

NEWS IN BRIEF

MAMATA BANERJEE'S "NOSTALGIC" POST AS KOLKATA GETS 3 NEW METRO ROUTES

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee went down the memory lane, revisiting her time as the Union Railway Minister, when she was involved in the planning and sanctioning of a series of Metro railway corridors in Kolkata. She wrapped up her experience in an online post about an hour before three new routes would add to the city's metro network. Kolkata was the first Indian city to get an underground metro rail network and has lately expanded to improve connectivity to the city's northern and southern ends, as well as the eastern and western fringes. Continuing the progress, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will today inaugurate 13 km of new metro tracks and launch train services on three new routes. Ms Banerjee, however, has reportedly decided to skip the event in the wake of the alleged harassment.

PM MODI INAUGURATES KEY BRIDGE IN BIHAR, WAVES HIS STOLE AT CROWD

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a key bridge over the Ganga River in Bihar's Begusarai today. PM Modi, with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar by his side, was seen standing on the bridge and greeting people. He was also seen waving his stole at the crowd. The 1.86-km-long Aunta-Simarua Bridge has been constructed parallel to an old two-lane dilapidated rail-cum-road bridge, 'Rajendra Setu', at a cost of more than Rs 1,870 crore. Because of the poor condition of Rajendra Setu, heavy vehicles were forced to reroute.

The bridge marks a significant infrastructure push in the state. The six-lane bridge on National Highway 31 will provide direct connectivity between Mokama in Patna and Begusarai, reducing the additional travel distance of more than 100 km for heavy vehicles travelling between north Bihar - Begusarai, Supaul, Madhubani, Purnea, Araria - and south Bihar - Sheikhpura, Nawada and Lakhisarai.

PM MODI**'THEY ARE ANGRY BECAUSE...': PM MODI SLAMS OPPN OVER BILL TO SACK JAILED MINISTERS**

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday strongly defended the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill even as he accused the opposition INDIA bloc, including the Trinamool Congress (TMC), of shielding corrupt leaders.

While addressing a rally in Kolkata, PM Modi highlighted the provisions of the proposed law, which bars prime ministers, chief ministers, and ministers from holding office if they remain in jail for 30 days or more. Modi was in West Bengal where he laid foundation stone of 6-lane elevated Kona Expressway and inaugurated 3 metro routes in Kolkata.

Targeting Bengal's ruling party, PM Modi said, "Two TMC ministers, even after going to jail on corruption charges, were not willing to give up their posts," reported news agency PTI. He was alluding to ex-ministers Partha Chatterjee and Jyoti Priya Mallick, arrested in the teachers' recruitment and ration distribution scams, respectively.

"We decided to bring in a law that provides for dismissing a corrupt chief minister, or even the prime minister, if he or she spends 30 days in jail. But when we brought in a stringent law, the TMC, the Congress started protesting. They are angry because they are scared of facing punishment for their own sins," the Prime Minister added. In an apparent reference to former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, Modi remarked, "It is a shame that even a chief minister, after going to jail, has been running government from there." "Those who are arrested on corruption charges, how can they be part of the government and remain in their posts? Modi will not allow this," Modi said. Defending the Bill, he said the legislation was necessary to prevent leaders from exploiting gaps in the system. "Look at the situation, nowadays some people have stooped so low that they are trying to run the government from jail," he said.

PM MODI TO EMBARK ON 4-DAY VISIT TO JAPAN, CHINA FROM AUGUST 29

Diary Times Desk : Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Japan and China from August 29 to September 1, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

The MEA said that PM Modi will visit Japan from August 29 to August 30 at the invitation of Japanese PM Shigeru Ishiba to participate in the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit. This will be PM Modi's eighth visit to Japan and the first Summit with Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba.

"During the visit, the two Prime Ministers will review the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan, including defense and security, trade and economy, technology and innovation, and people to people exchanges, as well as discuss issues of regional and global importance," the MEA said in a statement. "The visit will reaffirm the longstanding special bond of friendship between the two countries," it added. From Japan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit China to take part in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Tianjin from August 31 to September 1. The summit, which will be held on August 31, will be attended by the leaders of over 20 countries.

"In the second leg of his visit, at the invitation of the President of China, H.E. Xi Jinping, Prime Minister will travel to China from 31 August to 1 September 2025 to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Tianjin," the ministry said.

**AADHAAR VALID FOR VOTER ROLL REVISION, TOP COURT TELLS ELECTION COMMISSION**

Diary Times Desk : Bihar voters challenging their exclusion from the electoral roll - before the election later this year - can present the Aadhaar as proof of identity, the Supreme Court said Friday afternoon, directing the Election Commission to add the government-issued ID to a list of 11 others.

Excluded voters - numbering around 35 lakh people, the court estimated after deducting the number of those said to be dead and duplicate entries - however, were told to hurry up.

Justice Surya Kant directed the filing of all documents to be completed by September 1. This, though, can be completed online, a bench that included Justice Joymalya Bagchi said.

The top court - hearing petitions contesting the 'special intensive revision' of the voter list - said applications for re-inclusion can be submitted with either one of those 11 or the Aadhaar.

The court also had some strong comments for political parties in Bihar, demanding to know why they - many of whom have opposed the revision on grounds it was 'designed to disenfranchise' communities that usually vote for them - had not assisted lakhs in trying to get back on the list. "Political parties are not doing their jobs..." the court said, echoing the poll panel's note that objections had filed been by individual politicians, i.e., MPs and MLAs, but not the parties.

'SEE YOU IN OUR SECOND INNINGS': DREAM11 STOPS ALL 'PAID CONTESTS' AFTER BAN

Diary Times Desk : Dream11 has stopped all paid contests and pivoted entirely to a free-to-play model in the aftermath of India's newly minted online gaming law.

"We have always been and always will be a law-abiding company, and have conducted our business in compliance with the laws," Dream11 said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "While we believe that progressive regulations would have been the right way forward, we will respect the law and will fully comply with 'The Promotion & Regulation of Online Gaming Law, 2025'."

On Friday, President Draupadi Murmu gave her assent to the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025, to make it a law. The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha passed the legislation on Wednesday and Thursday respectively.

India's online gaming law prohibits promotion and operation of gaming apps that require users to pay money to win cash. While such action attracts penalty as well imprisonment, there's no punishment for those playing online money games. The move threatens India's \$3.8 billion gaming industry that has drawn global investors and fostered fantasy sports apps like Dream11, Games24x7 and Mobile Premier League, among others. "The government believes that the harms of addiction, financial loss and even extreme consequences such as suicides associated with online money gaming can be prevented by prevention of such activities," according to a media statement released on Wednesday. "Additionally, online money gaming platforms are often misused for financial fraud, money laundering, terror financing and messaging activity that compromise national security."

DELHI NEWS

POLICE QUESTIONS 5 PERSONS IN GUJARAT OVER ATTACK ON DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

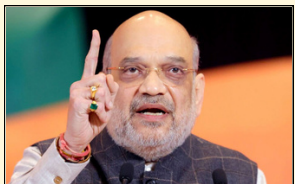
Diary Times Desk : A team of Delhi police on Friday visited Rajkot city in Gujarat and questioned five persons associated with Rajesh Sakaria, a local resident arrested for allegedly attacking Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, a police official said.

Sakaria, 41, who resides in Kotharia Road area of Rajkot, was arrested on the charges of attempted murder by the Delhi police for attacking Chief Minister Gupta on August 20 during her 'Jan Sunwai' programme in the national capital.

In their preliminary probe, the police have found that Sakaria, an auto-rickshaw driver, was a dog lover and was upset after the Supreme Court's recent order of capturing all stray dogs in Delhi and putting them in a shelter home.

"During his Delhi visit, Sakaria was in contact with five persons back home," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone-2 of Rajkot), Jagdish Bangarwa, said.

"A team of Delhi police visited Rajkot and conducted interrogation of these five persons, including an autorickshaw driver who had sent Rs 2,000 via GPay to Sakaria. The team has left after questioning them," he said. The Delhi police did not arrest or detain anybody after the questioning, but they have served a notice to an autorickshaw driver who had transferred the money to Sakaria and he has been asked to appear before the them for further questioning, the DCP said.

