

NEWS IN BRIEF

**60 KILLED, 500
FEARED TRAPPED
AFTER CLOUDBURST
IN J&K'S KISHTWAR**

Diary Times Desk : At least 60 people died and over 100 got injured after a massive cloudburst struck Chashoti village in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district on Thursday afternoon, said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. The rescue operations are underway, and efforts are being made to extricate people stuck or buried under debris. Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Chief Farooq Abdullah believes over 500 people continue to be trapped.

**AMID TARIFF ROW,
US' "HISTORIC TIES,
SHARED VISION" WISH
ON INDEPENDENCE DAY**

Diary Times Desk : The United States on Friday extended wishes to India on its 79th Independence Day and said the "historic ties" between Washington and New Delhi are "consequential and far-reaching." In a statement, US State Secretary Marco Rubio stressed that America shares a vision for a more peaceful, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific region with India and said the ties between the two nations will rise to modern challenges. "On behalf of the United States, I extend our congratulations and warm wishes to the people of India as they celebrate their Independence Day on August 15. The historic relationship between the world's largest democracy and the world's oldest democracy is consequential and far-reaching," the statement read.

**OVER 350 FLIGHTS
DELAYED DUE TO
RAINS, TRAFFIC JAMS
IN DELHI**

Diary Times Desk : More than 350 flights were delayed at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport on Thursday after heavy morning rainfall triggered massive traffic jams across the National Capital Region, preventing both passengers and flight crew from reaching the airport. Even hours after the rain had stopped, gridlock on key roads left many unable to reach the airport in time, with several missing their flights altogether. Delhi airport authorities issued advisories urging travellers to opt for the Metro instead of road transport. The Metro's Magenta Line is connected to the airport Terminal 1.

79TH INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE



INDIA'S MODI VOWS TO PROTECT FARMERS, CUTS TAX, PUSHES SELF- RELIANCE AMID TRUMP TARIFF TENSIONS

Diary Times Desk : Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the country on Friday to move towards more self-reliance, manufacture everything from fertilisers to jet engines and EV batteries, and vowed to protect farmers in the face of a trade conflict with Washington.

With the punishing tariffs imposed on Indian exports by U.S. President Donald Trump expected to hurt growth in the world's fastest growing major economy, Modi announced lower goods and services taxes (GST) from October - a move that could help boost consumption. He also announced India would set up a new defence system called 'Sudarshan Chakra' in the aftermath of India's four-day military conflict with Pakistan in May.

He did not elaborate but a government statement said the system is aimed at neutralising enemy infiltrations and enhancing India's offensive capabilities. Indian defence and policy circles have informally referred to the Russian S-400 air defence system - which played a key role during the fighting with Pakistan - as Sudarshan Chakra, after a Hindu mythological weapon.

Modi was addressing the nation on the occasion of its Independence Day at a time New Delhi has been struggling with Trump's tariffs and the collapse of trade talks, largely due to differences over imports of American farm and dairy products. "Farmers, fishermen, cattle rearers are our top priorities," Modi said in his customary annual address from the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi. "Modi will stand like a wall against any policy that threatens their interests. India will never compromise when it comes to protecting the interests of our farmers," he said. Modi did not mention the tariffs or the U.S. in his speech that lasted nearly two hours. Last week, Trump imposed an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods, citing New Delhi's continued imports of Russian oil in a move that sharply escalated tensions between the two nations.

GLOBAL PLASTIC TALKS COLLAPSE AS COUNTRIES REMAIN DEEPLY DIVIDED

Diary Times Desk : Global talks to develop a landmark treaty to end plastic pollution have once again failed.

The UN negotiations, the sixth round of talks in just under three years, were due to end on Thursday but countries continued to negotiate into the night in the hopes of breaking a deadlock.

There remained a split between a group of about 100 nations calling for curbs on production of plastic, and oil states pushing for a focus on recycling.

Speaking in the early hours, Cuban delegates said that countries had "missed a historic opportunity but we have to keep going".

"I'm hugely disappointed that an agreement wasn't reached," said the UK's Marine Minister Emma Hardy.

"Plastic pollution is a global crisis that no country can solve alone, and the UK is committed to working with others at home and abroad to protect the environment and pave the way to a circular economy," she added.

The talks were convened in 2022 in response to the mounting scientific evidence of the risks of plastic pollution to human health and the environment.

Despite the benefits of plastic to almost every sector, scientists are particularly concerned about potentially toxic chemicals they contain, which can leach out as plastics break down into smaller pieces.



DK SHIVAKUMAR COUNTERS PM'S PRAISE FOR RSS, SAYS OUTFIT HAS NO HISTORY



Diary Times Desk : Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday said that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh "doesn't have any history" when placed against the Congress party's legacy. His remark came hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi heaped praise on the right-wing organisation during his Independence Day speech.

"RSS is an organisation, we don't question their credentials or anything. But RSS doesn't have any history. RSS is a newly-born institution. The Congress party has a longer history in this country," Shivakumar told reporters.

He also recalled that the RSS "could not hoist the national flag for a long time" and credited former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee for taking the initiative on the matter. "Anyway, it is their party agenda and I don't want to comment on it now Congress party has always protected the Constitution and the country," he added.

Shivakumar's remarks came hours after PM Modi lauded the RSS for completing 100 years, calling it the "world's biggest NGO" and hailing its "very proud and glorious" journey of national service. The Prime Minister, a former RSS pracharak, said the organisation's volunteers had dedicated their lives to "nation building" and "character development" since its inception in 1925. For the past 100 years, the RSS swayamsevaks (volunteers) have been dedicating their lives to fulfil the resolve of 'vyakti nirmaan' (character development) and 'rashtra nirmaan' (nation building) for the welfare of 'matrubhoomi' (motherland), he said.

AIMIM LEADER HOSTS 'BIRYANI PARTY' TO OPPOSE MEAT BAN IN MAHARASHTRA DISTRICT



Diary Times Desk : AIMIM leader Imtiaz Jaleel on Friday organised a "biryani party" at his residence here to mark his protest against the local civic body's order to keep the meat shops in the city shut on account of festivals.

He also hit out at Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, seeking to know why he did not direct the municipal commissioner to withdraw the meat ban order. This year, Independence Day and Gokul Ashtami, a Hindu festival marking the birth of Lord Krishna, are being celebrated on Friday.

The Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation on Tuesday announced the closure of slaughterhouses, outlets and shops selling meat within city limits on two days - August 15 and 20.

As per the order, slaughterhouses and meat shops were asked to remain closed on August 15 on the occasion of Gokul Ashtami. The same order was issued for August 20, which marks the beginning of 'Paryushan Parva', a key festival of the Jain community characterised by fasting and prayer.

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader Jaleel, a former MP, held a biryani party at his residence to express his opposition to the move. Talking to reporters, he said, "I have cooked chicken biryani along with a vegetarian dish. If the municipal commissioner comes and asks for vegetarian food, then I will offer it to him. But the government should not tell us what we should eat and what we should not." "Such things should be stopped. This unfortunate decision (of meat ban) was taken on account of Independence Day," he added.

GST NEWS

CENTRE PROPOSES REDUCING GST SLABS FROM 4 TO 2, MAY RETAIN 5%, 18%: SOURCES



Diary Times Desk : The Centre has proposed that only two slabs for Goods and Services Tax (GST) be retained - 5 per cent and 18 per cent - as per sources.

Under this proposal, 90 per cent of the items in the 28 per cent will be moved to the 18 per cent slab, while 99 per cent of the items in the 12 per cent slab will be moved to the five per cent slab, the sources added.

A special 40 per cent rate will apply to luxury and sin goods, which include tobacco, gutkha and cigarettes. The 40 per cent category will have just 5-7 items, according to the government sources, but will exclude aspirational items like refrigerator, air conditioner and washing machine. Further, petroleum products will continue to remain outside the GST regime even in revamped indirect tax structure.

High labour-intensive and export-oriented sectors like diamonds and precious stones would continue to be taxed as per the existing rates. The total incidence of taxation will remain at the current level of 88 per cent. Sources said that the proposed GST revamp is expected to give consumption a big boost, which will offset revenue loss due to rate rationalisation.

The proposal was based on Union Finance Ministry data that stated that 67 per cent of the total GST revenue comes from products in the 18 per cent slab, while 11, five and seven per cent come from the 28 per cent, 12 per cent and five per cent slabs respectively. The proposed GST revamp comes hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during the Independence Day address that GST reforms will be brought for "double Diwali".

6 KILLED AFTER ROOF AT DARGAH NEAR DELHI'S HUMAYUN'S TOMB COLLAPSES



Diary Times Desk : Six people, including an 80-year-old man, were killed, after part of the roof of a dargah, or the tomb of a Muslim saint, collapsed in Delhi's Nizamuddin area on Friday evening.

