to make environmental conservation an integral part of their lifestyle. Emphasising that protecting the ecosystem is a shared collective responsibility, he called upon everyone to plant more saplings and pledge to conserve trees. Gupta remarked that instilling a sensitivity towards nature in children is crucial, as these values will shape them into responsible future citizens. He also appreciated the creativity displayed in the environmental artworks and presentations created by the students. In her address, the school Principal, Mamta Shekhar, stated that the objective of the event was to inspire students to adopt practices related to environmental conservation, sensitivity towards nature, and the core principles of 'Mission LIFE'. She remarked that "One Child–One Sapling" is not merely a campaign but a collective pledge to ensure a clean, green, and safe future for upcoming generations. A comprehensive target has been set to plant a total of 2,000 saplings on the school premises as part of the forest festival. In line with this, approximately 600 saplings were planted during the event, featuring diverse species such as Pilokhan, Ashoka, Indian Willow, and Nirgundi. The remaining 1,400 saplings will be planted in a phased manner over the coming days. The event featured a variety of cultural and educational activities, including impressive performances by the school's Cub-Bulbul and Scout & Guide units, a sapling plantation drive, songs, group singing, Bharatanatyam, short plays, group dances, instrumental music performances, student speeches on environmental themes, and a prize distribution ceremony.



Panel calls for a national day to commemorate colonialism victims

New Delhi A public dialogue examining India's colonial history alongside its newly signed free trade agreement with Britain has culminated in a call for a National Day of Commemoration for Victims of Colonialism. Titled "Terms of Trade: India, Britain, and the Long Shadow of Empire," the dialogue was convened by Urzu Media at the India Habitat Centre on Friday. It brought together economists, historians, trade policy experts and a senior human rights lawyer to discuss how nearly two centuries of colonial rule shaped India's economy, institutions and collective memory, and how that history still informs policy choices today. Closing the event, participants said they would begin wider consultations with historians, academics, museums, civil society groups and policymakers to finalise a date. The day is envisioned as covering economic exploitation, famine, displacement and the freedom struggle as connected chapters, rather than isolated episodes such as Jallianwala Bagh or Partition. The panel included Charan Singh of the EGROW Foundation, trade expert Abhijit Das, economist-historian Prasenjit K Basu, Delhi University's Prabhu Mohapatra, advocate Colin Gonsalves, and Chandini Jaswal of the Museum of British Colonialism, moderated by Richa Jain Kallra. Vijay Kumar Sundaresan of the India Pride Project also spoke on repatriating India's stolen artefacts.



YES Bank posts 32.5% rise in Q1 profit to ₹1,071 cr

Mumbai Private lender YES Bank on Saturday reported a 32.54 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹1,071.80 crore in the June quarter, aided by growth in the core net interest income. In the year-ago period, net profit of the bank stood at ₹808.65 crore. However, on a sequential basis, net profit fell 0.96 per cent. The core net interest income of the bank increased 17.5 per cent year-on-year to ₹2,786 crore, from ₹2,371 crore. The medium term as rural infrastructure development fund (RIDF) balances are expected to come down further and retail credit has picked up. "The RIDF balance is run down, which are currently at about ₹27,000 crore. As we look to exit March 2027, that's likely to become more like ₹21,000 crore of RIDF. So, that will certainly add to margins. With retail growth coming back, we do expect that that should also start supporting margins," Tonse said during the post-earnings conference call. Net interest margins of the bank improved to 2.70 per cent in June 2026 quarter, from 2.5 per cent in the year-ago period. It remained stable on a sequential basis. Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Vinay M Tonse said margins are expected to improve over



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Rescuers in China search rubble for survivors of landslide that killed 8, left 34 missing