'IF ARVIND KEJRIWAL HAD RESIGNED...': AMIT SHAH ON BILLS TO SACK JAILED MINISTERS

Diary Times Desk : Amit Shah maintained that it had not happened in the 75 years since the nation won freedom. He then cited the example of Arvind Kejriwal, the former Delhi Chief Minister who ran the government from Tihar jail, to drive home the point of bringing in the bills to sack jailed ministers.

Mr Shah also underlined the need for "constitutional morality", something he said should be practised by both the opposition and the ruling party.

The government introduced three bills in Parliament on Wednesday for the removal of the Prime Minister, a Union minister, a chief minister or a minister of a state or Union Territory when arrested or detained on serious criminal charges for 30 days in a row. "Do the people of the country want any Chief Minister to stay in jail and run the government? What kind of discussion is this? I don't understand. This is a question of morality. Now they are asking why it was not included in the Constitution earlier. When the Constitution was drafted, it was not anticipated that people who had been to jail would continue to hold elected office," he said, speaking.

"REOPENED WOUNDS": 6-YEAR-OLD CHHAVI'S FAMILY ON TOP COURT VERDICT ON STRAY DOGS

Diary Times Desk : The Supreme Court order that brought a sense of joy to animal lovers across the country cast a long shadow over the family of six-year-old Chhavi. The family claims that the verdict reopened wounds of a tragedy they have been struggling to come to terms with and one that took away their youngest member. Chhavi, fondly called Bittu by her family, was bitten by a stray dog on June 30 last year while walking to her aunt's house in northwest Delhi's Pooth Kalan. The family recalls the dog attacked her without any provocation. Bleeding heavily, she was rushed to Dr B.R. Ambedkar Hospital and started on anti-rabies treatment. Her condition, however, worsened weeks later. On July 21, her first day back at school, she began vomiting and lost strength in her limbs. She stopped speaking. Four days later, just days before her final vaccine dose, she passed away. "We thought no other child would go through what Chhavi did," says her aunt Krishnadevi. "The first court order gave us a sense of relief. It wasn't just about our loss, we believed it was a step to protect others too," she added. The Supreme Court's recent ruling that healthy stray dogs should not be moved to shelters but sterilised, vaccinated and released back to their original locations has been welcomed by dog feeders and animal rights groups, but it has left Chhavi's family disheartened. While the court emphasised the need for compassionate care for stray animals, the family feels their concerns for public safety remain unaddressed. "The judgment has brought happiness to many, but we are still living with grief and fear," says Krishnadevi.

TIKTOK STILL BLOCKED: GOVERNMENT SOURCES ON BUZZ ABOUT BAN BEING LIFTED

Diary Times Desk : TikTok is still blocked in India, government sources said this evening after several users reported that they could access the website of the video streaming platform "The government of India has not issued any unblocking order for TikTok. Any such statement or news is false and misleading," they said. While the website was accessible for some users, they were unable to log in or upload or watch videos. The app of the China-based platform was also not available on app stores. Internet service providers continue to block the website, said the sources in the Department of Telecom, making it unclear how it was accessible to some. Meanwhile, online shopping platform AliExpress was also working for users at the time of publishing this article. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to China from August 31 to September 1 to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin at the invitation of China's President Xi Jinping.

CHAOS AT FIRST EVENT BY DELHI CHIEF MINISTER AFTER ATTACK, MAN ESCORTED OUT

Diary Times Desk : Chaos erupted at an event attended by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta this morning, leading to security concerns at her first public event since being attacked at a grievance redressal programme at her residence two days ago. A man raised slogans at the event in Delhi's Gandhinagar, apparently after an argument with local traders at the wholesale garment market, and was immediately removed from the venue by the police. The man initially raised slogans in support of the Chief Minister, followed by a "murdabad" slogan against someone else, which alerted the police. As cops swung into action and escorted the man out, he claimed he was a BJP worker, which is yet to be verified. The police are yet to release an official statement on this incident. Ms Gupta continued with her speech thereafter at the inaugural event of Vastrika, an open market garment show at the Gandhi Nagar wholesale market. Speaking in the 'Yamunapaar' area (near the Yamuna's banks), she reiterated her vow to clean the Yamuna River and work without pause.

BOMB AND THE BUTTON: TIME TO CALL PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL BY ITS NAME

Diary Times Desk : From 1947 to Kargil, Pakistan's generals have lost every conventional war they've fought. But they've mastered a far more insidious weapon: nuclear blackmail. It's not the bomb itself that poses the gravest danger, but the hand that hovers over the button. Today, that hand belongs to "Field Marshal" Asim Munir, a man whose rhetoric is not merely bellicose but openly sectarian, divisive and bigoted.

In statements one can hardly imagine being uttered in the 21st century, Munir posits the impossibility of Muslims living in a non-Muslim majority India to justify his claim that Muslim-majority Kashmir is the "jugular vein" of Pakistan. His intention was to stoke hatred of India and of Hindus, and to justify Pakistani belligerence. But to suggest that Muslims cannot live in a non-Muslim majority country was all the more preposterous for being made to a Pakistani diaspora audience living in the United States - a non-Muslim majority country!

The Warm Washington Welcome
The choice of audience highlighted the fact that Munir's threats aren't confined to Rawalpindi or Islamabad. They're made on American soil, under the warm glow of Washington's welcome. At a White House-hosted dinner during the Trump administration, Munir reportedly warned that Pakistan could "take half the world down" if provoked - a statement that should have triggered alarm, not applause. Instead, it was met with diplomatic indulgence, a familiar pattern in the US-Pakistan relationship, where strategic convenience often trumps - apologies for my choice of word! - moral clarity.

For decades, Pakistan's military has wielded its nuclear arsenal not as a deterrent, but as a diplomatic cudgel - a tool to intimidate India, extract concessions, and shield itself from accountability. The world remembers A.Q. Khan's nuclear bazaar, where technology was trafficked to North Korea, Iran, and Libya. Yet, Pakistan faced no meaningful consequences, thanks to the world's (read: America's) leniency and the enduring illusion of partnership.

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.

ISRO UNVEILS MODEL OF BHARATIYA ANTARIKSH STATION; INDIA'S FIRST ORBITAL LAB

Diary Times Desk : ISRO on Friday unveiled a model of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) module during the two-day National Space Day celebrations that began here. India plans to launch the first module of the BAS, its own home-built space station, by 2028, marking its entry into the group of a handful of nations that operate orbital laboratories. Presently, there are two orbital laboratories -- the International Space Station operated by five space agencies, and the Tiangong space station of China. India plans to have five modules of the Bhartiya Antariksh Station in place by 2035 as part of its ambitious plans for the space sector. The BAS-01 module is expected to weigh 10 tonnes and will be placed in a low earth orbit at 450 km above the earth. Salient features of the BAS include, indigenously developed Environmental Control and Life Support System (ECLSS), Bharat Docking System, Bharat Berthing Mechanism, automated hatch system, platform for microgravity research and technology demonstration, viewports for scientific imaging and crew recreation.

FRESH TROUBLE FOR CONGRESS MLA AS TRANS WOMAN SAYS HE WANTED TO 'RAPE' HER

Diary Times Desk : Kerala Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil, who faces allegations of sexual harassment, found himself in fresh trouble after a trans woman activist accused him of sending her "sexually regressive messages".

Activist Avanthika alleged Mamkootathil once shared his sexual desires and "rape fantasies" with her and that she had flagged the matter to the party but in vain.

On Thursday, Mamkootathil stepped down as Kerala Youth Congress President after Malayalam actor Rini George accused a youth leader of a prominent political party of misconduct. Ms George did not name anyone but the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alleged Mamkootathil's role even as the Congress leader denied the charges.

Speaking to Malayalam media, Ms Avanthika said: "I met Rahul at a media debate during the Thrikkakara by-election campaign. After that, I sent him a friend request on social media.