At least five others injured in the accident were admitted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre for treatment.

Officials said that people were visiting the dargah for Friday prayers when the roof collapsed, news agency PTI reported. The Dargah Sharif Patte Shah is located near the Humayun's Tomb in Nizamuddin East. Visuals from the site showed a small, lime-green building around an open courtyard as the roof on one side of the building appeared to have collapsed. Multiple rescue agencies, including the Delhi Fire Services (DFS), Delhi Police, NDRF and Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), were rushed to the site following the incident. Unconfirmed reports say there were 15-20 people inside the building, including the 'imam', when the roof of the building, which is believed to be about 25-30 years old, collapsed.

NAGALAND GOVERNOR LA GANESAN DIES IN CHENNAI AT 80

Diary Times Desk : Nagaland Governor La Ganesan has reportedly passed away. As per a PTI report, a Raj Bhavan official said that the sitting governor died while undergoing treatment at a Chennai hospital. As per reports, Ganesan was undergoing treatment at the ICU of a private hospital in Chennai for the past few days. The Kohima Raj Bhavan PRO added that the governor died on Friday night. On August 8, Ganesan collapsed at his home in Chennai and sustained a head injury. After this, he was rushed to the hospital, where doctors admitted him to the ICU to undergo intensive monitoring and treatment. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to X to express his condolences over the death of governor La Ganesan.

"Pained by the passing of Nagaland Governor Thiru La. Ganesan Ji. He will be remembered as a devout nationalist, who dedicated his life to service and nation-building. He worked hard to expand the BJP across Tamil Nadu. He was deeply passionate about Tamil culture too. My thoughts are with his family and admirers," wrote the prime minister.



A TIRED PRIME MINISTER, RECYCLING CLICHES AND SELLING OLD PROMISES

Diary Times Desk : If an alluring rhetoric, cleansed of falsehood and hypocrisy, sounds hollow, the purpose of the orator stands defeated. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's track-record unfortunately sucks the life out of his Independence Day speech, so meticulously adorned with lofty ideals like constitutionalism, unity, impartiality, self-reliance, technological innovation and inclusive growth. Truth has a nasty habit of springing up through the fragile layers of propaganda and pretence. When the prime minister talks of his intent to purge "laws that are used to unnecessarily dump citizens into jail", what flits through the mind is 'politics of vendetta', the central theme of oppositional critique of his regime. The reckless and brazen misuse of central agencies and draconian laws to target political rivals, critics, independent journalists and activists have not only dominated the national discourse but has also been repeatedly flagged up by the judiciary at multiple levels. People are being framed in false charges, hauled up for harmless tweets and participating in peaceful struggle. In many cases, even court proceedings for bail have been abnormally delayed or disrupted for years.

DARSHAN IN STATE OF DEPRESSION, REFUSES TO ATTEND INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS IN JAIL

Diary Times Desk : Kannada superstar Darshan, who was arrested in the sensational fan murder case, and Prajwal Revanna, former JD(S) MP convicted in the obscene video and rape case, did not participate in the 79th Independence Day celebrations held at the Bengaluru Central Prison, sources said on Friday.

Darshan was arrested on Thursday (August 14) following the Supreme Court's cancellation of his bail, while Prajwal Revanna, grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, has been in prison for over a year, and the Special Court on August 1 convicted him to a life term until his death. Sources stated that both are in a state of depression following these developments and chose to remain in their barracks. Sources further stated that Darshan did not sleep throughout the night in the prison. According to sources, all accused, including Darshan, have been assigned remand prisoner numbers. Darshan's prisoner number is 7314 and Darshan's partner Pavitra Gowda's number is 7313. Pavitra Gowda is the first accused in the fan murder case. The last time Darshan was arrested, many fans had created tattoos with his prisoner number, which sparked controversy and even led to police cases being filed. Currently, Darshan and the other three accused have been placed in the same barrack. Meanwhile, film actress Ramya, who faced brutal trolling from Darshan's fans after she posted that the family of the deceased man Renukaswamy in the fan murder case should receive justice, reacted to the media by saying that Darshan should have kept better company. "I have acted in films with Darshan. He had shared his story with me, and I had felt proud of his progress," she said.



PM'S SEMICONDUCTOR CHIP ANNOUNCEMENT GETS JAIRAM RAMESH'S PATHOLOGICAL LIAR REPLY

Diary Times Desk : Congress MP Jairam Ramesh on Friday responded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks on semiconductors in his Independence Day speech by calling him a "pathological liar". The Congress MP pointed out that the Semiconductors Complex Ltd in Chandigarh had already begun operations in 1983, contradicting the Prime Minister's claim that India lost 50 to 60 years in developing semiconductor technology. Jairam Ramesh made the remarks in a post on X while responding to PM Modi's Independence Day speech from the Red Fort. "One more example of what a pathological liar Mr. Modi is. Semiconductors Complex Ltd established in Chandigarh started operations in 1983," Jairam Ramesh said in a post while replying to a video of PM Modi's speech. In his address, the Prime Minister said that while the idea of setting up semiconductor manufacturing plants was discussed 50-60.

YOUR HOROSCOPE

16-08-2025

Aries

Today, you will meet old friends, which will refresh old memories. Employed people may be fired from the job due to heavy arguments with colleagues in the workplace. People doing business should thank God for getting financial benefits from the advice of their spouse. Due to irritation in the eyes, you should consult an ophthalmologist.

Gemini

Today you should include yoga and meditation in your daily routine. For employed people, your responsibilities may increase due to promotion in the workplace. People doing business may suffer financial loss from any unknown person today. There may be difficulty in walking due to nerve pain problems.

Leo

Today, you should offer water to Lord Shiva to avoid difficulties. A heated argument with HR in the workplace will spoil your whole day. Businessmen have to exercise patience, there are chances of improvement in business. Today, you may face stomach and pancreas problems due to eating too much fried food.

Libra

Today is going to be a busy day for you. Employed people will get a chance to work with senior officers due to advancement in their professional field. People doing business should avoid exchanging money with any unknown person today. Pregnant women may have to face problems due to changing weather.

Sagittarius

Today you should take all important decisions of your career thoughtfully. Employed people may have to face some problems due to the start of a new job in the workplace. Due to financial gain for business people, you can invest in a new business. Problems like leg pain and headache may bother you.

Aquarius

Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employees will be suspended due to indiscipline in the workplace. People doing business should solve all the problems of their customers in time. Due to worsening weather, problems related to cold and cough may increase in the family.

Taurus

Today you will get success as your long pending legal proceedings will come in your favor. There will be an atmosphere of happiness in the family as employed people will get progress in their workplace. People doing business should make a budget and spend the money in order to get financial benefits. Housewives should change their food according to health and season.

Cancer

Today you will get relief from all your problems due to sudden financial gain. Employed people may have to get scolded by their boss due to being hasty in the workplace. People doing business may face increased difficulties in business due to arguments with business partners. As the problem of foot pain increases, you must consult a specialist doctor.

Virgo

Today you should take special control over your speech and behavior. People in employment will get success in the workplace with the help of friends. People doing business will get financial gain due to some special offer, your financial condition will be strengthened. Old diseases of elders in the house may emerge.

Scorpio

Today you may have to face huge arguments in your family over small matters. Employed people may have to face mental problems due to extra workload in the workplace. People doing business may have to travel abroad in connection with business expansion. Diabetic patients should get themselves checked by a doctor in case of any problem today.

Capricorn

Today you can invest especially in land and buildings. Employed people may have to travel long distances due to office work, due to which your health may deteriorate. People doing business may face difficulties in repaying business loans due to loss of money. High BP and cholesterol problems will increase the problems of your spouse.

Pisces

Today your interest in creative work will especially increase. Employed people may be given an important project by their boss to handle important projects in the workplace. People doing business should control their speech and behavior with their customers. You should walk carefully on the road, problems may arise due to injury.

AMID TARIFF ROW, US
"HISTORIC TIES, SHARED
VISION" WISH ON
INDEPENDENCE DAY

Diary Times Desk : The United States on Friday extended wishes to India on its 79th Independence Day and said the "historic ties" between Washington and New Delhi are "consequential and far-reaching." In a statement, US State Secretary Marco Rubio stressed that America shares a vision for a more peaceful, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific region with India and said the ties between the two nations will rise to modern challenges.

"On behalf of the United States, I extend our congratulations and warm wishes to the people of India as they celebrate their Independence Day on August 15. The historic relationship between the world's largest democracy and the world's oldest democracy is consequential and far-reaching," the statement read.

"Our two countries are united by our shared vision for a more peaceful, prosperous, and secure Indo-Pacific region. Our partnership spans industries, promotes innovation, pushes the boundaries of critical and emerging technologies, and extends into space," he added.