CHONGQING, (China), July 19: Rescue crews used excavators on Sunday to comb through the rubble in search of survivors from a landslide in the southwest-ern Chinese city of Chongqing that killed at least eight people and left another 34 missing. Massive amounts of rocks and soil roared down a slope and buried more than 10 residential buildings early Friday in Pengshui County on the outskirts of Chongqing. On Sunday morning, about nine rescuers were seen carrying a sealed orange bag from the scene. It was not immediately clear if a victim had been pulled out. State broadcaster CCTV reported that all the residents staying in 21 buildings in the potential impact zone had been evacuated. Authorities carried out the evacuations from buildings on slopes and in low-lying



areas within a kilometer radius of the disaster site, relocating over 1,100 people, Chongqing authorities

said in a WeChat post published Sunday. Authorities said one of 10 survivors was discharged from the hospital while the other nine were in stable condition. Eight people pulled from the rubble had died. On Saturday, rescue crews aided by dogs and detectors found signs of life, confirming that at least one survivor was still trapped beneath the rubble. But authorities said the crews needed to carefully map out a rescue plan since a reckless excavation could risk triggering a secondary collapse, especially with the boulders at the scene. The landslide contained about 18,000 cubic metres (635,500 cubic feet) of rocks and debris, with one boulder being around 3,000 cubic metres (106,000 cubic feet), Wang Chuanjun, head of Planning and Natural Resources in Pengshui County, told reporters Friday.

US lets Hong Kong emergency lapse, lifts some sanctions



Hong Kong

The United States said on Saturday it did not renew a national emergency declaration over Hong Kong, leading to the lifting of partial sanctions, but it said an executive order that revoked Hong Kong's special trading status remains in place. Hours ago, China said the US recently confirmed to China that the President's Executive Order on Hong Kong Normalisation would end, the ministry said in a statement responding to media questions. That announcement had appeared to be a sign that the city's preferential privileges might be restored. But a statement from a State Department spokesperson sent to the AP said that US President Donald Trump "allowed the national

emergency to end, but Executive Order 13936 otherwise remains in effect." As the order states, Hong Kong is no longer sufficiently autonomous to justify differential treatment in relation to mainland China under certain laws and provisions, it said. The US Office of Foreign Assets Control said in a statement Friday that the national emergency declared in the executive order had expired and that it delisted people who were sanctioned under the order. But it said people who remain sanctioned under the Hong Kong Autonomy Act of 2020 have been added to a different sanction list. The statement showed Hong Kong leader John Lee and his predecessor, Carrie Lam, were removed from the first list but added to the second one.

8 killed, over 60 wounded in Ukrainian attack on Russian

Moscow

Eight people were killed and more than 60 others were wounded in Russia by overnight Ukrainian drone attacks, Russian officials said on Saturday. Kyiv's forces are continuing their relentless aerial campaign against energy infrastructure and military targets inside Russia, aiming to undermine Moscow's war effort and make Russians feel the consequences of the Kremlin's all-out invasion of Ukraine that is well into its fifth year. Two sprawling warehouses of Russia's major online retailer, Wildberries, were hit by Ukrainian drones overnight, according to Russian officials: one in the town of Kotovsk in the Tambov region, some 360 km from the border with Ukraine, and another one in the city of Elektrostal, about 50 km east of



Moscow. Both caught fire, but Wildberries founder Tatyana Kim said later on Saturday morning that the fire in Kotovsk has been put out. Images and footage released by Russian online outlets showed a fire raging at the Elektrostal facility,

with massive plumes of smoke towering over it. A Ukrainian drone also hit an oil depot in the city of Noginsk, just north of Elektrostal, sparking a fire and prompting evacuations of a nearby maternity hospital and a residential building, according to the governor of the Moscow region, Andrei Vorobyov. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post on Saturday that Ukrainian long-range strikes hit two "significant logistical facilities in the Moscow and Tambov regions." "These facilities were used by the aggressor to supply sanctioned components for the production of drones and navigation equipment," he wrote. An oil facility was also hit, he said. Seven night shift workers were killed at the warehouse in Kotovsk, and 25 others were wounded, Tambov regional governor Yevgeny