"INDIA KREMLIN'S LAUNDROMAT, DOESN'T NEED RUSSIAN OIL": TRUMP TRADE ADVISOR

Diary Times Desk : Calling India the "Maharaj" of tariffs, US President Donald Trump's trade adviser, Peter Navarro, accused New Delhi of running a "profiteering scheme" by continuing to import Russian oil, and said he expects punitive tariffs of 50 per cent on Indian imports to take effect as planned next week. "I see that taking place," Navarro told reporters outside the White House when asked about the 25 per cent punitive tariffs on India that are set to kick in on August 27. "Prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, India virtually bought no Russian oil...It was like almost one per cent of their need. The percentage has now gone up to 35 per cent...They don't need the oil. It's a refining profit-sharing scheme. It's a laundromat for the Kremlin. That's the reality of that," Navarro said. The fresh salvo from the trade hawk comes after India has signalled it'll keep buying Russian oil. Stung by the steep 50 per cent levy, the Indian government has reiterated its long-standing friendship with Russia and moved to ease tensions with regional rival China in recent days. During his Moscow trip, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar responded to American officials' criticism of India's trade ties with Russia, and said the Indian government is "perplexed" by the US threats, as Washington itself had asked New Delhi to help stabilise global energy markets by buying Russian oil. "We are a country where, actually, the Americans said for the last few years that we should do everything to stabilise the world energy markets, including buying oil from Russia," he said.

UNION MINISTER SURESH GOPI'S SON MADHAV DETAINED IN KERALA ROADSIDE SPAT

Diary Times Desk : Madhav Suresh, Actor and son of Union Minister Suresh Gopi and Congress Leader Vinod Krishna, was taken into custody by Museum police in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday (August 21) night following a road rage altercation. According to the police, the confrontation began when Madhav was travelling from Sasthamangalam to Vellayambalam, and Vinod Krishna was driving from the opposite side after taking a U-turn. An argument broke out between the two after there was limited space on the road for two cars to move. Madhav was seen blocking the vehicle of Vinod and arguing. The police rushed to the scene after being informed about the incident. As per the witnesses, Madhav was drunk, police took him into custody and checked. Police rushed to the spot after being alerted about the incident.

BEIJING OPPOSES 'BULLY' US FOR 50% TARIFFS ON INDIA

Diary Times Desk : Chinese ambassador to India Xu Feihong has said that Beijing "firmly opposes" Washington's steep tariffs on Delhi and called for greater co-operation between India and China.

Xu likened the US to a "bully", saying that it had long benefitted from free trade but was now using tariffs as a "bargaining chip" to demand "exorbitant prices" from other nations.

"US has imposed tariffs of up to 50% on India and even threatened for more. China firmly opposes it. Silence only emboldens the bully," Xu said on Thursday.

Earlier this month, Trump imposed a 25% penalty on India in addition to 25% tariffs for buying oil and weapons from Russia. The new rate will come into effect on 27 August.

Delhi's increased imports of cheap Russian crude since the Ukraine war has caused a strain in its ties with the US and impacted negotiations on a trade deal.

'NEITHER RAHUL GANDHI WILL BECOME PM, NOR...': AMIT SHAH LASHES OUT AT OPPN IN TAMIL NADU

Diary Times Desk : Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday took a nepotism jibe at the ruling DMK-Congress alliance in Tamil Nadu, saying Sonia Gandhi wants to make her son, Rahul Gandhi, the prime minister, while MK Stalin wants to make his son, Udhayanidhi, a chief minister.

Shah added in the same breath that neither Congress leader Rahul Gandhi would become the prime minister, nor Udhayanidhi would become the chief minister.

"Stalin ji has only one agenda to make his son the Chief Minister and Sonia Gandhi also has only one agenda to make her son the Prime Minister. But I want to tell both of them. Neither Rahul Gandhi can become the Prime Minister nor Udhayanidhi can become the Chief Minister. NDA's victory is certain in both places," Amit Shah said while addressing party supporters in Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu.

IAS ASSOCIATION CONDEMNS "PERSONAL ATTACKS" ON POLL BODY CHIEF'S FAMILY

Diary Times Desk : The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) association has come out strongly against the trolling of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's family online after allegations of 'vote theft' by Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders. "The IAS Association notes with concern that unwarranted criticism has been directed against the family members of the Chief Election Commissioner, who also happen to be well reputed civil servants," the association said in a post on X on Friday. Condemning personal attacks, it added, "The IAS Association strongly deprecates such personal attacks unconnected with the discharge of official duties. We stand for the dignity and integrity in public service." The family of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kumar, particularly his daughters, have faced trolling by a section of social media users. Mr Kumar is a former IAS officer from the Kerala cadre of the 1988 batch. He retired as secretary in the ministry of Cooperation in January 2024 and was appointed an election commissioner two months later. He took over as the Chief Election Commissioner in February this year. Alleging irregularities in the Bihar Special Intensive Revision and a constituency in Karnataka during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Mr Gandhi has claimed the Election Commission is engaged in 'vote theft' to benefit the BJP.

**AT LEAST 18 KILLED AND DOZENS
INJURED IN SEPARATE COLOMBIA
ATTACKS**

Diary Times Desk : At least 18 people have been killed and dozens wounded in two separate attacks in Colombia, deepening the country's most serious security crisis in decades.

Six people died and more than 60 were injured after a car bomb exploded on a busy street in the western city of Cali in Colombia, according to authorities.

Earlier on Thursday, a separate drone attack against a police helicopter killed at least 12 people in a rural area outside the northwestern city of Medellin.

The attacks, attributed to different dissident factions of the now defunct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) group, pose fresh challenges to Colombia's fragile peace processes ahead of elections next year.

Alejandro Eder, the mayor of Cali, ordered martial law for the country's third most populous city. He also announced a temporary ban on large trucks entering the city and called on the public to report information about the incident for a \$10,000 reward.

In the wake of both attacks, the president and the military leadership announced they would lead a security council meeting to "define additional protection measures" for citizens.

**EARTHQUAKE OF MAGNITUDE 7.5
HITS DRAKE PASSAGE, TSUNAMI
ALERT ISSUED BRIEFLY**

Diary Times Desk : A strong earthquake struck the Drake Passage region on Thursday (local time), according to the US Geological Survey (USGS), which downgraded the intensity of the quake from magnitude 8 to 7.5.

While the US tsunami warning system did not issue any alert after the Drake Passage earthquake, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) briefly issued a warning for Chile, saying hazardous tsunami waves from the earthquake in Drake Passage are possible within the next three hours along some Chilean coasts.

Chile's Navy Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service also issued a precaution for the Chilean Antarctic territory.

The earthquake struck at a depth of 10.8 kilometres, according to the USGS data.

**7 KILLED, 9 MISSING AFTER ROPE BREAKS
ON UNDER-CONSTRUCTION CHINA
BRIDGE**

Diary Times Desk : Seven people were killed and 9 others were missing after a rope broke at a bridge under construction in northwest China on Friday, state media reported.

The People's Daily said 15 workers and a project manager were at the site on the bridge spanning the Yellow River in Qinghai province when the rope snapped at around 3:00 am on Friday.

The bridge on the Sichuan-Qinghai Railway is the world's largest-span double-track railway continuous steel truss arch bridge, according to the report.

It is also China's first railway steel truss arch bridge spanning the Yellow River -- the country's second longest -- the report said.

Images published on the People's Daily website showed the partially built bridge, its middle section yet to be completed, with two giant scaffolding towers and several cranes alongside it.

A rescue operation was under way, the report added. Industrial accidents are fairly common in China due to vague regulation and lax safety standards.

**WE NEED TO MAKE SURE PUTIN NEVER
TRIES TO ATTACK UKRAINE AGAIN,
NATO CHIEF SAYS**

Diary Times Desk : NATO's support for Ukraine remains "unwavering" and "continues to grow," the alliance Secretary General Mark Rutte said on Friday during a visit to Kyiv.

After the meeting with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Rutte said there are more plans to provide NATO funding to ensure "a crucial flow of lethal US weapons to Ukraine."

Following Monday's multilateral meeting at the White House, Rutte said US President Donald Trump made it clear "the United States will indeed be involved in providing security guarantees for Ukraine."

"We are now working together -- Ukraine, the Europeans, the United States -- to make sure that these security guarantees are of such a level that Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin sitting in Moscow will never try to attack Ukraine again," Rutte said at a press conference.