BENGALURU'S YELLOW LINE
METRO SEES HUGE
PASSENGER SURGE AHEAD
OF LONG WEEKEND

Diary Times Desk : Bengaluru's newly inaugurated Yellow Line stretch of the Namma Metro witnessed an overwhelming passenger surge on Friday evening ahead of the long weekend, drawing notable attention from commuters, residents and social media users alike.

A video shared by a Bengaluru resident on social media site X showed throngs of people queuing up at the Yellow Line metro station, waiting for trains. Many were seen carrying luggage for outstation travel, with metro security personnel guiding the crowds.

The Namma Metro hit a new milestone on Monday, clocking its highest-ever single-day ridership – just a day after the city's long-anticipated Yellow Line began operations.

According to figures released by Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), a total of 10,48,031 commuters rode the metro network that day – marking a record across all active lines.

The launch was followed by a long weekend, with Independence Day falling on Friday, August 15, Krishna Janmashtami on Saturday, August 16, followed by Sunday.

PREYING ON OLIVE RIDLEYS & EVEN YOUNG
WOLVES, HOW STRAY DOGS HAVE BECOME A
BIG THREAT TO CONSERVATION

Diary Times Desk : Earlier this week, the Supreme Court ordered the removal of stray dogs from Delhi and NCR cities in public interest. But there is another area where these dogs are potentially more harmful—in the wild.

For years, environmentalists and biologists have stressed the threat posed by packs of stray, feral dogs to endangered animals like Olive Ridley turtle nests, Great Indian bustards, snow leopards, black-necked cranes, and even Indian wolves.

In every ecosystem, from marine beaches to deserts to the mountains, packs of stray dogs outnumber other animals by a wide margin and have become one of the biggest conservation threats in recent years, said Sumit Dookia, a wildlife biologist based in Rajasthan.

"You name any animal, snow leopards in Ladakh or wolves in Maharashtra or our GIB in Rajasthan, they are all threatened by dogs," said Dookia, an associate professor at the University School of Environment Management, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University. "They can bring down animals even larger than them because, like wolves, they hunt in packs."

The last government survey in 2019 pegged India's total stray dog population at 1.52 crore, making India home to one of the largest stray dog populations in the world. From 2022 to 2025 January, India recorded 92 lakh reported cases of dog bites, and 125 deaths from them.

HOW INDIA'S CHOICE OF AUGUST 15
AS INDEPENDENCE DAY HAS A JAPAN
LINK

Diary Times Desk : The last Viceroy of India under British rule decided that India would observe its Independence Day on August 15, a day which in 1947 marked the second anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II. This, Lord Mountbatten later said, represented the conclusion of imperial conflict and not nationalist jubilation.

Just two years before August 15, 1947, Japan's emperor surrendered to the Allies, ending World War II. The country's war dead crossed 3 million. The date of Japan's surrender also held significance for Lord Mountbatten, who had fought against the Japanese in the War as a Navy officer in erstwhile Burma.

The Indian Independence Bill was given Royal Assent in July 1947, which was to "make provision for the setting up in India of two independent Dominions, to substitute other provisions for certain provisions of the Government of India Act, 1947".

NEXT-GENERATION GST REFORMS BY DIWALI, SAYS PM MODI;
SIMPLIFIED 2-SLAB STRUCTURE PROPOSED BY FINMIN

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Diwali gift" to the people of India, of reforms to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system, will likely be across three pillars – structural reforms, rate rationalisation, and ease of living – and could entail a shift to a two-rate GST system from the current five-rate system. "The government will bring next generation GST reforms, which will bring down tax burden on the common man," Mr. Modi said during his speech at Red Fort in New Delhi on India's 79th Independence Day. "It will be a Diwali gift for you."

The Ministry of Finance, elaborating on the Prime Minister's announcement in a press release, said that the Central Government has sent its proposal on GST rate rationalisations and reforms to the Group of Ministers (GoM) that had been constituted by the GST Council to examine this issue.

OVER 350 FLIGHTS DELAYED
DUE TO RAINS, TRAFFIC JAMS
IN DELHI

Diary Times Desk : More than 350 flights were delayed at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport on Thursday after heavy morning rainfall triggered massive traffic jams across the National Capital Region, preventing both passengers and flight crew from reaching the airport. Even hours after the rain had stopped, gridlock on key roads left many unable to reach the airport in time, with several missing their flights altogether.

Delhi airport authorities issued advisories urging travellers to opt for the Metro instead of road transport. The Metro's Magenta Line is connected to the airport Terminal 1 and the Airport Express Line (Orange) connects to Terminal 3.

"Heavy rainfall and waterlogging across the Delhi-National Capital Region since morning led to traffic jams on roads to and from the Delhi airport. Our on-ground teams are working diligently, with all stakeholders to ensure smooth journey of passengers. We recommend that passengers consider alternative modes of transportation, such as the Delhi Metro, to avoid potential delays.

AS TRUMP SPLITS FROM INDIA, IS THE US
ABANDONING ITS PIVOT TO ASIA?

Diary Times Desk : When United States President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin meet in Alaska on Friday, their summit will be followed closely not only in both those countries, Europe and Ukraine – but also more than 10,000km (6,200 miles) away, in New Delhi.

Since the end of the Cold War, India has juggled a historically strong relationship with Russia and rapidly blossoming ties with the US. New Delhi's relations with Washington grew particularly strong under the presidencies of George W Bush and Barack Obama, and remained that way during Trump's first term and under Joe Biden.

At the heart of that US warmth towards India, say analysts, was its bet on New Delhi as a balancing force against Beijing, as China's economic, military and strategic heft in the Asia Pacific region grew. With Soviet communism history, and China, the US's biggest strategic rival, Washington increased its focus on Asia – including through the Quad.



ALASKA, ONCE RULED BY RUSSIA, GREETES TRUMP-PUTIN SUMMIT WITH MIX OF HOPE AND ANGER

Diary Times Desk : A flurry of superpower-style signalling from Washington and Moscow over the war in Ukraine heralded the first U.S.-Russian summit in four years, but on the ground in Alaska there was a mix of the bizarre, the peculiar and even moose and a bear.

Donald Trump wants Friday's summit at a Cold War-era air force base to be the start of the end of the deadliest war in Europe since World War Two.

Vladimir Putin, ascendant in the war, has meanwhile offered the prospect of a possible deal to limit strategic nuclear weapons, which the Kremlin hopes would usher in a much broader discussion of U.S. and Russian global interests beyond Ukraine.

In Anchorage, nearly 5,000 miles (8,000 km), from the front lines of the war, Putin's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, arrived in a sweatshirt with the old Soviet Union initials "USSR" ("СССР") across the front.

A bear and a moose ambled across at least one live television feed.

The Kremlin press pool was housed in an Alaska Airlines Center, where a semi-open-plan room was subdivided by partitions and some reporters were seen making their own camp-style beds. They were fed for free at a nearby university campus, Russian reporters said.

FLASH FLOODS KILL NEARLY 200 IN PAKISTAN AND PAKISTAN-ADMINISTERED KASHMIR

Diary Times Desk : At least 194 people have died in the last 24 hours in heavy monsoon floods and landslides in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

Most of the deaths, 180, were recorded by disaster authorities in the mountainous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in north-west Pakistan. At least 30 homes were destroyed and a rescue helicopter crashed during operations, killing its five crew.

Nine more people were killed in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, while five died in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region, it said.

Government forecasters said heavy rainfall was expected until 21 August in the northwest of the country, where several areas have been declared disaster zones.

MEET WITH PUTIN WILL WORK OUT "VERY WELL", WILL "WALK" IF IT DOESN'T: TRUMP

Diary Times Desk : US President Donald Trump landed in Alaska's Anchorage today to hold talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on issues including the war in Ukraine. The meeting backed by advisers of the two leaders is expected to last six-seven hours.

On board the Air Force One, Mr Trump told reporters he is not going to Alaska to broker a deal on behalf of Ukraine, but said instead his goal was getting Mr Putin to the table. "I'm not here to negotiate for Ukraine," he added. "... I think it's going to work out very well - and if it doesn't, I'm going to head back home real fast," Mr Trump told reporters in the presidential plane.

"Putin believes that his continuous attacks give him strength in negotiations, but I think that hurts him. I think we will achieve some result at the summit with Putin. I am working to end the war to save lives. Russia will face severe economic consequences if it does not reach an agreement," Mr Trump said, adding they will discuss the issue of land exchange, but it is up to Ukraine to make the decision.

