

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**RAIN LASHES  
PARTS OF DELHI,  
MORE SHOWERS  
PREDICTED FOR  
NEXT 2 DAYS****Diary Times Desk :**

Rain lashed several parts of Delhi and the surrounding National Capital Region (NCR) on Saturday evening. Areas including Lajpat Nagar, RK Puram, Lodhi Road, and Mandir Marg witnessed light showers. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), today's sky will be mostly overcast in Delhi, with one or two periods of light to moderate rain or thundershowers in numerous locations. In isolated places, an intense period may occur in the afternoon or forenoon. "There is a risk of light to moderate rain or thundershowers throughout the next two days, after another period of very light to light rain is anticipated in the early hours of Sunday," as per the Met Department.

**RS 12 CRORE  
CASH, CARS WITH  
SAME VIP  
NUMBERS:  
CONGRESS MLA  
ARRESTED IN  
BETTING RACKET**

**Diary Times Desk :** Karnataka Congress MLA K C Veerendra 'Puppy' was arrested from Sikkim in an alleged illegal betting racket after the Enforcement Directorate carried out a two-day search operation across India on Saturday. The investigation revealed a huge illegal betting network, including links to international casinos and gaming operations in Dubai. The raids were carried out in many states, including Sikkim, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Goa, on August 22 and 23. The probe agency officials targeted five casinos in Goa - Puppy's Casino Gold, Ocean Rivers Casino, Puppy's Casino Pride, Ocean 7 Casino and Big Daddy Casino. According to the probe agency, the Congress MLA was running multiple betting websites such as 'King567' and 'Raja567', while his brother K C Thippeswamy operated three Dubai-based entities linked to call centre services and gaming operations. Investigators also recovered multiple international casino membership cards from MGM, Bellagio, Metropolitan, Marina and Casino Jewel, along with luxury.

**PM  
MODI****PM MODI, ISRO UNVEIL INDIA'S AMBITIOUS  
SPACE PLAN: CHANDRAYAAN 4, SPACE STATION  
BY 2035**

**Diary Times Desk :** ISRO on Friday unveiled an ambitious roadmap for India's space programme, announcing plans for a Bharatiya Antriksh Station (BAS) by 2035, a Moon sample return mission by 2040, and a series of pathbreaking missions over the next two decades.

ISRO chairman V Narayanan, speaking on National Space Day, said: "Based on the Prime Minister's vision, we are going to have Chandrayaan-4 and a Venus Orbiter Mission. By 2028, we will launch the first module of BAS, which will be fully operational by 2035." He added that work on a Next Generation Launcher (NGL) has also been approved. "By 2040, India will not only land on the Moon but also bring samples back safely. At that point, our space programme will be at par with any leading space agency in the world."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who addressed scientists and students on the occasion, said India's achievements have given it a unique standing in global space exploration. "Achieving new milestones one after another in the space sector has become the nature of India and Indian scientists," PM Modi said. "Just two years ago, India created history by becoming the first country to reach the South Pole of the Moon. We have reached the Moon and Mars, and now we have to take a peek into deep space."

The Prime Minister recalled his recent interaction with Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who hoisted the tricolour aboard the International Space Station. "The moment when he showed me the tricolour is beyond words," PM Modi said. "In him, I saw the immense courage and infinite dreams of New India's youth. To take these dreams forward, we are preparing India's own astronaut pool, and I invite young friends to join and give wings to India's aspirations." He also highlighted India's progress in semi-cryogenic engines and electric propulsion technologies, and praised initiatives like the Indian Space Hackathon and Robotics Challenge to inspire the next generation.

**PM SAID NO TO PROTECTION FOR HIM IN BILL TO SACK  
MINISTERS: KIREN RIJJU**

**Diary Times Desk :** Union Minister Kiren Rijju on Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi refused to accept an exemption for himself in a proposed bill that would require the removal of a prime minister, chief ministers and ministers who remain in custody for 30 consecutive days on serious criminal charges.

Mr Rijju said that during cabinet discussions, there was a suggestion that the Prime Minister should be excluded from the provision, but PM Modi declined.

"PM Modi told the cabinet that the recommendation is to keep the prime minister out of this bill, but he disagreed. PM Modi refused to give an exception to the prime minister. The PM is also a citizen, and he should not have special protection. Most of the Chief Ministers are from our party. If our people make mistakes, they will have to quit their posts. Ethics should also mean something. The Opposition would have welcomed this bill had they kept ethics at the centre," Mr Rijju said, as quoted by news agency ANI. The remarks came after the Centre introduced three bills earlier this week -- the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2025, the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirtieth Amendment) Bill, 2025, and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2025. Together, the bills propose that if the prime minister, any Union minister, or a state chief minister is arrested and detained in custody for at least 30 days in relation to an offence carrying a minimum five-year jail term, the person will automatically lose office on the 31st day.