**NORTH KOREA'S KIM JONG
UN HAILS TROOPS KILLED IN
'HEROIC' WAR WITH
UKRAINE**

Diary Times Desk : North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has awarded medals to his returning and fallen troops, who fought for Russia in the war against Ukraine, as he held an emotional meeting with the families of soldiers killed on the battlefield, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"The combat activities of overseas operational forces ... proved without regret the power of the heroic [North Korean] army," and that the "liberation of Kursk" proved the "fighting spirit of the heroes", KCNA reported on Friday, quoting Kim.

"Our army is now doing what it ought to do and what needs to be done. It will do so in the future, too," Kim said, according to KCNA.

He also laid a flower at a memorial wall for North Korean soldiers killed overseas, and a concert was held for soldiers who returned from serving in Russia, as well as a banquet that included bereaved family members of slain troops, KCNA said.

Photos published by the news agency showed the North Korean leader hugging visibly emotional family members of fallen soldiers.

South Korean and Western intelligence agencies have said Pyongyang sent more than 10,000 soldiers to Russia's Kursk region in 2024, along with artillery shells, missiles and long-range rocket systems to be used by Russia against Ukraine.

**GREEN CARD APPLICANTS
MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT:
USCIS CHANGES
IMMIGRATION POLICY TO
CONSIDER ANTI-
AMERICANISM**

Diary Times Desk :

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a significant change on Tuesday on the evaluation of applications for immigrant benefits, including Green Card applications, which would now take into account "anti-Americanism" on social media.

The Trump administration has increased travel restrictions since taking office, including requiring potential international students to submit information about their social media accounts, which will be examined for "any indication of hostility" towards American "citizens, culture, government, institutions, or founding principles."

**WHO, WMO ISSUE NEW REPORT AND GUIDANCE TO PROTECT WORKERS
FROM INCREASING HEAT STRESS**

Diary Times Desk : The World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) have published a new joint report and guidance highlighting the growing global health challenges posed by extreme heat on workers.

As climate change drives more frequent and intense heatwaves, many workers who are regularly exposed to dangerous heat conditions are already feeling the health impacts of rising temperatures, in particular, manual workers in sectors such as agriculture, construction and fisheries. Increasing heat episodes are also leading to health issues for vulnerable populations in developing countries, such as children, older adults and low-income populations.

"Heat stress is already harming the health and livelihoods of billions of workers, especially in the most vulnerable communities," said Dr Jeremy Farrar, WHO Assistant Director-General, Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Care. "This new guidance offers practical, evidence-based solutions to protect lives, reduce inequality, and build more resilient workforces in a warming world."

The new report and technical guidance, entitled Climate change and workplace heat stress draws on five decades of research and evidence, highlighting that the health and productivity of workers are severely impacted by rising temperatures. WMO reports that 2024 was the hottest year on record. Daytime temperatures of more than 40°C and even above 50°C are becoming increasingly common, a clear indication that immediate action is needed to address the worsening impact of heat stress on workers worldwide.

SCO SUMMIT 2025 TO BE ATTENDED BY OVER 20 COUNTRIES, LEADERS: PUTIN, MODI AND MORE ON LIST

Diary Times Desk : China is all set to host the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Tianjin. The event, which will be held on August 31, will be attended by the leaders of over 20 countries.

As per China's assistant foreign minister Liu Bin, that the leaders such as Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and more will attend the Tianjin summit.

The summit, scheduled for August 31 and September 1, will also be attended by UN Secretary General António Guterres and the heads of nine other International organisations.

According to the minister, Chinese President Xi Jinping will use the SCO Summit to announce new measures that Beijing will take to support the organisation. He also said that the leaders would sign and release the Tianjin declaration, Reuters reported.

SCO Summit 2025 - Who all are attending?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi - India
- President Vladimir Putin - Russia
- President Xi Jinping - China
- President Masoud Pezeshkian - Iran
- Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar- Pakistan
- President Recep Tayyip Erdogan- Turkey
- Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim- Malaysia
- Secretary General António Guterres- United Nations

PAKISTAN GEARS UP FOR DHAKA RENDEZVOUS WITH BANGLADESH HARDLINERS

Diary Times Desk : India will be closely watching the developments in the neighbourhood this weekend as Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar are scheduled to be in Dhaka for a three-day visit. Although initially scheduled for April this year, the visit was postponed due to the hammering that Pakistan received during Op Sindoor which was launched in the aftermath of the heinous terror attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir. Bangladesh's Interim Government's Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain told Bangladesh Daily Prothom Alo, "Like with many other countries, we are trying to establish a normal relationship with Pakistan, focusing on trade, investment, and facilitating people's movement. In the past, an unnecessary atmosphere of hostility was created. We have moved away from that. But while seeking normal ties, the three unresolved issues remain on the table."Ishaq Dar is scheduled to meet a host of leaders from across the political spectrum in Bangladesh including Chief Adviser of the Interim Government of Bangladesh Muhammad Yunus, Foreign Affairs Advisor Touhid Hossain and Begum Khaleda Zia, Chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and former Prime Minister.

US TO REVIEW ALL 55 MILLION VISAS TO CHECK IF HOLDERS BROKE RULES

Diary Times Desk : The US is reviewing the records of more than 55 million US visa holders to assess if they have broken conditions for entry or stay in the country.

People with US visas will be under "continuous vetting", a state department spokesperson told the Associated Press news agency.

Visas will be revoked if there are indications of "overstays, criminal activity, threats to public safety, engaging in any form of terrorist activity, or providing support to a terrorist organisation", an official said.

President Donald Trump has made anti-immigration the cornerstone of his second administration, from mass deportations and full-on travel bans on countries to revoking 6,000 student visas.

As part of the wide-ranging review, prospective students and visitors to the US will be subjected to social media vetting with officials looking for "any indications of hostility toward the citizens, culture, government, institutions, or founding principles of the United States".

State Department officers have also been instructed to spot individuals "who advocate for, aid, or support designated foreign terrorists and other threats to national security; or who perpetrate unlawful antisemitic harassment or violence".

Matthew Tragesser, a spokesperson from US Citizenship and Immigration Services, said in a statement: "America's benefits should not be given to those who despise the country and promote anti-American ideologies."

HOW A FAILED ONLINE PAYMENT EXPOSED THIS MAN'S EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIR

Diary Times Desk : A Chinese man's attempt to secretly purchase birth control pills backfired after his mobile payment failed, inadvertently exposing his extramarital affair to his wife.

The man visited a pharmacy in Yangjiang, Guangdong province, and tried to pay 15.8 yuan (approximately Rs 200) for contraceptive pills using his mobile payment code. A "system error" prevented the transaction from going through, as per The South China Morning Post.

Pharmacy staff called the phone number linked to his membership card to recover the payment. The call accidentally reached his wife, who asked about the purchase. The staff member confirmed it was for contraceptive pills, immediately revealing the man's affair.

The man claimed the incident destroyed two families and blamed the pharmacy. He submitted a receipt for the medication and a police report issued on August 12 by the Pinggang Police Station under the Gaoxin Branch of the Yangjiang Public Security Bureau.



CHINA AND PAKISTAN AGREE TO LAUNCH NEW ECONOMIC CORRIDOR PROJECTS

Diary Times Desk : Pakistan and China pledged to expand economic cooperation and investment under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship program of China's Belt and Road Initiative, officials said.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with his Pakistani counterpart, Ishaq Dar, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad on Thursday. The two sides agreed to launch new projects through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, a flagship program of the Belt and Road Initiative, a Pakistani government statement said.

The countries did not immediately share details of the proposed projects.

Called "One Belt, One Road" in Chinese, the Belt and Road Initiative has built power plants, roads, railroads and ports around the world and deepened China's relations with Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Mideast. It is a major part of Chinese President Xi Jinping's push for China to play a larger role in global affairs.

Beijing has invested billions of dollars in Pakistan through CPEC, building roads, power plants and rail links to connect China's western Xinjiang region with the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar in southwest Pakistan, where some Chinese have been attacked by insurgents in recent years.

EUROVIEWS. EUROPE KNEELS BEFORE TRUMP IN WASHINGTON

Diary Times Desk : When Volodymyr Zelenskyy returned to the White House this week, he came flanked by an extraordinary entourage: German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Finnish President Alexander Stubb, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte.

One by one, the political heavyweights of Europe crossed the Atlantic to sit alongside Ukraine's president in Donald Trump's Oval Office.