TRUMP DEPLOYS 800 NATIONAL GUARD IN WASHINGTON, 45 ARRESTED AMID 'CRIME EMERGENCY'



Diary Times Desk : After Trump announced federal takeover of Washington police, all 800 National Guard troops ordered by President Donald Trump to the nation's capital have now been fully mobilised, the Pentagon confirmed on Thursday.

The deployment marks the latest escalation in Trump's authorised 'criminal emergency' in Washington, DC, a city where violent crime rates, as per numbers, have actually declined over the past year.

"As of today, all 800 Army and Air National Guardsmen are mobilised, as part of Joint Task Force DC, and they are now here in our capital," Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson told journalists.

JAPAN MINISTER VISITS CONTROVERSIAL SHRINE TO MARK WORLD WAR II ANNIVERSARY

Diary Times Desk : A Japanese cabinet minister was among thousands of people to visit a controversial war memorial in Tokyo as Japan marks 80 years since the end of World War II.

Agricultural Minister Shinjiro Koizumi on Friday paid his respects at the Yasukuni Shrine, a symbol of Japan's militaristic past.

He was joined by dozens of national and local politicians from the far-right "Japan First" Sanseito Party, according to local media.

The Shinto shrine was built in the 19th century to honour Japan's war dead, but it is best known for enshrining 14 Japanese "class A" war criminals and 1,000 others also found guilty by an Allied tribunal after World War II.

The Yasukuni Shrine is considered a political lightning rod in East Asia, where memories of Japan's wartime atrocities are not forgotten, but senior Japanese leaders have continued to visit over the years.

But the shrine was just one site where Japanese people gathered on Friday to mark 80 years since Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender in an August 15, 1945, radio broadcast.

GERMANY CALLS ON ISRAEL TO "STOP SETTLEMENT CONSTRUCTION" IN WEST BANK



Diary Times Desk : Germany "strongly" objects to an Israeli plan to build thousands of new homes in the West Bank, calling on the government to "stop settlement construction" in the Palestinian territory.

Berlin "strongly" rejects the Israeli government's announcements on thousands of new settlements in the Israeli occupied areas of the West Bank, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The UN human rights office on Friday called the settlement plan illegal under international law and said it put nearby Palestinians at risk of forced eviction, Reuters news agency reported. A spokesperson for the UN rights organization said it would be "a war crime for an occupying power to transfer its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." Israel rejects this interpretation, saying the West Bank is "disputed" rather than occupied territory.

NYC 'EXPLOSION': WHAT CAUSED THE MANHATTAN UPPER EAST SIDE FIRE? VIDEOS SURFACE

Diary Times Desk : A massive fire erupted Friday at a seven-story apartment building on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Firefighters arrived at East 95th Street, between First and Second Avenues, shortly after 10 a.m., according to NBC New York.

"I heard an explosion from my building just opposite the fire, and looked outside and saw all the smoke in the skies," Joann Sowma told Daily Mail.

Videos from the scene show firefighters battling intense flames on the building's rooftop as thick black smoke billowed into the skyline. More than 100 firefighters and EMS personnel responded to the incident and remain on site.

According to ABC 7, the third-alarm fire was sparked by a buildup of gas in the building's basement. The building's superintendent was in the basement at the time of the incident and is currently being treated for a minor injury.



TRUMP-PUTIN SUMMIT, THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AND OTHER IMPONDERABLES

Diary Times Desk : The Russia-Ukraine war faces significant obstacles to ending, primarily due to the conflicting territorial and political demands of both sides. Ukraine insists on reclaiming all its lost territories, including Crimea, and will not renounce its intention of becoming a NATO member. Russia, on the other hand, seeks sweeping political changes in Kyiv and aims to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO. These fundamental disagreements create a deadlock that makes a negotiated settlement extremely difficult. Neither side is willing to end the war on terms that are acceptable to the other side. Against this background, President Donald Trump said he'll be meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday, 15th August, in Alaska, to work out a potential peace deal to end the war in Ukraine that could include "some swapping of territories." Trump's announcement came on the day which he had set as the deadline for Putin to make peace or face severe economic punishment.



Trump posted on Truth Social: "The highly anticipated meeting between myself, as President of the United States of America, and President Vladimir Putin, of Russia, will take place next Friday, August 15, 2025, in the Great State of Alaska. Further details to follow". India has said that it "welcomes the understanding reached between the United States and the Russian Federation for a meeting in Alaska on 15th August 2025".

FITNESS TRAINER SHARES 5 CHATGPT PROMPTS FOR WEIGHT LOSS: "... CREATE A WORKOUT SCHEDULE"

Diary Times Desk : Managing weight is not an easy task for many. To shed weight, both diet and workout play an important role. While there are several nutritionists to consult and fitness clubs to join, they are expensive and require extra effort. And so, fitness coach Julie recently took to her Instagram account to share 5 ChatGPT prompts that could easily come to your rescue for more personalised advice.

She claimed these ChatGPT prompts will guide you to weight loss and act as a free digital coach, only if you know what to ask. And why not? If ChatGPT can be used for creating travel itineraries, learning languages, and more, then it can also be employed to help you in your fat loss journey. Calculate your calorie deficit: Diet plays the most important role in a weight loss programme. To create a calorie deficit state, Julie suggested the following command:

"Help me find a healthy calorie deficit. I weigh 180 lbs, I'm 45 years old, female, 5'3", and work out 3x/week. What should my calorie goal be?"

VIRAL 'JESSICA RADCLIFFE ORCA ATTACK' - THE TRUTH REVEALED

Diary Times Desk : A viral video has been making the rounds on the internet, showing an orca brutally turning against its trainer, named Jessica Radcliffe. However, amid the buzz comes the truth — there have been a lot of pieces missing from this story.

According to the viral video, it shows a 23-year-old marine trainer being killed by an orca at Pacific Blue Marine Park. The clip claims she died ten minutes after being rescued by the staff. But how much of this is true?

Orcas, also known as killer whales, have been involved in several fatal incidents in the past. One such case is that of Tilikum, an infamous male orca who spent most of his life in captivity and was involved in the deaths of three people. Among them was the tragic incident of Keltie Byrne, who slipped into a pool and was fatally drowned by an orca an event described as "forcible submersion by orca." Despite the staff's consistent efforts, they failed to save her, leading to the closure of Sealand of the Pacific.

The Truth About the "Jessica Radcliffe" Orca Attack Despite these past cases, many reports suggest there are no official records, news articles, or marine park statements about the alleged Jessica Radcliffe incident.

OVER 90 ARRESTED FOR AERIAL FIRING IN KARACHI ON PAKISTAN'S I-DAY; 3 DEAD, SEVERAL INJURED

Diary Times Desk : Over 90 people were taken into custody by Karachi Police for indulging in aerial firing during Independence Day celebrations, which turned deadly, ARY News reported. According to the report, police also seized 68 illegal weapons from the suspects, with more than 100 FIRs registered.

ARY News further quoted a police official as saying that additional cases of murder and attempted murder are being filed against those responsible.

The celebrations took a tragic turn as aerial firing claimed at least three lives and left 82 others injured across the city. According to ARY News, East Zone reported 30 injuries, West Zone 43, and South Zone 12. The victims included an eight-year-old girl in Azizabad, who was fatally struck in the head, and two elderly men in Korangi and Lyari who died after being shot in the head and neck. Among the injured were 51 men, 24 women, six boys, and one girl, ARY News added.

The city has experienced a sharp increase in crime this year, with more than 26,500 incidents reported in the first five months of 2025, ARY News reported, citing Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) data. According to the report, 245 people lost their lives in various incidents, including 48 who were shot dead while resisting robberies.



HEZBOLLAH SAYS LEBANON DISARMAMENT PLAN SERVES ISRAEL, VOWS TO KEEP WEAPONS

Diary Times Desk : Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem has accused Lebanon's government of "handing" the country to Israel by pushing for the group's disarmament, warning it would fight to keep its weapons.

Qassem spoke in a televised address on Friday after meeting Iran's top security chief, Ali Larijani. Tehran has long backed the Lebanese armed group.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam slammed the remarks, branding them "a veiled threat of civil war." Salam added, "No one in Lebanon today wants a civil war, and any threats or intimidation of such a war are completely unacceptable."

Lebanon suffered one the 20th century's worst civil wars for 15 years, between 1975 and 1990. The war left around 200,000 people dead and an estimated 17,000 others missing. The Israeli army also occupied Lebanon during and after the war, with a full invasion in 1982, only withdrawing its troops in 2000 after being harried out by Hezbollah.

HONG KONG TYCOON JIMMY LAI'S TRIAL DELAYED OVER HEALTH CONCERNS

Diary Times Desk : Hong Kong judges have postponed the trial of media tycoon Jimmy Lai until he is provided with a heart monitoring device and related medication.

Friday's decision marked the second delay to the case this week after his lawyer said he had suffered heart palpitations.