**JAISHANKAR'S DIG AT US-PAK  
RELATIONS: 'THEY HAVE A HISTORY  
OF OVERLOOKING THEIR HISTORY'**

**Diary Times Desk :** External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Saturday took a jibe at the relations between Pakistan and the United States, saying that the two countries have a history of overlooking their history. During an interaction at The Economic Times World Leaders Forum 2025, Jaishankar also recalled the capture of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden from Pakistan's Abbottabad.

"They (US and Pakistan) have a history with each other, and they have a history of overlooking their history... It is the same military that went into Abbottabad (in Pakistan) and found who there?," Jaishankar said. He also underlined that India does not accept any third-party mediations in its relations with Pakistan.

On the issue of mediating (India-Pak conflict), since the 1970s, for more than 50 years now, there's a national consensus in this country that we do not accept mediation in our relations with Pakistan," the external affairs minister said at the interaction. On India-US ties, Jaishankar said talks were ongoing despite tensions over tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump. "We are two big countries, as I say, the lines are not cut, people are talking to each other, and we will see where it goes," he added. Pakistan and the US have experienced a resurgence in their ties after several years of a stressful relationship. Earlier this month, Pakistan Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir made his second trip to the US, where he held high-level interactions with political and military leaders.

**ANOTHER U-TURN IN KARNATAKA MASS  
BURIAL CASE, WOMAN BLAMES YOUTUBER**

**Diary Times Desk :** Sujata Bhat, an elderly woman in Karnataka, had claimed her daughter went missing in Dharmasthala, a small village in Dakshin Kannada district at the centre of a mass burial controversy. Weeks later, she backtracked and told a YouTuber that her daughter, MBBS student Ananya Bhat, never existed. Now, in another U-turn, she has told NDTV that she was forced to make the false claim by the YouTuber.

"It's true, I have a daughter. The YouTube channel made me say that (false claim) forcibly," she said when asked why she earlier denied having a daughter.

The Dharmasthala "mass burial" case is no stranger to unexpected developments. This is rather the second boomerang in the case since morning, after the arrest of the man who had brought the matter to light.

The controversy erupted last month with a man making an explosive claim about mass burials in the village. CN Chinnayya, alias Chenna, had approached the police, saying he was forced to bury hundreds of bodies, including young women who were sexually assaulted, and asserted he was ready to become a witness if he was given protection. Earlier known as a 'masked man' who appeared in public only with a mask, his identity was revealed only today, after he was arrested over what the police claimed were false and fabricated claims during his interrogation. Chenna had earlier recorded his statement with the magistrate, but the Special Investigation Team (SIT) wasn't convinced. During his cross-questioning based on their findings, the SIT found he had been lying. Then they took off his witness protection and arrested him for perjury.

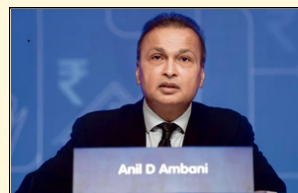
**USA TARIFF****S JAISHANKAR'S STRONG  
'DON'T BUY IT' MESSAGE 4  
DAYS BEFORE TRUMP TARIFF  
DEADLINE FOR INDIA**

**Diary Times Desk :** External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Saturday sharply reacted to the United States' 25 per cent extra tariff on Indian goods for purchasing Russian crude oil, calling the move "unjustified and unreasonable".

Jaishankar also said trade negotiations with Washington are continuing, but there are lines that New Delhi needs to defend, just days before hefty additional US tariffs are due to hit.

Indian goods face additional US tariffs of up to 50 per cent, among the highest imposed by Washington, due to its increased purchases of Russian oil. A 25 per cent tariff has already come into effect, while the remaining 25 per cent is set to be enforced from August 27. Jaishankar pointed out the contradiction in the West's stance, saying Europe trades far more with Russia than India does.

"And when people say we are funding the war and putting the money, Russia-European trade is bigger than India-Russia trade. So, European money is not putting coffers? The overall Russia-EU trade is bigger than the Russia-India trade. If the argument is energy, they (EU) are bigger buyers. If the argument is who is the bigger trader, they are bigger than us. India's exports to Russia have grown, but not that much," he added. Jaishankar also hit out at criticism of India's continued imports of Russian crude and refined products.

**CBI RAIDS PREMISES LINKED TO  
ANIL AMBANI IN RS 2,000  
CRORE BANK FRAUD CASE:  
SOURCES**

**Diary Times Desk :** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday raided premises linked to Reliance Communications (RCOM) and its Promoter Director, Anil Ambani, in connection with an alleged bank fraud that caused a loss of over Rs 2,000 crore to the State Bank of India (SBI), sources said.