The image was striking, and humiliating. There they sat, arrayed in a semicircle, as if pupils in front of a school principal. The symbolism could not have been clearer: Europe had come not as an equal partner, but as supplicant.

This was not a demonstration of strategic strength, but of Europe's continuing weakness and dependence on the United States. More dangerously, on the whims of a mercurial president who delights in reminding allies of their subordination.

"GATES OF HELL WILL OPEN": ISRAEL'S WARNING TO HAMAS BEFORE GAZA CITY TAKEOVER

Diary Times Desk : Israel's Defence Minister has threatened to destroy Gaza City if Hamas does not agree to disarm, release all remaining hostages in the Palestinian territory and end the war on Tel Aviv's terms. The warning came as the Jewish state prepares for an expanded offensive in the enclave.

"Soon, the gates of hell will open upon the heads of Hamas's murderers and rapists in Gaza - until they agree to Israel's conditions for ending the war, primarily the release of all hostages and their disarmament," Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz posted on social media.

"If they do not agree, Gaza, the capital of Hamas, will become Rafah and Beit Hanoun," he added, referring to two cities in Gaza largely razed during previous Israeli operations.

His remarks came a day after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he would authorise the military to seize Gaza City. Netanyahu has ordered immediate negotiations aimed at freeing all the remaining hostages in Gaza.



PUTIN DEMANDS DONBAS SURRENDER, NO NATO, NO WESTERN TROOPS IN UKRAINE: REPORT

Diary Times Desk : Russian President Vladimir Putin is demanding that Ukraine give up all of the eastern Donbas region, renounce ambitions to join NATO, remain neutral and keep Western troops out of the country, three sources familiar with top-level Kremlin thinking told Reuters.

The Russian president met Donald Trump in Alaska on Friday for the first Russia-U.S. summit in more than four years and spent almost all of their three-hour closed meeting discussing what a compromise on Ukraine might look like, according to the sources who requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Speaking afterwards beside Trump, Putin said the meeting would hopefully open up the road to peace in Ukraine - but neither leader gave specifics about what they discussed.

In the most detailed Russian-based reporting to date on Putin's offer at the summit, Reuters was able to outline the contours of what the Kremlin would like to see in a possible peace deal to end a war that has killed and injured hundreds of thousands of people.

CANADA TO DROP MANY COUNTER-TARIFFS IN OLIVE BRANCH TO TRUMP

Diary Times Desk : Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Friday that his country will drop some of its billions of dollars in retaliatory tariffs on US goods, though it will keep levies on autos, steel and aluminium.

It comes a day after he and President Donald Trump spoke over the phone for the first time since the two countries missed a self-imposed deadline to reach a trade agreement.

Canada had placed a 25% levy on about C\$30bn (£16bn; \$21.7bn) worth of US goods on an array of products, including orange juice and washing machines.

The tax hike was in retaliation to US tariffs on Canada, which as of August are valued at 35% on all goods not compliant with the countries' existing free trade deal.

Carney said Canada will now match the US by ending its tariffs on goods compliant with the US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement (USMCA). He said that would "re-establish free trade for the vast majority" of goods that move between the two countries.

In a statement to the BBC's US news partner CBS, the White House said it welcomes Canada's move, adding that it is "long overdue".

"LOWLIFE, VERY BAD AT WHAT HE DOES": TRUMP'S EXPLOSIVE JAB AT FORMER AIDE JOHN BOLTON

Diary Times Desk : Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents raided the Maryland home of former US National Security Adviser (NSA) John Bolton on Friday, in a high-profile national security investigation ordered by FBI director Kash Patel, per a report by New York Post.

Minutes before the FBI agents swarmed Bolton's home, the former NSA took a jibe at US President Donald Trump. He wrote a post on X, saying that despite Trump's meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, there is no progress on the Ukraine conflict, however, the talks "will continue because Trump wants a Nobel Peace Prize".

However, Trump said that he had no information about the raid on Bolton's house, and only got to know about it through television. He called the former NSA a "lowlife" and a "quiet person" who would only speak on television to say "something bad about Trump".

WORLD REACTS AS UN-BACKED BODY DECLARES FAMINE IN GAZA

Diary Times Desk : Gaza City and surrounding areas are officially suffering from famine, and it will likely spread across the enclave, a United Nations-backed global hunger monitor has said.

On Friday, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system said 514,000 people, close to a quarter of Palestinians in Gaza, are experiencing famine, with the number due to rise to 641,000 by the end of September.

This comes after 22 months of war, during which Israeli forces have destroyed infrastructure and bakeries, blocked the entry of aid into the besieged Strip, and targeted and killed desperate Palestinians seeking food.

This is the first time the IPC has recorded famine outside of Africa, and the global group has predicted that famine conditions would spread to the central and southern areas of Deir el-Balah and Khan Younis by the end of next month.

FORMER SRI LANKA PRESIDENT RANIL WICKREMESINGHE ARRESTED

Diary Times Desk : Former Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe has been arrested and appeared in court over allegations he misused state funds while in office, police say.

Wickremesinghe, 76, who led the country during a devastating 2019-2024 economic crisis, had been investigated over a visit he made to London to attend his wife's graduation, local media reported on Friday.

Police confirmed his arrest for alleged misuse of public funds.

"Former President Ranil Wickremesinghe has been arrested and produced in court. We are awaiting the court directive to decide what further steps need to be taken," a police spokesperson said.

Later on Friday, a court in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo, ordered Wickremesinghe to be held in custody until August 26 when a fresh hearing will be held into the allegations.

Sri Lanka's anticorruption units have led a crackdown since President Anura Kumara Dissanayake came to power in September on a promise to fight corruption.

A Wickremesinghe ally from his United National Party (UNP) proclaimed his innocence and suggested the case was politically motivated.



DAY AFTER CHALLENGING CM MANN, BJP CHIEF JAKHAR LEADS PROTEST IN ABOHAR, DETAINED

Diary Times Desk : Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar led a massive protest on the Abohar-Sitto Gunno Road today — a day after the police cracked down on the party's awareness camps at multiple locations under its outreach programme "BJP De Sewadar, Aa Gaye Tuhade Dwar" and detained party leaders and workers.

The move prompted Jakhar to challenge Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to arrest him for continuing the party's initiative the next day. Today, the police blocked the road at Kala Tibba Toll Plaza to prevent the movement to Raipura village. When hundreds of workers staged a dharna on the road and refused to disperse, the police detained Sunil Jakhar, his nephew and MLA Sandeep Jakhar, former minister Surjit Jyani and others and took them in separate vehicles to police stations.



PUNJAB-ORIGIN DRIVER'S FATAL CRASH PROMPTS US TO HALT TRUCKER VISAS

Diary Times Desk : The United States has stopped issuing work visas for commercial truck drivers, a move that could significantly impact Indian drivers who were hoping to work in the US transportation industry.

The order comes on the heels a tragic accident on Florida's Turnpike on Saturday that claimed lives of three people after a semi-truck driver of Punjab-origin made an illegal U-turn, causing a devastating collision with a passenger van.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced the change on Thursday, saying it takes effect immediately.

The decision affects all nationalities, not targeting any specific country, but will pause the visa process while the US conducts a review of the qualifications and screening procedures for foreign truck drivers.

"The increasing number of foreign drivers operating large trucks on US roads is endangering American lives and undercutting the livelihoods of American truckers," Rubio said on social media.

ONE-YEAR-OLD GIRL FALLS OFF BIKE, CRUSHED BY STRAY ANIMALS

Diary Times Desk : A one-year-old girl was crushed by stray animals after she fell off her father's bike in Dangar Khara village, about 8km from Abohar, today. Witnesses said that Rajesh — who along with his one-year-old daughter, Rehmat, was riding a bike — fell on the road and got injured after being hit by stray animals. The girl child was crushed under the animals' feet and died on the spot. The family of the deceased girl and other villagers have expressed anger against the administration, saying that the problem of stray animals is getting worse day by day. Many people have lost their lives while hundreds became disabled in accidents due to stray animals, but the government was not taking steps against the issue.

FIRE BREAKS OUT AT LPG PLANT ON HOSHIARPUR-JALANDHAR ROAD



Diary Times Desk : A fire broke out at the LPG plant of Hindustan Petroleum at Mandiyala village on the Hoshiarpur-Jalandhar road in Hoshiarpur on Friday night.