The 77-year-old founder of the Apple Daily newspaper is charged with foreign collusion under Hong Kong's national security law, which Beijing imposed following widespread pro-democracy protests in 2019.

Closing arguments in the long-running trial were originally expected to begin on Thursday, but all court sessions were suspended due to bad weather.

As the court resumed on Friday, defence lawyer Robert Pang said that Lai had heart "palpitations" and had experienced the feeling of "collapsing", but added that the tycoon did not want attention to be concentrated on his health.

Lai has been kept behind bars since December 2020, reportedly in solitary confinement, and concerns have previously been raised over the septuagenarian's welfare.

DONALD TRUMP'S GOLDEN DOME STILL SHROUDED IN MYSTERY, EVEN FOR ITS BUILDERS

Diary Times Desk : The companies expected to create President Donald Trump's "Golden Dome for America" know the objective: to protect the US from missiles and airborne threats. They know it means billions of dollars' worth of contracts. But they don't know much about what, exactly, they are expected to do - and at an event last week, the government officials who might tell them weren't even allowed to mention the project by name.

Attendees at the 28th annual Space and Missile Defense Symposium in Huntsville, Alabama, saw signs early on that the topic on everyone's minds might be tricky to discuss. Before the event even began, the industry groups hosting it removed a Golden Dome-focused panel. "Information regarding Golden Dome for America will be promulgated by the government," they said.

Major defense contractors, including Lockheed Martin Corp., RTX Corp. and Northrop Grumman, prepared slick websites and flashy sideshows for the conference to demonstrate how their work fits with the president's vision for an air and missile defense network protecting the entire US.



MOSCOW "KILLING PEOPLE" ON DAY OF PUTIN-TRUMP SUMMIT, SAYS ZELENSKY

Diary Times Desk : Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Friday that Moscow was still killing people and not showing that it wanted to end the war, hours before the start of a summit between the Russian and US presidents in Alaska. "There is no order, nor any signals from Moscow that it is preparing to end this war... they are also killing on the day of the negotiations," Zelensky said in a video address posted on social media.

MAN ARRESTED AFTER SANDWICH THROWN AT FEDERAL AGENT IN WASHINGTON DC



Diary Times Desk : An employee at the US Department of Justice (DOJ) has been arrested for throwing a Subway sandwich at a federal agent deployed to Washington DC as part of President Donald Trump's vow to crackdown on crime. Sean Charles Dunn, who had worked in the DOJ Criminal Division, was fired after video of the incident emerged. He is being charged with felony assault. The presence of federal law enforcement agents, as well as the National Guard, has led to widespread anger in the mostly Democratic city. Trump, a Republican, has said the deployment is necessary to fight crime and remove "drugged-out maniacs and homeless people". Local police data shows violent crime is at a 30-year low in Washington DC. According to charging documents, Mr Dunn allegedly threw a "submarine-style sandwich" at a Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officer on Sunday. In a video of the incident, which prosecutors cite in their charges, the suspect is heard calling the agents "fascists" and screaming profanities directed at them. "Why are you here? I don't want you in my city," he yells before crossing the road. He later returns and is seen hurling the wrapped sandwich into the chest of a uniformed agent, who appears to be wearing a bulletproof vest. He then flees on foot as officers give chase. According to prosecutors, Mr Dunn confessed after he was arrested on Wednesday, telling investigators: "I did it. I threw a sandwich."

TRUMP AND PUTIN TO MEET IN ALASKA FOR HIGH-STAKES SUMMIT

Diary Times Desk : High-level summits like these are always governed by carefully planned out protocol. And even though today's meeting was hastily arranged in a matter of days, we're still seeing a lot of careful choreography playing out here. Everything, from the timing of the arrivals to where the planes have parked, would have been negotiated between the two sides. Neither man wants to be seen waiting for the other. And even though Trump arrived first, he didn't emerge from his plane until Putin was there to meet him. The red carpet, ordinarily a show of respect, also comes with it a show of American military might, with the four F-22 Raptors lined up alongside it. At summits like these, no optic or moment is left to chance. A European official has told CNN it is a "relief" that US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin will no longer be meeting one-on-one.

PUT UP OR SHUT UP, MATCH TRUMP'S INDIA SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA OIL: BESSENT TO EUROPE

Diary Times Desk : US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has sent a blunt message to European allies, calling on them to stop lecturing the United States and start imposing sanctions on Russia at the same level as Washington.

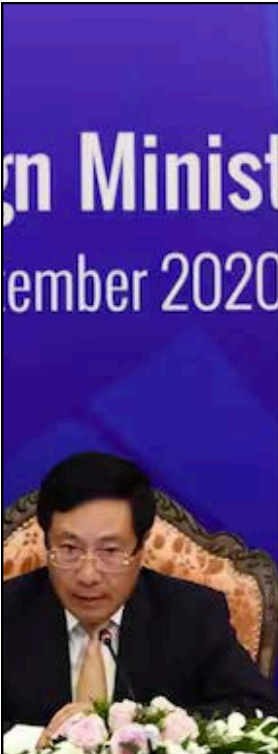
"It is time for our European counterparts to put up or shut up," Bessent said in an interview with Fox News.

"They keep saying, 'Oh, the US should do this, the US should do that.' President Trump has imposed secondary sanctions, or secondary tariffs, on India because of their consumption of Russian oil, and the Europeans haven't done that yet." Bessent said. Bessent accused European nations of continuing to buy refined products from Indian refineries that process Russian crude -- a move Bessent says undermines the West's united front.

A NEW BOOK ON CHINA PUTS ITS RISE IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN CONTEXT

Diary Times Desk : Endless headlines about Chinese adventurism in land and sea—whether it is Beijing's aggression at the China-India border or its heightened military activity in the Taiwan Strait—offer light insight into hard realities for Southeast Asian countries that have to strike a balance between China and the US in order to preserve their economic and security interests in a shifting political climate. A new book called "In the Dragon's Shadow", written by Sebastian Strangio, an author and journalist who writes on the region, puts some of these headlines in context. It wasn't like China was always this assertive in the region that comprises eleven countries (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, East Timor, and the Philippines). In the late 1970s, China began establishing ties with the countries it had alienated during Mao's rule, which had lasted almost three decades from 1949 until 1976. In September 1980, China had passed a new nationality law that revoked dual citizenship for people from China living overseas. This helped fix ties with the countries that were suspicious about Chinese intention to normalise relations. It also led to investment into China from ethnic Chinese living abroad, mainly from those living in Hong Kong and Taiwan. But now, things have changed drastically. Not only is China suspected of mobilising its citizens' sympathies abroad into active support for the Communist Party, but it is also accused of using dubious measures to gather that support.

So are all of these concerns legitimate? The answer to that is a little complicated. Some concerns about the Chinese engaging its diaspora community for political ends are true in the sense that the Chinese government has placed greater importance on engaging its citizens living abroad.



'48% DECLINE IN ACCIDENTAL DEATHS': PUNJAB CM MANN LISTS ACHIEVEMENTS DURING I-DAY SPEECH IN FARIDKOT

Diary Times Desk : Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, during the Independence Day celebrations in Faridkot today, hoisted the national flag and outlined his government's achievements and future plans for the state. His address focused on road safety, support for military families, rural development, education, and law enforcement. He claimed that there had been a 48-per cent reduction in accidental deaths in Punjab, attributing it to a new 5,000-strong police force. The initiative was praised by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, he said. He said Punjab was the first state to provide Rs 1 crore in aid to the family of any soldier of the state who is martyred. The benefit is also extended to the families of Punjab Police officers.



HARBHAJAN SINGH ETO HOISTS TRICOLOUR AT PATIALA ON 79TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Diary Times Desk : Power and Public Works Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO on Friday hoisted the national flag during the 79th Independence Day celebrations at the Raja Bhalinder Singh Sports Complex, Polo Ground, Patiala. Extending heartfelt greetings to the people of Punjab, he paid rich tributes to the freedom fighters, martyrs and warriors of various movements who laid down their lives for the nation's independence. He honoured the descendants of freedom fighters, including Mohkam Singh Chauhan, with special felicitations. Addressing the gathering, ETO said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Punjab is moving rapidly towards becoming a prosperous, happy and progressive state. He reaffirmed the government's resolve to fulfil the dreams of the martyrs and ensure the overall development of Patiala which, he said, had been neglected by previous governments. The minister highlighted that a Rs 110 crore project under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme had been initiated in Patiala district for laying new lines, installing transformers and upgrading the power network to provide uninterrupted electricity supply to residents. He added that more than 55,000 youth had been provided jobs, the honorarium for the families of martyrs had been doubled from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 1 crore, and Agniveers had been brought under the ambit of this scheme. The government has also implemented 600 units of free electricity for households, eight hours of assured supply for farmers, and a Rs10 lakh health insurance cover for all. Elaborating on infrastructure development, the minister said 2,173 km of new roads are being built at a cost of Rs 2,130 crore, 34 bridges worth Rs185 crore have been completed, and 20 toll plazas shut to provide relief to the public.