The searches were conducted at six locations linked to RCom and the 66-year-old businessman in Mumbai. Today's searches, sources said, are aimed at gathering crucial documents and digital evidence to establish how bank funds were misused and whether loans were diverted.

The agency has also registered a case against RCom for causing losses of over Rs 2,000 crore to SBI, sources said.

The SBI had classified RCOM and Mr Ambani as "fraud" on June 13 and sent a report to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on June 24. As per RBI guidelines, after a bank classifies an account as "fraud", the lender should then report it to the RBI within 21 days of detection and also report the case to the CBI or police.

FROM BULLOCK CARTS TO MOON LANDING: NCERT  
LAUNCHES SPECIAL MODULES ON INDIA'S SPACE JOURNEY

**Diary Times Desk :** National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has released special modules on India's space programme, tracing the country's rise from carrying rockets on bicycles and bullock carts in the 1960s to emerging as one of the world's most cost-efficient space powers with landmark missions such as Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya-L1.

The modules, India: A Rising Space Power, have been designed with photographs, diagrams and timelines to help students understand the country's space journey.

It highlights how the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), set up in 1962 under Vikram Sarabhai, grew into the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which went on to script achievements that have placed India among leading spacefaring nations.

"Our missions are low-cost and simple but high-tech and robust designs; self-reliant in most of its space programmes; these are synergetic and focused," the module notes, summing up ISRO's approach to space exploration.

The two modules-- one catering to middle-stage students and the other to secondary students-- pays tribute to India's astronauts, Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma, who became the first Indian to travel to space in 1984 on a Soviet mission, and Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who in June 2025 became the first Indian to stay at the International Space Station (ISS).

It recalls the launch of Aryabhata in 1975, India's first satellite, and the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), which brought television to villages across India.

The early days are contrasted with present-day feats such as Chandrayaan-3's historic south pole landing in 2023, which made India the first nation to touch down in that region of the Moon.

'MODI REFUSED EXCEPTION FOR PM': KIREN RIJITU ON BILLS  
FOR REMOVAL OF MINISTERS

**Diary Times Desk :** Union minister Kiren Rijitu on Saturday revealed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi refused an exemption for himself as the government framed the bills regarding the removal of PM, CM and ministers if they are jailed for serious offences.

Rijitu said that PM Modi told the Cabinet that it has been recommended that the prime minister be kept out of the ambit of the bills, but he added that he does not agree with the recommendation.

"PM Modi told the cabinet that the recommendation is to keep the prime minister out of this bill, but he did not agree.



GREATER NOIDA WOMAN SET ABLAZE IN FRONT OF SON, HUSBAND  
WANTED ₹36L DOWRY: SHOCKING DETAILS EMERGE

**Diary Times Desk :** A woman was physically assaulted by her husband and in-laws before allegedly being set on fire in a ghastly incident in Greater Noida. The woman died while on her way to a hospital in Delhi on Thursday.

The victim, identified as Nikki, was married to Vipin and the family lived in Greater Noida's Sirsa village. The couple got married in 2016 and the torture began over dowry six months ago, according to a report in NDTV.

A video has surfaced on social media showing the husband and his family assaulting the woman. The footage also shows her set ablaze and sitting on the floor.

Ever since the incident surfaced, several shocking details have emerged of the crime:

- The woman was allegedly set ablaze in front of her minor son. The boy has said that his mother was slapped before being set on fire using a lighter. The police have arrested the husband.
- Several reports claimed that the woman was set ablaze after her family failed to give ₹36 lakh in dowry. The elder sister, who was married in the same family, claimed that Nikki was burnt was she failed to get the dowry amount.
- The woman was first rushed to Fortis Hospital by the neighbours. She was later shifted to Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi. But the victim succumbed to the burn injuries on way to the hospital.



PRESSURE BUILDS, KERALA CONGRESS  
MLA ACCUSED OF MISCONDUCT  
REFUSES TO RESIGN

**Diary Times Desk :** Having stepped down as the Kerala Youth Congress president following allegations of misconduct against women Palakkad MLA Rahul Mamkootathil is now facing growing calls for resigning from the state Assembly as well. The controversy, which began with a social media post, has now snowballed into a full-blown political crisis with leaked audio clips, WhatsApp chats and fresh testimony adding to Mamkootathil's troubles.

The latest trigger was an audio clip, aired on Thursday by a television channel, in which a male voice, purportedly Mamkootathil's, is heard pressuring a woman to undergo an abortion. The woman, resisting the demand, asserts that she loves her unborn child and can raise it independently, without seeking his support.