According to the residents of nearby villages, a few blasts were heard. The fire was reported by the plant officials to the fire brigade at Hoshiarpur at 10.05 pm. Fire tenders have been rushed to the plant.

The traffic towards the plant was stopped and nobody was allowed to go towards it.

GOVERNMENT WORK SCAM: COMPLAINTS GALORE, PUNJAB POLICE WARN PUBLIC OF DATA THEFT, FINANCIAL FRAUDS

Diary Times Desk : In the last 24 hours, the Punjab Police have received complaints that some people, claiming to be from a particular political party, are not only collecting personal data of individuals, but are also collecting money as commission to get their work done from the government. A Punjab Police spokesperson stated that some citizens had also complained that they had given their bank account numbers to such persons who contacted them, after which their money was siphoned off. The spokesperson added that all such complaints were being examined and strict action would be taken as per law. "We urge the public to stay away from such anti-social elements and not give any personal data to anyone as the same could be misused. People should also not approach any unauthorised person to get their government work done. The government has set up many 'Sewa Kendras' across Punjab. People may approach any 'Sewa Kendra' or any Punjab Government office for their works," he said.

HC SLAMS ELECTION TRIBUNAL'S 'CASUAL APPROACH', DIRECTS PROPER PROCEDURES IN POLL DISPUTES

Diary Times Desk : The Punjab and Haryana High Court has directed the Punjab Chief Secretary to issue proper instructions to all election tribunals across the state "to follow procedure as contemplated under law, while dealing with election disputes".

The direction came as Justice Pankaj Jain castigated Sri Anandpur Sahib Election Tribunal for its "casual approach" while setting aside its "callous" order dismissing a petition arising out of panchayat elections held in October last year. Justice Jain made it clear that the law requires a structured adjudication of election petitions — summons and responses, framing of issues, examination and recording of evidence, and reasoned findings — none of which was followed.

The matter was placed before Justice Jain after Sarbjjeet Kaur filed an appeal against Kamaljit Kaur and other respondents, challenging order dated November 12, 2024, whereby the election tribunal dismissed her election petition.

HEALTH MINISTER INSPECTS FLOOD-HIT SULTANPUR LODHI, ENSURES MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS

Diary Times Desk : Health Minister Dr Balbir Singh today made an intensive tour of the flood-affected areas at Sultanpur Lodhi in Kapurthala, hit by the Beas floods, after having visited the Sultanpur Lodhi Civil Hospital last night. The minister was accompanied by Rajya Sabha MP Balbir Singh Seechewal, Sultanpur Lodhi halka in-charge Sajjan Singh Cheema, along with the Kapurthala Civil Surgeon, SMO, DC, and SSP.

He toured flood-affected areas on a boat, visited homes, and even toured cow sheds in villages. Over 20 villages had been flooded in Sultanpur Lodhi after the temporary bundh broke days ago, hitting the Mand villages Baupur and 16 to 18 others near them. Subsequent breaches in advance bundhs at Mandala Channa also caused additional damage to crop land. A minor breach at Ali Kalan village was also reported today. With the fluctuating water advancing and receding every day — as per rains and waters released from dams — villagers have been fearing infections, allergies.

BJP PROTESTS DELAY IN DA PAYMENT TO GOVERNMENT STAFF, STAGES WALKOUT FROM HIMACHAL ASSEMBLY

Diary Times Desk : BJP legislators staged a protest during the ongoing monsoon session of the Assembly here today over the delay in the payment of pending 11 per cent Dearness Allowances (DA) to government employees.

Una MLA Satpal Singh Satti raised the issue during the Question Hour in the Vidhan Sabha. He said that Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had made an announcement in his Budget speech that DA would be given to the employees soon but it was still pending. Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur and Jaswan MLA Bikram Singh accused the Chief Minister of misleading the House and not honouring his commitment on the payment of DA made during the Budget speech.

Speaker Kuldeep Pathania tried to pacify the Opposition but the BJP legislators started raising slogans and later walked out of the House amidst pandemonium.

Thakur said that the Congress had come to power with the support of the employees and so the state government should pay the pending 11 per cent DA to them.

WILL CONSIDER RELAXING NOC CONDITION FOR FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT IN HOMESTAYS: HIMACHAL CM SUKHVINDER SUKHU

Diary Times Desk : Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today said that the state government would consider giving relaxation in the mandatory condition of no-objection certificates (NOCs) for the installation of fire safety equipment in homestays. Sukhu was replying to a query of Mandali MLA Buvneshwar Gaur, who sought relaxation for homestays being run in old heritage buildings, where it was not possible to install firefighting equipment.

RUCKUS AT CONGRESS MEETING IN SHIMLA; SUPPORTERS TAKE TO SLOGANEERING IN FAVOUR OF CM SUKHU AND VIKRAMADITIYA IN FRONT OF DELHI LEADERS

Diary Times Desk : A massive ruckus took place at the beginning of the Congress meeting ahead of the 'Vote Chor Gaddi Chor' rally in Shimla on Friday.

In the presence of AICC in-charge for Himachal, Ranji Patil, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, HPCC president Pratibha Singh, the party workers resorted to sloganeering.

While one group of the workers raised slogans in favour of the Chief Minister, the other group raised slogans in favour of PWD Minister Vikramaditya Singh.

When the sloganeering did not stop, AICC co-incharge for Himachal Chetan Chauhan had to intervene and ask the party workers to stop sloganeering.



RIISING CANCER CASES IN HIMACHAL RATTLE ASSEMBLY; EXCESSIVE PESTICIDE USE KEY REASON, SAYS CM SUKHU

Diary Times Desk : The Vidhan Sabha today expressed concern over the rising number of cancer cases, with Himachal recording the second-highest incidence after the north eastern states.

Replying to a query by Gagret MLA Rakesh Kalai, Sukhu said it was a matter of concern that Himachal had recorded the second highest number of cancer cases in the country. He said in view of the spike, renowned cancer specialists had been consulted for the setting up of a Rs 300-crore state-of-the-art cancer institute at Hamirpur.

The Chief Minister said efforts were under way to provide treatment in all medical colleges. "The excessive use of pesticides and urea is one of the main reasons for the rising cancer cases in Himachal. Efforts will be made to ensure that there is a check on the sale of sub-standard pesticides," said Sukhu.

While admitting that the equipment in most health institutions was outdated, the CM said the PET scan facility would be made available at the Tanda medical college in Kangra by October, and all other medical colleges in a phased manner.

HIMACHAL SPEAKER SAYS NO NHAI QUESTIONS IN VIDHAN SABHA, DEPT OFF STATE LIMITS

Diary Times Desk : Vidhan Sabha Speaker Kuldeep Pathania on Friday said that no questions pertaining to works being undertaken by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) will be taken up in the Vidhan Sabha as it does not fall under the purview of the state government.

It was during the Question Hour in the Vidhan Sabha that the Speaker gave this ruling.

He said this after a request by Public Works Minister Vikramaditya Singh that questions pertaining to NHAI must not be taken up in the House that the Speaker took this decision. Since NHAI works are being undertaken in the territory of the state, some state agencies must have a say in these matters. We will take up the issue with the Central Government," he said.

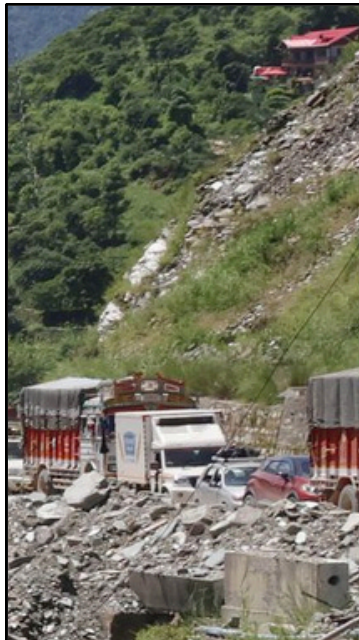
Later, when NHAI road-related issues, including poor-road conditions and traffic jams, were raised by many MLAs during Zero Hour, the Speaker assured the House that he would shortly convene a meeting of the Director General of NHAI, the Director General of Police, and the Chief Secretary to address all issues concerning road.