OVER 3,000 PUNJAB BUSES TO REMAIN OFF ROAD TODAY

Diary Times Desk : Nearly 3,000 buses of the state public sector undertakings — PRTC, Punbus and Punjab Roadways — will remain off road tomorrow, as the employees' unions of the undertakings have gone on strike. Meanwhile, commuters are set to face a lot of inconvenience as the government has failed to make any alternative arrangement for them. After a failed dialogue with the state government over floating tenders for issuing bus permits under the kilometre scheme to private players, the unions today announced that the strike would continue till their demands were met. Harkesh Kumar, senior vice-president of the PRTC, Punbus and Punjab Roadways contract workers unions, said apart from scrapping the tenders under the kilometre scheme for private players, the unions had alleged that the Transport Minister Laljit Bhullar had failed to fulfil their demands. The government has called for another round of meeting with the union leader tomorrow to end the dialogue.

FLORAL TRIBUTES PAID TO SHAHEED KARNAIL SINGH ISSRU

Diary Times Desk : Punjab Cabinet Ministers Aman Arora and Tarunpreet Singh Sond on Friday paid floral tributes to Shaheed Karnail Singh Issru during a state-level function at his native village of Issru, commemorating his martyrdom day. He had sacrificed his life during the liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule.

The ministers were joined by MLA Manwinder Singh Giaspura, Punjab Genco Limited Chairman Navjot Singh Jarg, Market Committee Chairman Jagtar Singh Gill Rattanheri, Deputy Commissioner Himanshu Jain, SSP Dr. Jyoti Yadav Bains, ADCs Amarjit Bains and Shikha Bhagat, Assistant Commissioner (UT) Dr. Pragati Rani IAS, SDM Dr. Baljinder Singh Dhillon, and other dignitaries. They garlanded the statue of Shaheed Karnail Singh Issru, and felicitated nieces of Issru — Balwinder Kaur, Jaswinder Kaur, Nirinder Kaur and Nirmal Kaur on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Arora highlighted the legacy of sacrifice inherited from Sikh Gurus, particularly Guru Arjun Dev and Guru Teg Bahadur, who stood against the Mughal tyranny for humanity's sake. He noted that this spirit of self-sacrifice has been a driving force behind Punjab's significant contributions to India's freedom struggle.

PUNJAB GOVERNOR HOSTS 'AT HOME' TO MARK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Diary Times Desk : On the occasion of the 79th Independence Day, Punjab Governor and UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria on Friday hosted the traditional 'At Home' reception on the lawns of Punjab Raj Bhavan.

The event brought together dignitaries and distinguished citizens to celebrate the spirit of freedom, unity, and national pride. The evening began with the ceremonial arrival of the Governor at 5 pm. He was accorded a warm welcome by the Chandigarh Police band with a soulful rendition of the National Anthem, evoking a strong sense of patriotism among those present. The lush Raj Bhavan lawns were tastefully decorated in the colours of the national flag.

A highlight of the evening was the Governor's interaction with the dignitaries, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, with whom he shared warm greetings. The function witnessed the presence of Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Saini, Haryana Speaker Harvinder Kalyan, Rajya Sabha MP Balbir Singh Seechewal, Punjab minister Gurmeet Khudian, Chandigarh Mayor Harpreet Babla, UT Chief Secretary Rajeev Verma, Punjab Chief Secretary KAP Sinha, Principal Secretary to Punjab Governor VP Singh, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav and Chandigarh DGP Sagar Preet Hooda.

HOME MINISTRY ANNOUNCES NAMES OF PUNJAB COPS FOR MEDALS

Diary Times Desk : The Ministry of Home Affairs has on the eve of the 79th Independence Day announced the names of Punjab Police officers/officials to be awarded the President's Medal for Distinguished Service and Medal for Meritorious Service. Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), State Armed Police, Punjab, MF Farooqui, and Inspector Suresh Kumar, Counter Intelligence, Ludhiana, will be conferred with the President's Medal for Distinguished Service. Similarly, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Intelligence-II, Gurdial Singh and DSP, SSOC, Amritsar, Gurpreet Singh are among the 14 officers/officials who have been selected for the Medal for Meritorious Service. The remaining officials include Inspector Satinder Kumar, Inspector Deepak Kumar, Inspector Jagdeep Singh, Inspector Tejinderpal Singh, SI Amrik Singh, SI Sanjiv Kumar, SI Amritpal Singh.

**CM SUKHU ANNOUNCES
33 DEVELOPMENT
PROJECTS WORTH RS
216 CRORE IN MANDI**

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu marked the 79th Independence Day celebrations at Sarkaghat in Mandi district with a slew of major announcements and inaugurations. The Chief Minister inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 33 development projects worth Rs. 216 crore across Sarkaghat, Seraj, Drang and Dharampur Assembly constituencies, aiming to bolster infrastructure, education, healthcare and water supply in the region.

Among the major projects inaugurated were Rs 54.91 crore multi-village rural piped water scheme for Baldwara, Bhadrola, and parts of Gopalpur block, Rs 32 crore Rajiv Gandhi Day Boarding School at Sarkaghat, Rs 22.82 crore double-lane bridge with footpath over the Beas River at Kothi Pattan, Rs 11.06 crore Community Health Centre building at Marhi, Rs 4.93 crore metalling and tarring of the Naghla Redu Kaner road and Science laboratories at various senior secondary schools, including GSSS Baldwara, Paunta, and Chowk, with costs ranging from Rs 95 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore.

Infrastructure projects also included bridges, roads, panchayat ghars, patwar buildings and community centres across the region, including, Rs 1.33 crore bridge on the Nabahi-Thanda Pani link road, Rs 4.77 crore bridge over Sun Khad from Kandapatan and Rs 2.25 crore bow-string steel truss footbridge over Sun Khad to Purana Dharampur Bazar.

**ARMY RESCUES FOUR
FROM FLOOD-HIT
KINNAUR**

Diary Times Desk : The Indian Army's swift response averted a potential tragedy following flashfloods at Hojis Lungpa Nala on Thursday evening. The Army helped four stranded civilians move to a higher and safer ground and evacuated an injured person to the Regional Hospital, Reckong Peo. Flashfloods triggered by a cloudburst in the higher reaches of the Rishi Dogri Valley engulfed the bridge across the Sutlej, injuring one person. On receiving an urgent request from the Kinnaur SP, the Army immediately mobilised a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) column.

**SUKHU PRESIDES OVER STATE-LEVEL INDEPENDENCE DAY
CELEBRATION AT SARKAGHAT IN MANDI**

Diary Times Desk : The 79th Independence Day was celebrated across Himachal Pradesh with enthusiasm. The state-level function was held at Sarkaghat in Mandi district, where Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu unfurled the National Flag, inspected the parade and took the salute from various contingents, including Police, Home Guards, ITBP, NCC, and others, despite heavy rainfall. In his address, the Chief Minister expressed concern over frequent natural disasters caused by climate change. He mentioned that while the 2023 disaster caused losses worth Rs 10,000 crore, the state only received Rs 1,500 crore from the Centre, and that too after two years. No Central aid has been received yet for this year's disasters. However, the state government has already distributed Rs 360.42 crore and now announced an additional Rs 100 crore for disaster relief. He also launched a Rs 3,000 crore project for disaster mitigation and livelihood support.

**4 PUNJAB PILGRIMS RETURNING
FROM CHAMUNDA DEVI TEMPLE IN
HIMACHAL'S KANGRA DIE IN
ACCIDENT, 25 INJURED**

Diary Times Desk : At least four persons, including 2 women, died and 25 others were injured in a road accident involving a Mahindra pick-up vehicle near Balley Hotel, Ikku Mod, on the Chamunda-Dharamsala road on Friday morning.

They had come from Moga, Punjab, to pay obeisance at the Chamunda Devi temple in Kangra district.

Local police officials stated that the pick-up vehicle, carrying pilgrims from Moga veered off the road. As per initial reports, 29 persons were on board and sustained injuries.

One woman died on the spot, and three others (one female and two males) succumbed to their injuries at Dr Rajendra Prasad Medical College and Hospital at Tanda. The deceased have been identified as Jagsir Singh (38), son of Varyam Singh; Paramjeet Kaur, wife of Gurmel Singh (35); Kiran (35), wife of Sukhjinder Singh; and Shukhjinder Singh (35), son of Parkash Singh — all residents of Baaghi ke village, Nihal Singh Wala sub-division, Moga district.