Pervyshev said. A total of 37 people were wounded in the Moscow region, Vorobyov said, adding that one of those later died in the hospital. In Elektrostal, drone debris also hit a kindergarten building, Vorobyov said, sparking a fire that has since been put out. In the city of Vladimir, some 180 km east of Moscow, a Ukrainian drone hit a residential building, sparking a brief fire, Vladimir governor Alexander Avdeyev said. There were no casualties, he added. Ukrainian special operations also conducted strikes against targets in the Sea of Azov and in occupied territory, Zelenskyy said. Overall, the Russian Defence Ministry said its air defences overnight intercepted 379 Ukrainian drones over 19 Russian regions, as well as the illegally annexed Crimea, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. (

Pakistan, China to tighten border security, say officials

Islamabad

Pakistan and China have officially agreed to deepen bilateral ties by strengthening cooperation in immigration, border management, and institutional frameworks. A delegation from China's National Immigration Administration, headed by Director General Qi Jingyang, held a meeting with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday to discuss bilateral matters. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry was also present in the meeting. The new bilateral agreement aims to boost the efficiency of joint operations against illegal immigration, weapons smuggling, and cross-border crime, according to a statement issued by the interior ministry. Both parties agreed to finalise an agreement soon to expedite the immigration process, and a Pakistan-China joint working group on border management and security will be established. Naqvi said cooperation with China on land borders, seaports and immigration management would be further enhanced. (PTI)



US lawmaker seeks review of arms sales to India

Washington

A US lawmaker and national security experts have urged Congress to review arms sales to India over alleged transnational repression during a briefing at the Capitol Hill. Congressman Jim McGovern, co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, also called on Congress to pass the bipartisan and bicameral Transnational Repression Policy Act. McGovern urged Secretary of State Marco Rubio to review India's eligibility for US arms sales under the Arms Export Control Act. The congressional briefing titled "India's Transnational Repression: Implications for US National Security," held on July 14, was organised by Equitas Forum USA in partnership with Hindus for Human Rights, the Sikh Coalition, the Sikh American Legal Defence and Education Fund



(SALDEF), the New York State Council of Churches and the Dalit Solidarity Forum, with support from the office of Congresswoman Summer Lee. Daniel Stanton, a former senior officer with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, warned that hostile states increasingly use organised criminal networks as instruments of state power. "They intimi-

dade and coerce diaspora communities, threaten family members at home, recruit criminal proxies, and facilitate lethal violence against individuals living in democratic countries," he said. "Transnational repression must be recognised early as a pattern, not as a series of isolated incidents," Stanton said. Stephen Schneck, former Chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, said that USCIRF's 2026 Annual Report, for the seventh consecutive year, recommended designating India as a Country of Particular Concern. India had rejected the USCIRF's report, asserting that it misrepresents facts and "peddles a motivated narrative". Allison McManus, Managing Director of National Security and International Policy at the Centre for American Progress, said strategic partnerships should not shield Governments from consequences.

UN experts express concern over detention of five indigenous rights activists in Assam

Geneva

A group of UN experts has expressed concern over the detention of five indigenous human rights activists in Assam, saying the charges against them could undermine the legitimate work of those defending indigenous peoples' rights. In a statement issued, a UN Working Group on business and human rights and four UN Special Rapporteurs said they were "deeply concerned" by reports that the activists had been deprived of their liberty in connection with their peaceful advocacy on behalf of indigenous communities' lands and rights. According to the statement, Assam Police arrested Pranab Doley, Rajib Pegu, Brijit Kutum, Amit Nag and Bhaskar Saikia in connection with protests on June 29



over the proposed construction of a luxury tourism project near the Kaziranga National Park. The project is reportedly linked to an agreement between the Assam government and a prominent hotel group. The five were held by the police earlier this week reportedly under charges of criminal conspiracy, unlawful assembly, criminal trespass, rioting, causing

obstruction to public servant while they are carrying out duties, and criminal intimidation. "Such arrests and prosecutions can have a chilling effect on civic space and discourage others from speaking out against abuses," the experts said in the statement. They noted that threats, arrests, surveillance, retaliation and legal harassment could undermine the safety of indigenous communities and human rights activists, as well as their ability to participate freely in processes concerning business activities. "States must ensure human rights defenders are able to exercise their right to protect, defend and promote human rights and carry out their work safely and without fear of intimidation, reprisals or criminalisation," the experts said.