FARMERS WORRIED OVER BAD CONDITION OF MANDI-KULLU STRETCH OF MANALI HIGHWAY

Diary Times Desk : Farmers from Lahaul-Spiti and Kullu districts have raised serious concern over the bad condition of the Mandi-Kullu stretch of the Kirtapur-Manali four-lane highway, which is adversely affecting the timely transportation of their agricultural and horticultural produce to distant markets. Frequent landslides on this critical route have led to massive traffic disruptions, with jams lasting over 40 hours on multiple occasions this month. This was resulting in decay of perishable goods causing huge financial losses to growers.

Sonam Zangpo, pradhan of Gram Panchayat Keylong, Lahaul-Spiti, told The Tribune that traffic snarls between Kullu and Mandi are causing truckloads of vegetables, particularly cauliflower and peas, to rot in the vehicles. "Due to the long halts caused by landslides, vegetables are decaying causing immense losses to farmers," he said.

The apple growers of Kullu are equally distressed. With peak apple harvesting season underway, they fear their high-value produce may not reach markets on time. Manu Sharma, an apple grower from Manali, and Rajeev Kimta of Kullu stated, "The situation is grim. We urge the Deputy Commissioners of both Mandi and Kullu districts to work in coordination to ensure smoother traffic movement. Apple and vegetable-laden trucks should be given priority in movement. A dedicated mechanism must be put in place to reduce traffic congestion urgently."



African countries into China's hands

Africa is adjusting to the new reality of US President Donald Trump's tariffs, with countries on the continent facing some of the highest export charges.

But what could become a crisis is an opportunity for United States rival China, which has long courted African countries and is now offering them a lifeline.

"We (Africa) are going straight into the hands of China," Nigerian economist Bismarck Rewane told.

"That is the unfortunate outcome," Rewane said of Africa's expected further shift toward China, which has emerged in recent years as the continent's largest bilateral trading partner.

Four African nations - Libya, South Africa, Algeria and Tunisia - face some of the steepest tariffs imposed by the Trump administration, with charges on exports ranging from 25% to 30%.



Nimi Princewill
Thousands of roles are also threatened in Lesotho's richer neighbor, South Africa.

Eighteen other countries from the continent were hit with 15% levies, a modified tariff package released Thursday by the White House showed.

In April, when the US import levies were first announced, Trump pitched them as "reciprocal" and targeting countries that he said had trade deficits with the US. But Trump instead based his tariffs on countries' trade deficits with the United States - not the tariffs they charge.

South Africa, one of the continent's powerhouses, challenged the imposition of a 30% tariff on its US-bound exports, saying Trump's decision was not based on "an accurate representation of available trade data."

An opportunity for China
China has offered to soften the impact of US tariffs on Africa, saying in June it would halt charges on imports for nearly all its African partners.

"There is no other opportunity for African countries to strengthen South-South trade (among developing nations) than now," South African researcher Neo Letswalo told CNN, while urging countries to "solely turn to China and make it the next US."

"America is gradually forfeiting its global leadership status," Letswalo said, adding that the more countries "become less dependent on the US, the greater opportunity for China to become an alternative."
Before the tariff deadline, the US did not make a trade deal with any African nation despite efforts from the continent to avoid the tariffs, underscoring Africa's place on the White House's priority list.

Letswalo described America's failure to negotiate a deal with Africa as "an open goal for China."

The impact of Trump's tariffs is already being felt in some of Africa's most buoyant economies and some of the continent's poorest, such as Lesotho, which was slapped with a 15% tariff. It had previously been hit with a 50% tariff - one of the steepest rates - before the charges were modified.

Lesotho's Prime Minister Samuel Matekane said in June that the huge tariff, combined with the halt of US aid to the nation of just over 2 million people, "have crippled industries that previously sustained thousands of jobs."
Trump has described Lesotho, a landlocked nation surrounded by South Africa, as a country "nobody has ever heard of" - even though trade between the US and Lesotho totaled over \$240 million last year, mostly in textiles.
Before the tariffs, Lesotho benefited from a US trade agreement that allowed it and other eligible sub-Saharan countries to export goods to the US duty-free.

'immediate negotiations' Israel advances Gaza City



Mitchell McCluskey
Two Israeli sources say that Netanyahu is managing the developments under tight secrecy and confidentiality.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he has ordered negotiations for the release of all hostages and an end to the war in Gaza "on terms acceptable to Israel."

The Israel military still intends to advance plans to take control of Gaza City, Netanyahu said.

The Israeli leader's remarks came in a video recorded on Thursday, ahead of a high-level security meeting Netanyahu convened with defense chiefs and cabinet ministers focused on approving the operational plans to take Gaza City and "decisively defeat Hamas."

A spokesperson for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said the Israeli military is already on the outskirts of Gaza City, and local residents told on Friday that the city was under under shelling all night. Multiple casualties have been reported, including several children killed in a strike on a school.

Netanyahu stressed that Israel is now at a critical juncture. "We are at the decisive stage," he said, underlining that "defeating Hamas and securing the release of all hostages go hand in hand."



At the same time, Netanyahu refrained from making any official reference to the mediators' proposal, leaving open the possibility of a partial agreement.

This is the first time Netanyahu has publicly addressed the Gaza war ceasefire talks since Hamas responded positively earlier this week to the latest proposal put forth by mediators from Qatar and Egypt.

Still, the Israeli prime minister did not say to whom he had given the order to start immediate negotiations and avoided referring to the current proposal framework, which begins with a 60-day ceasefire during which half of the remaining Israeli hostages are to be released.

Israeli officials believe that 50 hostages remain in Gaza, at least 20 of whom are thought to be alive.

In his recent public statements and official briefings, Netanyahu has emphasized that Israel is seeking a comprehensive agreement that would secure the release of all hostages and meet Israel's conditions for ending the war. He continues to push forward plans for a massive assault on Gaza City.

The humanitarian situation in the city - the largest in northern Gaza - is already dire.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a UN-backed program, said on Friday that famine has been confirmed in the Gaza Governorate, which includes Gaza City.

Meanwhile, deadly strikes continue on daily basis. At least 18 Palestinians, including several children, have been killed in a series of Israeli strikes against a school in the city on Friday morning, according to Fares Afana, who heads the emergency services in northern Gaza.

He told CNN that the Omar Ibn Al-A'as school, which has been used as a shelter for displaced people, was targeted by artillery fire.

"The school yard was packed with tents and residents, many of which are women and children," Afana told CNN.

Israel has called up tens of thousands of reservists to take part in the impending military operation.

"We are at the stage of decision," Netanyahu said in a video address.

INFA

best city

20-SOMETHINGS, ACCORDING TO TIME OUT



Maureen O'Hare

with lots of things to see and do that are both fun and free. Its diverse gastronomic offerings are also a hit with young people; 95% rated the food scene highly.

Cape Town is the best city in the world, says Time Out - unless that is, you're under 30.

The publishing giant, famous for its best-of lists of everything from cool streets to foodie destinations, has released its first-ever "best cities" list tailored to young people, and it's notably different from the multigenerational ranking shared earlier this year.

In January, its annual survey of more than 18,500 city-dwellers worldwide crowned the South African metropolis the best city for 2025, followed by Bangkok, New York and Melbourne. However, filtering the same data to responses from the under-30s - so that's the Gen Z cohort, ages 13 to 28, plus baby millennials - paints a different picture.

The Thai capital grabs the No. 1 spot for 2025 with youthful residents, who scored it highly for happiness, affordability and as a great place to meet new people. Young urbanites here were more likely than under-30s anywhere else to rate their city as an ideal environment to make friends.

That's on top of Bangkok's many other assets, of course. Thailand's capital "checks every box for a great city: famously

friendly, culturally rich, and packed with iconic sites like Wat Arun and the Grand Palace," Time Out said in January.

Melbourne was No. 2 on the under-30s list, two places higher than on the multigenerational ranking. Nearly four in five young Melburnians described their city as diverse and inclusive and an impressive 96% praised its art and culture scene. More than nine in 10 also said Melbourne's quality of life is "good" or "amazing."