**FOUR GURDASPUR RESIDENTS
ARRESTED WITH 25.19 GRAMS OF
'CHITTA' IN KANGRA DISTRICT**

Diary Times Desk : In a significant crackdown on drug abuse, the Kangra district police have arrested four individuals from Gurdaspur district, Punjab, after recovering 25.19 grams of 'chitta' (heroin) from their vehicle.

The suspects, identified as Gurinder Singh (30) of Rasulpur, Rupinder Kaur (21) of Neelkalan, Arithpal (22) of Rasulpur, and Rupinder Singh (26) of Dapai, were intercepted by police during routine patrols at Gaggal.

The police arrested the accused on the spot and registered a case against them under the NDPS Act.

SP Ashok Rattan of Nurpur and Kangra police districts emphasized that the anti-drug campaign will continue, assuring the public that no one involved in drug trafficking or illegal activities will be spared.

An investigation is currently underway.

**HIMACHAL SPEAKER: 12 BILLS PENDING WITH PRESIDENT, GOVERNOR FOR
OVER THREE MONTHS TO BE DEEMED PASSED**

Diary Times Desk : Vidhan Sabha Speaker Kuldeep Pathania today said that in light of the recent Supreme Court ruling, 12 Bills cleared by the Himachal Vidhan Sabha but were pending with the Governor or the President of India for their assent for more than three months would be deemed to have been passed.

Pathania, while addressing mediapersons, said, "Of the total 73 Bills passed by the 14th Vidhan Sabha, 12 are still awaiting the assent of the Governor or the President. The Supreme Court ruling will now be applicable to these pending Bills, which include five pertaining to raising the emoluments of the legislators."

He was responding to a question about the status of the Bill passed by the Assembly regarding increasing the emoluments of the Chief Minister, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, ministers and MLAs during the Budget session in March this year.

The Speaker's remarks come amid an ongoing standoff between the Raj Bhawan and the state government over the delay in the grant of assent to many Bills, including the one regarding an amendment to the Act for the appointment of Vice-Chancellors of two horticulture and agriculture universities. Since the Bill passed by the Assembly in 2023 was still to be granted assent by the Governor, it had delayed the appointment of Vice-Chancellors of the two varsities.



“

"Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren't."

Margaret Thatcher



Germany Calls On Israel

Germany "strongly" objects to an Israeli plan to build thousands of new homes in the West Bank, calling on the government to "stop settlement construction" in the Palestinian territory.

Berlin "strongly" rejects the Israeli government's announcements on thousands of new settlements in the Israeli occupied areas of the West Bank", the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Israeli far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said work would start on a long-delayed settlement that would divide the West Bank and cut it off from East

Jerusalem, a move his office declared would "bury" the idea of a Palestinian state.

Standing at the site in Maale Adumim, Smotrich said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump had agreed to the revival of the E1 scheme, though there was no immediate confirmation from either.

"Whoever in the world is trying to recognize a Palestinian state

today will receive our answer on the ground. Not with documents nor with decisions or statements, but with facts. Facts of houses, facts of neighborhoods," Smotrich said.

Israel froze construction plans at Maale Adumim in 2012, and again after a revival in 2020, because of objections from the US, European allies and other powers who considered the project a threat to any future peace deal with the Palestinians.

The move could further isolate Israel, which has watched some of its Western allies condemn its military offensive in Gaza in the war with Palestinian militant group Hamas and announce they will recognize a Palestinian state.

Palestinians fear the settlement building in the West Bank — which has sharply intensified since the 2023 Hamas attack on Israel that led to the Gaza war — will rob them of any chance to build a state of their own in the area.

In a statement headlined "Burying the idea of a Palestinian state," Smotrich's spokesperson said the minister had approved the plan to build 3,401 houses for Israeli settlers between an existing settlement in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

In Maale Adumim, Smotrich told Reuters the plan would go into effect on Wednesday, without specifying what would happen on that day.

The Palestinian foreign ministry called the plan an extension of crimes of genocide, displacement and annexation. Israel has long rejected accusations of genocide and rights abuses and said it is acting in its own defense.

Hamas described the plan as part of Israel's "colonial, extremist" policies and called on Palestinians to confront it. Jordan's foreign ministry condemned the move as a flagrant violation of international law.

Peace Now, which tracks settlement activity in the West Bank, said there were still steps needed before construction, including the approval of Israel's High Planning Council. But if all went through, infrastructure work could begin within a few months, and house building in about a year.

"The E1 plan is deadly for the future of Israel and for any chance of achieving a peaceful two-state solution. We are standing at the edge of an abyss, and the government is driving us forward at full speed," Peace Now said in a statement.

HOUSE BUILDING 'IN A YEAR'

Palestinians were already demoralized by the Israeli military campaign which has killed more than 61,000 people in Gaza, according to local health authorities, and fear Israel will ultimately push them out of that territory. About 700,000 Israeli settlers live among 2.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israel annexed East Jerusalem in a move not recognized by most countries but has not formally extended sovereignty over the West Bank. The UN and most world powers say settlement expansion has eroded the viability of a two-state solution by fragmenting Palestinian territory. The two-state plan envisages a Palestinian state in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, existing side by side with Israel. Israel disputes this, citing historical and biblical ties to the area, which it calls Judea and Samaria.



Devlin Barrett

Berlin "strongly" rejects the Israeli government's announcements on thousands of new settlements

Alaska summit

Goal Is To Get Putin

U S President Donald Trump said on Friday that his main objective at the upcoming summit in Alaska is to bring Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table — not to strike a deal on behalf of Ukraine.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One while en route to Anchorage, Trump clarified his position. "I'm not here to negotiate for Ukraine. I'm not doing this for my health... I'd like to focus on our country, but I'm doing this to save a lot of lives," he said.



Tyler Pager

Trump said aim is to bring Putin to the negotiating table at the Alaska summit, not to strike a deal for Ukraine

Trump stressed that the priority is to push towards ending the war in Ukraine. While he did not detail any specific proposals, he warned that the consequences for Russia would be "very severe" if Moscow refuses to cooperate.

The US President said he believes the meeting with Putin could produce meaningful outcomes, given the current state of Russia's economy and the urgency of the war.

"He's a smart guy, been doing it for a long time but so have I ... we get along, there's a good respect level on both sides, and I think, you know, something's going to come of it," Trump noted. He also welcomed the fact that Putin is bringing Russian business leaders to the talks,



Trump invited Putin to the summit after the Russian leader suggested the meeting. However, the US president has since taken a firmer tone, warning that the meeting could end quickly if Putin refuses to compromise.

seeing it as a sign of readiness for engagement, but made it clear that no business deals would be possible until the war is resolved.

"I noticed he's bringing a lot of business people from Russia, and that's good. I like that because they want to do business, but they're not doing business until we get the war solved," he added.

The summit in Alaska marks the first time Putin will set foot on Western soil since launching the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, a conflict that has claimed tens of thousands of lives. In the lead-up to the summit, Russian forces have made notable advances on the battlefield.

Trump invited Putin to the summit after the Russian leader suggested the meeting. However, the US president has since taken a firmer tone, warning that the meeting could end quickly if Putin refuses to compromise. While Mr Trump was flying to Alaska, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the US president should convince Russia to stop its

"invasion". "It is time to end the war, and the necessary steps must be taken by Russia. We are counting on America," Mr Zelensky said in a social media post.

The US delegation includes Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Secretary of Treasury Scott Bessent, Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick, and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director John Ratcliffe, among others.

For India, which faces US tariffs over buying Russian oil, cannot allow itself to be used by the US in the West's misguided trade war with China, a top American economist told NDTV ahead of the Trump-Putin meeting. "... I have been saying to my dear Indian friends for years, which is that the United States uses other countries. It does not act responsibly towards other countries, so be careful. India should not allow itself to be used by the US, for example, as somehow in the US' misguided trade war with China," professor Jeffrey D Sachs, who teaches at Columbia University.

The talks are set to begin at 1900 GMT on Friday at Elmendorf Air Force Base, the largest US military installation in Alaska and a Cold War base for surveillance of the Soviet Union.

INFA

foreign forces

HONG KONG DEMOCRAT JIMMY LAI

U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday said he would see what he could do to help "save" detained Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai, even though Chinese President Xi Jinping would not be "thrilled."

"I'm going to do everything I can to save him," Trump told Fox News Radio in an interview. "We'll see what we can do ... we're going to do everything we can."

Lai, 77, has pleaded not guilty to charges under Hong Kong's national security law of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces, as well as to a separate charge of conspiracy to publish seditious material. He has been held in solitary confinement for more than 1,500 days since December 2020.

Liu Pengyu, the spokesperson for China's embassy in Washington, said Lai had been "a key orchestrator and participant in anti-China, destabilizing activities in Hong Kong."