UN human rights agency voices concern over wave of unrest in PoK

United Nations

The United Nations human rights agency has voiced concern over the "wave of unrest" in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), calling for investigations into killings of protesters as well as members of security forces. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk on Friday appealed for calm in PoK amid a wave of unrest ahead of regional elections at the end of the month, a statement issued in Geneva said. It added that dozens of people, mostly protesters but also law enforcement personnel, have reportedly been killed since June ahead of the vote for the legislative assembly on July 27. The High Commissioner called for prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into all deaths that have occurred due to the unrest, both amongst protesters and members of security forces. The Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) - a movement behind the protests comprising



traders, transporters, students, lawyers, activists and others - has been banned under anti-terrorism laws for allegedly threatening public order and security. Some of the group's leaders have subsequently been arrested. The criminalisation of a civil society organisation and imposition of strict limitations on gatherings raise serious concerns about infringements on the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, the statement said. (

SCO countries exchange information on situation along their borders

Islamabad

Officials of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) countries, including India and Pakistan, "exchanged information and assessments" on the situation along the international borders of the member states. The 12th Meeting of the Heads of Border Services of the Competent Authorities of the SCO member states was held in Islamabad on under the chairmanship of Pakistan, according to a statement by the Foreign Office. The meeting was attended by the heads and representatives of the border services of the competent authorities of Belarus, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia,



Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS). "The participants exchanged information and assessments regarding the situation along the international borders of the SCO member states, as well as trends and forecasts relating to its development," FO said. The participants discussed and approved the results of the Joint Border Operation "Solidarity-2025", conducted by the border services of the competent authorities of the SCO member states. They considered and approved the plan for the preparation and conduct of the Joint Border Operation "Solidarity-2026", while also approving the Work Plan of the Group of Experts of the Border

Services of the Competent Authorities of the SCO member states for 2027. They supported the proposal of Tajikistan to host the Joint Border Operation "Solidarity-2027" in 2027 and also discussed proposals regarding the venue and timing of the next meeting of the Heads of Border Services of the Competent Authorities of the SCO member States. The participants noted that the exchange of views and the development of common positions on countering emerging challenges and threats along the borders of the SCO member states would contribute to further strengthening cooperation among their border services, while enhancing security and mutual trust along their shared borders.



“Lionel Messi Will Reclaim Record": Kylian Mbappe's Stunning Remark Ahead Of FIFA World Cup 2026 Final

New Delh: France captain Kylian Mbappe believes Lionel Messi will reclaim the FIFA World Cup's all-time scoring record in Monday's final against Spain, just hours after overtaking the Argentina legend on the competition's overall scoring charts. Mbappe moved to the top of the all-time World Cup scoring list after netting twice in France's thrilling 6-4 defeat to England in the third-place play-off on Saturday. The brace took the 27-year-old to 22 World Cup goals from just 22 matches, one ahead of Messi's tally of 21. However, with Argentina set to face Spain in the final, Mbappe is convinced the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner will respond immediately. "Leo, he scores all the time. Tomorrow he will score, for sure," Mbappe told Fox Sports after the match.