The Australian city is also home to Time Out's coolest thoroughfare for 2024, Melbourne High Street, which editor Leah Glynn commended at the time for its "epic restaurants, hidden bars, live music venues and boutique shops."

Cape Town made it to No. 3 on the under-30 list, scoring particularly high for beauty - the coastal city is overlooked by the breathtaking Table Mountain - and cheap nights out. Three out of four young people say that going out for drinks there is affordable.

New York City, at No. 4, was the most likely city to be described as "exciting" by its younger residents, says Time Out. It was also praised for its walkability and, unsurprisingly for the city

that never sleeps, its nightlife.

Copenhagen was at No. 10 in the multigenerational rankings, but climbs to No. 5 when filtering for the under-30s. The Danish capital "prioritises good food, good people, and looking after each other," Time Out said in January, but it seems it also ranks highly for finding someone special to look after, too. More than half of young people said it was an easy place to find love.

Barcelona was another favorite with young people, placing at No. 17 in the overall list, but earning a No. 6 ranking with Gen Z and the youngest millennials. The buzzy seaside metropolis is famous for its nightlife, but the city is also tied with Melbourne for the highest rating for diversity and inclusivity. An impressive 77% of young residents gave its diversity credentials the thumbs up.

Edinburgh is at No. 7 on the under-30 list, thanks to its walkability, green spaces and access to nature. Nearly 95% of young people loved its opportunities for green-space action, making it the highest-ranked city in this category.

Mexico City, at No. 8, is the second-most affordable place for Gen Z to live, after Bangkok, with 69% scoring it highly for affordability - surely one of the most important criteria for young urbanites at the start of their careers. It's also the fourth-happiest city for 2025 across all generations, with 96% of respondents saying they're happy in their city.

Young Londoners don't rate their city highly for affordability; only 45% agree that it's easy on the wallet. However, the UK capital makes it to No. 9 on the under-30s list thanks to its excellent cultural scene.

RUBEN AMORIM 'GIVES UP' ON £34M MAN UNITED TRANSFER PURSUIT AS DEAL PLANNED

Diary Times Desk : Manchester United have been handed a blow in their pursuit of Morten Hjulmand following a recent approach, according to reports in Portugal.

After deciding against pursuing a deal at this time for Carlos Baleba following Brighton & Hove Albion's valuation in excess of £100million, United have looked at alternative options. One of those options was Hjulmand, having worked with Ruben Amorim at Sporting Clube de Portugal.

Italian media previously reported that United had sent a £34million bid for his services. Now, Portuguese newspaper Correio da Manhã (via Sport Witness) have provided an update on Hjulmand's future, claiming that United's move was blocked by Sporting. It's said that Sporting president Frederico Varandas is determined not to let Hjulmand leave for United or any other club. He is highly valued by the club as a key player and leader in Rui Borges' squad.



TEARS TO TRIUMPH AS EZE NEARS ARSENAL RETURN

Diary Times Desk : For many of those young players, that rejection is the end of their football dream. Not, however, for the resilient Eze.

Following multiple failed trials and subsequent spells at Queens Park Rangers and Crystal Palace, the playmaker looks set to come home 14 years later – as an England international – in a £60m move.

"I know so many people who got released from one club, got released from Arsenal, and that was it – they stopped playing," Eze told BBC Sport in May, days before scoring Palace's winner in the FA Cup final against Manchester City. "The fact I am in this position, I can only say 'God, thank you' because I could be anywhere doing anything." Eze was at Arsenal, the club he supported, for four years from the age of nine. "Arsenal was everything," he said. "Just to play there, to go in with the Arsenal badge and be the kid who plays for Arsenal, was special. "Afterwards it became difficult. As a kid your identity is almost wrapped up in that. When you don't have it..." After Arsenal, Eze had spells in the youth set-ups at Fulham, Reading and Millwall.

CHELSEA FANS' PREFERRED LINEUP AGAINST WEST HAM UNITED: ESTÊVÃO PLEASE!

Diary Times Desk : The WAGNH Community have spoken, and the name on everyone's lips is "Estêvão". Well, three-quarters of everyone: 75 per cent. That's still a supermajority! The remaining votes were split between Jamie Gittens (22%) and Tyrique George (2%). The people have spoken! Enzo Maresca has already hinted at making that change, and he's also suggested that Tosin Adarabioyo will get the start now that he's back to fitness, ahead of Josh Acheampong. The WAGNH Community agree here, too, with Tosin winning the battle by a margin of 57-47.

The rest of the lineup is as per usual, though Enzo Fernández barely clocks in at 72 per cent after his rather subpar showing on Sunday. Andrey Santos (30%) is just waiting for his opportunity!

Sánchez (94%) | Cucurella (97%), Tosin (57%), Chalobah (90%), James (91%) | Enzo (72%), Caicedo (98%) | Estêvão (75%), Palmer (99%), Neto (82%) | João Pedro (73%) Of those not mentioned, Liam Delap got a respectable 37% while Malo Gusto collected 11%. Everyone else was in the single digits, including Nicolas Jackson at 3%.



SENNE LAMMENS TRANSFER NEWS: MAN UTD IN TALKS TO SIGN ROYAL ANTWERP GOALKEEPER IN DEAL WORTH £17.3M

Diary Times Desk : As has been the case for months, the Cowboys and Micah Parsons are at a standstill in contract negotiations for an extension. Back in March, Cowboys owner and general manager Jones told reporters that he and Parsons had spoken and gone over the terms of the contract in what he believed was a negotiation. In a recent interview with Cowboys Hall of Famer Michael Irvin on his YouTube channel, Jones reiterated that an offer was on the table, but was then taken off because Parsons' agent, David Mulugheta, was not involved. "Micah and I talked, and then we were going to send it over to the agent. We had our agreements on term, amounts, guarantees, everything," Jones said. "We were going to send it over to the agent, and the agent said 'Don't bother, because we've got all that to negotiate.'" "Well, I had already negotiated. I had already moved off my mark on several areas. And so the issue very frankly is we've had the negotiation in my mind, and the agent's trying to get his nose in it right now and try to come in there and improve off the market we had already set." And that wasn't the only thing that Jones claims Mulugheta said to him when he sent over the terms he and Parsons had discussed.

BLOCKBUSTER 'SINCARAZ' RIVALRY READY TO LIGHT UP US OPEN

Diary Times Desk : Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz will be aiming to write another chapter of their blockbuster rivalry when the US Open men's singles gets under way on Sunday. As the era of men's tennis's "Big Three" recedes into the rearview mirror, Sinner and Alcaraz have accelerated onto centre-stage to fill the void created by the retirements of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal and the decline of Novak Djokovic. In their five meetings in Grand Slams so far, Sinner and Alcaraz have produced encounters that have been every bit as memorable as anything Federer, Nadal and Djokovic served up.

This season, Alcaraz drew first blood with a spellbinding 4-6, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (10/2) victory over Sinner to claim the French Open title in June. Sinner then hit back to claim the Wimbledon final last month, defeating Alcaraz in four sets, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

SERENA WILLIAMS LOSES 14 KG USING GLP-1 DRUG; SAYS IT WAS NEVER A SHORTCUT: 'I'D NEVER GO BACK'

Diary Times Desk : Serena Williams recently confessed that she has been taking GLP-1 medications to lose weight in a bid to be more transparent about her fitness journey and weight loss. The tennis legend told TODAY that she has been taking a medication prescribed to her by Ro to help her with weight loss, and she's down 31 pounds. In an August 21 interview with TODAY, Serena Williams talked about taking weight loss GLP-1 medication and losing 31 pounds/14.06 kg approximately. "This all started after I had my (first) kid. As a woman, you go through different cycles in your life... No matter what I did – running, walking, I would walk for hours because they say that's good, I literally was playing a professional sport – and I could never go back to where I needed to be for my health. Then, after my second kid, it just got even harder. So then I was like, OK, I have to try something different," the tennis champion confessed. Though she often works out at the gym and posts about her fitness on social media, Serena highlighted that after she started taking the medication, she saw its positive impact on her health, including improved blood sugar levels and her joints feeling 'lighter'. "A misconception is that it [GLP-1 medicine] is a shortcut. As an athlete and as someone who has done everything, I just couldn't get my weight to where I needed to be at a healthy place – and believe me, I don't take shortcuts," she adds.