"We strongly oppose external forces using judicial cases as a pretext to interfere in China's internal affairs or to smear and undermine Hong Kong's rule of law," he said.

Trump has said he would raise Lai's case as part of negotiations with China over trade and tariffs. On Monday, the U.S. and China extended a tariff truce for another 90 days, staving off triple-digit duties on each other's goods.

In his landmark trial, Lai stands accused of two counts of colluding with foreign forces — a crime punishable by life in prison under the 2020 national security law imposed by Beijing — and a separate sedition charge. He has pleaded not guilty to all charges. On Friday, a Hong Kong court is set to hear closing arguments from both defense and prosecutors after a day's delay due to a major rainstorm. The hearing — which is expected to last multiple days — paves the way for a verdict that will decide Lai's fate — and test Trump's resolve to make good on his pledge while trying to clinch a trade deal with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

"You can also understand, President Xi would not be exactly thrilled by doing it," Trump said. "With all of that being said, his name (has) already entered the circle of things that we're talking about, and we'll see what we can do."

In Hong Kong, dozens of people lined up outside the courthouse on Friday ahead of the hearing amid a heavy police presence.

"I am here to support 'Fei Lo' Lai and let him know that he's not alone," said Pun Tak-bun, 81, calling Lai by his colloquial nickname meaning "fat man." "Apple Daily spoke to Hongkongers from the heart."

In October, Trump responded "100% yes" when asked by podcast host Hugh Hewitt whether he would speak to Xi to get Lai out of prison if he won the election. Then, as president, Trump pledged to raise Lai's case as part of US trade talks with China.

"I think talking about Jimmy Lai is a very good idea," he told Hewitt in a subsequent radio interview in May, just days before officials met in Geneva for the first round of talks. "We'll put it down, and we'll put it down as part of the negotiation."

Two people who are close to Lai and have been campaigning for his release said they were told that US officials did bring up Lai's case with their Chinese counterparts during the talks.

"We understand it was informally brought up at trade talks, but we don't know the context of it," said Lai's top aide Mark Simon, referring to the negotiations in Geneva.

Mark Clifford, president of the Washington-based Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation, said that before trade negotiators met again in London in June, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent "had it as a mission" from Trump to ensure that Lai's release was part of the talks.

"I'm told that Bessent was tasked by the President and made it as part of his mission," said Clifford, who has been lobbying the US Congress for Lai's release. "Going into those talks, like immediately before those talks, Bessent told people that he was tasked by Trump with getting Jimmy out."



Yun Sun

Trump has said he would raise Lai's case as part of negotiations with China over trade and tariffs.

CRISTIANO RONALDO TO PLAY IN INDIA? AL-NASSR TO FACE FC GOA IN AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Diary Times Desk : Portuguese football icon Cristiano Ronaldo could play in India soon, as the draw for the upcoming AFC Champions League Two was revealed on Friday. Saudi giants Al-Nassr have been drawn into Group D, alongside Indian Super League (ISL) FC Goa, Iraq's AL Zawraa FC and FC Istiklol of Tajikistan. FC Goa, who finished second in the ISL 2024/25 league season, secured a place in the playoff round after winning the Super Cup in May. They then defeated Omani side Al Seeb in the playoff match to seal a spot in the competition.

Captained by Ronaldo, the Portuguese five-time Ballon d'Or winner, Al Nassr failed to qualify for AFC Champions League Elite after finishing third in the Saudi Pro League. They are now clubbed in Group D of ACL 2, along with FC Goa, Al Zawraa SC of Iraq and FC Istiklol of Tajikistan.

The draw for the tournament was conducted at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Friday.



BARCELONA TARGET PSG STAR TO LEAD THEIR 'NEW PROJECT' ALONGSIDE LAMINE YAMAL

Diary Times Desk : The past few transfer windows have not been easy at all for FC Barcelona, for they have been bogged down by Financial Fair Play issues, leading to complications with player registrations.

The ongoing summer has not been much different despite hopes that the Catalans would be in a much better position.

But, the future looks bright for Barcelona, considering that a return to Spotify Camp Nou is edging closer while the administration has done a solid job of getting the wage bill under control, considering how bloated it was when Joan Laporta & co. took over.

Desire Doue the next big target for Barcelona
With the financial situation expected to improve before next summer, Barcelona seem to have big plans in place for the future.

Indeed, transfer insider IndyKaila News on X reports that the La Liga champions are ready to make PSG sensation Desire Doue their next big target.

LIONEL MESSI'S VISIT TO INDIA CONFIRMED; LUIS SUAREZ, SERGIO BUSQUETS, JORDI ALBA COULD TRAVEL WITH ARGENTINE: REPORT

Diary Times Desk : It has finally been confirmed that Lionel Messi will visit India in December this year. The Argentine's visit received its final seal of approval, according to reports, and the Inter Miami star will have a three-city tour, which will kickstart in Kolkata on December 12.

Messi's trip will also see him go to Ahmedabad, Mumbai and New Delhi, and his visit has been named 'GOAT Tour of India 2025'.

The 2022 World Cup winner will also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence on December 15, and it will be his first trip to India since 2011. In 2011, he visited Kolkata with his national team to play a friendly against Venezuela at the Salt Lake Stadium.

Promoter confirms Lionel Messi's visit
Satadru Dutta, promoter of the event, told PTI, "I got the authorisation and afterwards made it official (on social media). Messi will post any day between August 28 and September 1 with the official poster with all details and a small introduction of his tour."

SAANIYA CHANDHOK SEEN WITH SACHIN TENDULKAR AND FAMILY

Diary Times Desk : Saaniya Chandook, who recently got engaged to Arjun Tendulkar, was seen with legendary Indian cricket team batter Sachin Tendulkar and family. In a video that has gone viral on social media, Saaniya was seen attending the opening of Sara Tendulkar's Pilates Academy in Mumbai's Andheri. She was present with the Tendulkar family and even took part in some of the rituals. The video was posted on Instagram by the pilates academy's account and there were pictures that showed Saaniya posing with Sara.

Recently, social media went on over-drive after the news of Arjun Tendulkar taking a major step in his personal life surfaced. However, no official statement has been released by both families.

According to a report by India Today, Saaniya is the granddaughter of prominent Mumbai entrepreneur Ravi Ghai. The Ghai family is famous for its services in hospitality and food industries. They are the owners of the InterContinental hotel and Brooklyn Creamery.

The report also claimed Arjun and Saaniya got engaged privately, and hence only close friends and families from the two sides attended the ceremony.

Notably, Arjun is a left-arm pacer, who could also add valuable contributions with the bat. The bowler piles his trade for Goa in domestic cricket.



INDIA'S ASIA CUP 2025 SQUAD: SHUBMAN GILL IN, RS 13 CRORE IPL STAR MISSES OUT - REPORT

Diary Times Desk : The Indian squad for the Asia Cup T20, to be announced on Tuesday, could present a tricky challenge for Ajit Agarkar's selection panel, with some tough calls expected. While Indian Test skipper Shubman Gill's place and designation in the squad remain a hot talking point, the position of Rinku Singh in the 15-member squad is also under scrutiny. Rinku became the toast of the nation a few years back when he hit five consecutive sixes off a Yash Dayal over to win an IPL game for Kolkata Knight Riders and had since been looked upon as a designated finisher in the Indian team.

However Rinku's career graph has seen a bit a decline since he failed to make it to the Indian squad for the T20 World Cup (he was on stand by).

A low-key 2024 IPL, where he faced only 113 balls, and a similar 2025 season (134 balls) hinted at a reduced role.

Interestingly, in 2024, it was Gambhir who was the mentor and chief strategist of KKR.

The manner in which the erstwhile think-tank chief of KKR used Rinku was indicative that the Aligarh southpaw's role in his scheme of things was very limited.

Going by the fight for each batting slot, one can't say with a degree of certainty that Rinku is an automatic choice going into the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka early next year.

SALIYA SAMAN HANDED FIVE-YEAR BAN FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION BREACHES

Diary Times Desk : Former Sri Lankan domestic cricketer Saliya has been banned from all cricket for five years after being found guilty of multiple breaches of the Emirates Cricket Board's (ECB) Anti-Corruption Code during the 2021 Abu Dhabi T10 League.

An independent ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal, which conducted the hearing on the ECB's behalf, ruled that Saman was involved in attempts to corrupt matches in the tournament. The ICC, appointed as the Designated Anti-Corruption Official for the event, had disrupted these attempts.

Saman, one of eight people charged in September 2023, was found guilty of:

- Being party to an attempt to fix, contrive or improperly influence matches or aspects of matches in the 2021 Abu Dhabi T10 (Article 2.1.1)