Both Messi and Mbappe began the 2026 FIFA World Cup chasing former Germany striker Miroslav Klose's long-standing record of 16 World Cup goals. Messi first equalled and then surpassed Klose during Argentina's campaign before reaching 21 goals, only for Mbappe to leapfrog him with his double against England. Mbappe has enjoyed a sensational tournament in North America, taking his tally to 10 goals in eight matches. His overall World Cup tally now stands at 22 goals, having scored 12 across the 2018 and 2022 editions before adding 10 more in Canada, Mexico and the United States. His latest strikes also strengthened his grip on the Golden Boot race, leaving him two goals clear of Messi heading into Monday's final. Despite the personal milestone, Mbappe admitted the

record offered little consolation after France missed out on a podium finish. "I just try to help my team every time. It's certain that when you score so many goals in the World Cup, it elevates you to certain levels. But I would have preferred not to be the top scorer in history and play the match tomorrow," he said. France's defeat to England ended Mbappe's hopes of appearing in a second successive World Cup final, but the French captain will now watch with interest as Messi gets one last opportunity to reclaim the title of the tournament's most prolific scorer. If the Argentina captain finds the net against Spain, as Mbappe expects, he will once again move ahead of the Frenchman atop the World Cup's all-time scoring charts.

A tap on Gavaskar's shoulder for luck: Doshi recalls Sobers

New Delhi

Sir Garfield Sobers could dominate a cricket field like few others, but the West Indies legend also had a deeply superstitious side. Commentator Sushil Doshi recalled how Sobers believed touching Sunil Gavaskar's shoulder before batting would bring him fortune. Doshi, who had the privilege of sharing the commentary box with the West Indies great, spoke to PTI a day after Sobers' death, recalling the man behind the cricketing genius. He was 89. Among the many memories Doshi shared was an amusing anecdote from India's famous 1971 tour of the West Indies, the series in which a young Gavaskar amassed 774 runs. "Despite all his greatness, there were some things that showed Sobers was only human. And I remember a story that India was playing against West Indies. It was 1971. West Indies was behind 0-1 in the series and it was the last test match. "West Indies had to make 262 runs to win. And it was not a difficult task for Gary Sobers. Such a big player he was," Sobers, according to Doshi, was convinced Gavaskar was a lucky charm. He believed that a gentle tap on the Indian opener's shoulder before batting would somehow bring him a century and win West Indies the match. "Having said that, Sobers used to believe that if he touched



Gavaskar's shoulder, he would go on to score a century and win the game for his team. He thought Gavaskar was a very luck man." However, Sobers was not able to locate Gavaskar and ended up getting out cheaply. Behind the unlocatable Gavaskar was India captain Ajit Wadekar, who locked the opener in the bathroom to prevent Sobers from his sight. "This (Sobers' superstition) was not hidden from the Indian captain Ajit Wadekar. Gary Sobers was coming from the middle of the field to the Indian dressing room," recalled Doshi. "He immediately said, 'where is Sunny? Where is Sunny?' So someone said, he is in the bathroom. He is taking a bath. So he immediately closed the bathroom door and locked it and kept the key in his pocket. That was Ajit Wadekar. "So without touching Gavaskar's shoulder, Sobers left. And look at the game of fate. That day on the first ball Abid Ali bowled, Sobers got out on 0. This shows no matter how great a player you are, there are still some weaknesses," Doshi said.

Mandaviya unveils Peacko, marking 30-day countdown to BWF World Championships

New Delhi

Sports is not simply about winning medals; it is about nurturing talent, building a vibrant sporting culture and strengthening the ecosystem that enables athletes to thrive. Echoing this vision, the countdown to the BWF World Championships 2026 officially commenced with the unveiling of the tournament's official mascot and official anthem on Saturday July 18 2026 at New Delhi. The championship, scheduled to be held at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium from August 17 to 23, 2026, will bring together the world's finest shuttlers and mark the first time India will host badminton's premier event. The launch was attended by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh



Mandaviya, Badminton Association of India (BAI) President and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, BAI General Secretary Sanjay Mishra, DG, SAI, Hari Ranjan Rao, IAS, Indian badminton legend Pullela Gopichand, senior officials and members of the badminton fraternity, officially signalling the final phase of preparations for the Championships. The highlight of the event was the unveiling of "Peacko," the official mascot of the championship. Inspired by India's national bird, the peafowl, Peacko blends elements of Indian heritage with the dynamism of the sport,

giving a distinctive visual identity to the tournament. The official anthem, featuring PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty and India's entire 16-member World Championships contingent, captures the energy, ambition and unity of Indian badminton as it heads into its biggest stage. Addressing the event, Dr Mansukh Mandaviya highlighted how India has emerged as a global sporting nation, and hosting the BWF World Championships 2026 in New Delhi reflects the country's growing stature in badminton, world-class sporting infrastructure, and commitment to creating greater opportunities for athletes. The event marks one of the final milestones before New Delhi hosts the global badminton.

PV Sindhu enters Japan Open final

Tokyo

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu entered her first final in more than two years after Tokyo Olympics champion Chen Yufei of China retired midway through their women's singles semifinal at the Japan Open here on Saturday. The 31-year-old Indian was leading 21-19, 15-10 when world No. 4 Chen was forced to pull out with a hamstring injury. It will be Sindhu's first final



since winning the Syed Modi International in Lucknow in 2024. She had also finished runner-up at the Malaysia Open Super 500 earlier that year. Her last major title came at the Singapore Open Super 500 in 2022. "I'm very

happy that I've gone to the final," Sindhu said after the match. "For me every match mattered a lot from the first match, especially today's match. It was important from the beginning to be focused because when you play with the top-ranked players it's important that every point matters so winning that first game really mattered a lot." In Sunday's summit clash, Sindhu will take on Japan's Akane Yamaguchi. Yamaguchi enjoys a 14-10 head-to-head advantage over

Sindhu, having won 14 of their 24 meetings. While the two former world champions have shared one women's badminton's most compelling rivalries, the Japanese star has dominated the recent contests, winning five of their last six clashes. World No. 12 Sindhu had entered the contest trailing 6-8 in her head-to-head record against the fourth-seeded Chen, who had won each of their previous four meetings, including a straight-games victory at this year's Indonesia Masters.

Plunkett giving baseball a try with Oakland's minor league team

Oakland

Liam Plunkett leaned over the dugout rail at Raimondi Park with his arms crossed, looking every bit like a professional baseball player as he waited for his first chance to hit as a member of the Oakland Ballers. Formerly a fast bowler for England's cricket team, the 41-year-old Plunkett made his pitching debut in June. He faced one batter, striking out Yuba-Sutter's Josh Duarte on five pitches - one of the best hitters in the independent Pioneer League. Plunkett topped out at 77 mph and spun a breaking ball clocked at 63. "At first I wanted to be respectful and put it down the middle so he



could hit it, not throw something wild," Plunkett said. "Then I realized I could throw in some skills. I expected to give up a hit."

His career ERA stands at 0.00 - at least for now. The appearance was part of a bigger effort by the 6-foot-4 cricketer to raise

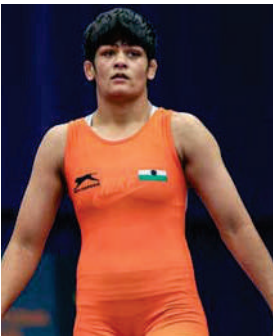
awareness for his own sport. Plunkett has been dabbling in America's pastime while visiting the Bay Area to broadcast Major League Cricket's latest stop in Oakland, which includes the championship match for the fourth-year league Saturday at the Coliseum. The former San Francisco Unicorns player signed with the Ballers through a marketing exception. He has made two appearances so far, and that might be it. "When he said, Shall I do it? I was like, Why not, what have you got to lose?" Major League Cricket CEO Johnny Grave said. "I think he surprised himself." Plunkett hopes his endeavor can help grow baseball and

cricket. Cricket will return to the Olympics for the first time in 100 years at the 2028 Games in Los Angeles. It is not a marquee sport in the U.S., but Grave is trying to generate interest beginning at the youth level with events leading up to those Olympics. Plunkett is nearing the end of his competitive cricket career but will continue to stay involved as an ambassador, in the Bay Area and beyond. He is hosting four youth clinics this summer in Canada. Ballers manager Aaron Miles was open-minded when the idea came about, trusting co-founders Bryan Carmel and Paul Freedman to do something fun for the fans of the defending Pioneer League champions. (AP)

Neha wins gold medal in 59kg category at Budapest Ranking Series

Budapest

Former U17 World Champion Neha delivered a gritty performance to capture the gold medal in the women's 59kg category on the third day of the Polyak Imre, Varga Janos & Kozma Istvan Memorial Senior Ranking Tournament. Continuing her senior circuit breakthrough, Neha displayed exceptional tactical composure under pressure to overcome USA's Abigail E. Nette in the championship bout. The Indian wrestler edged out Nette 6-4 on points (VPO1) to stand atop the



podium and secure India's second gold medal of the tournament, matching Olympic bronze medalist Aman Sehrawat's opening-day triumph. India's medal rush continued in the 62kg women's

wrestling division, with the contingent capturing both a silver and a bronze. Mansi fought her way into the gold medal match against Canada's Ana P. Godinez Gonzalez, but was forced to settle for a well-earned silver after an unfortunate injury curtailed her bout. In the bronze medal play-off of the same weight class, Savita produced a high-scoring, dominant display to overpower Kazakhstan's Irina Kuznetsova 14-5. With these three podium finishes, the squad has now expanded its overall medal haul to eight medals, comprising two gold, two silver, and four bronze medals.

Sobers revolutionised cricket, he inspired all of us: Kapil Dev

Greater Noida

Legendary Sir Garfield Sobers was a trend-setting revolutionary who altered cricketers' mindset and approach to the sport, reckoned former India skipper Kapil Dev. Sobers, 89, died at his home in Barbados on Friday. During an illustrious career, the West Indian had amassed 8032 runs in 93 Tests at an average of 57.78 with 26 hundreds along with 235 wickets. "I think anybody who knows about cricket should know about Gary Sobers. One of the finest cricketers ever born on this earth," Kapil Dev told PTI in an interview at the KDSG (Kapil Dev Sanjay Gupta) Hospital here on Saturday. "The way he played



cricket inspired people like us. Yeah, it's a sad day. He's no more, but he's given us so much-so much cricket and his talent and ability which we follow throughout our lives," Kapil added. The 1983 World Cup winning skipper said Sobers' sheer talent and love

for the game made him such a great player. "I think it's the talent, the way he used to enjoy himself and the way he used to play. I think during that era, no doubt the West Indies team was one of the best, but he set records and shifted people's mindset of

how to play and enjoy," he said. Kapil then explained the impact of Sobers in traditional cricketing coaching methods. "The biggest thing I remember is that he changed the method of MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) cricket coaching, what we used to call playing in 'V'. "And I think the first thing I came to know is not playing V, how you can get runs. I think that was the biggest statement stuck in my mind when I was growing up," he recalled. The 67-year-old said Sobers was in a league of his own as an all-rounder. "I think, well, we had all-rounders, but not on his scale. I don't think anybody can come close to him, the way he played batting,

bowling, fast bowling, spin bowling, fielding. "Everything — he had the ability and the knack for entertaining. At the end of the day, many cricketers will emerge, but very few will be true entertainers," he noted. Kapil, himself a premier all-rounder in his playing days, said there was so much to learn from the Bajan. "I think he was a brilliant cricketer, we lost him, but one can learn from the way he played cricket. Hats off to him, as he just enjoyed his life. "In the evening, he used to sit and talk and we were just good listeners. He talked, but he used to talk more about other things in life rather than cricket," he remembered. (