The male voice counters that the pregnancy would "destroy" his life and is even heard saying, "To kill you, what do you think, I just need a few seconds."

**YOUR HOROSCOPE**  
24-08-2025

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.



LUCKNOW GEARS UP FOR SPACE HERO SHUBHANSHU'S HOMECOMING

**Diary Times Desk :** LUCKNOW The city is preparing to accord a grand welcome to Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who is scheduled to arrive in his hometown on August 25 for the first time after the historic mission to the International Space Station. Mayor Sushma Kharkwal, the first citizen of Lucknow, along with corporators and Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC) officials, will receive him at the airport.

Shukla is the first Indian astronaut to travel to the International Space Station (ISS). He, along with other fellow astronauts, returned to Earth last month after his 20-day space sojourn as part of Axiom Mission 4.

In a meeting on Friday, the LMC decided to celebrate the astronaut's return from space with city-wide festivities. To mark the historic moment, welcome gates will be set up at prominent locations across Lucknow, giving citizens an opportunity to share the pride of the city's connection with India's space achievements, said Kharkwal.

BOY, 14, DETAINED FOR 10-YEAR-OLD GIRL'S MURDER IN HYDERABAD: COPS

**Diary Times Desk :** A 14-year-old boy murdered a 10-year-old girl when the latter caught him trying to steal a cricket bat, police said.

Five days after the sensational murder of the girl at her house in the Kukatpally area, Cyberabad Police solved the mystery with the arrest of the minor boy, a student of 10th class.

Cyberabad Police Commissioner Avinash Mohanty announced the breakthrough in the case at a press conference on Saturday.

Police said the boy brutally stabbed the victim multiple times when she caught him attempting to steal her brother's cricket bat.

The girl was found murdered when she was alone at her house on August 18. Despite a thorough investigation, including scanning of CCTV footage from the neighbourhood, police found no clue of any suspect entering the house.

However, working on a clue gathered during the questioning of one of the residents in the apartment building, police zeroed in on the suspect, who confessed to the crime.

The boy, a neighbour of the victim, had entered the building through the terrace and barged into the victim's house to steal a cricket bat belonging to the victim's younger brother. As the girl caught her stealing the bat and raised an alarm, the boy picked up the knife and stabbed her.

COMMERCE MINISTER URGES TRADERS TO SELL MADE-IN-INDIA GOODS, REJECT FOREIGN GOODS



**Diary Times Desk :** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday (August 23, 2025) urged traders to focus on 'Made in India' and reject foreign goods.

The Minister, however, did not make any direct reference to the issue of the United State imposed tariffs or the pause in the trade negotiations between the two countries.

Speaking at the Entrepreneurship and Traders Leadership summit on 'One Nation, One Election', Mr. Goyal urged the traders to carry the message of Aatmanirbhar Bharat [self-reliant India] to the youth.

"We should all stand with Prime Minister Narendra Modi shoulder to shoulder, whether it is about making the election process clean or carrying the message of Aatmanirbhar Bharat to the youth or as traders, by selling Made in India goods and rejecting foreign goods. Our families should reject them," Mr. Goyal said.

ED RAIDS 'ILLEGAL' CALL CENTRE OPERATIVES IN NCR WHO DUPED US NATIONALS OF RS 130 CR

**Diary Times Desk :** The Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Gurugram Zonal Office, carried out search operations at seven locations in Gurugram and New Delhi under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in connection with an alleged money laundering investigation related to illegal call centre scam.

ED's probe was initiated based on an FIR registered by Central Bureau of Investigation, IOD, Delhi, under various sections of IPC, 1860 and Information Technology Act, 2000 which inter-alia alleged that unknown accused persons, in criminal conspiracy, have been operating illegal call centers from the national capital and adjoining the areas to target victims, mainly US nationals, and subjecting them to tech-fraud during November 2022 to April 2024.

ED's investigation so far revealed that the accused persons namely Arjun Gulati, Divyansh Goel and Abhinav Kalra were allegedly involved.

S JAISHANKAR'S STRONG 'DON'T BUY IT' MESSAGE 4 DAYS BEFORE TRUMP TARIFF DEADLINE FOR INDIA

**Diary Times Desk :** External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Saturday sharply reacted to the United States' 25 per cent extra tariff on Indian goods for purchasing Russian crude oil, calling the move "unjustified and unreasonable".

Jaishankar also said trade negotiations with Washington are continuing, but there are lines that New Delhi needs to defend, just days before hefty additional US tariffs are due to hit.

Indian goods face additional US tariffs of up to 50 per cent, among the highest imposed by Washington, due to its increased purchases of Russian oil. A 25 per cent tariff has already come into effect, while the remaining 25 per cent is set to be enforced from August 27.

Jaishankar pointed out the contradiction in the West's stance, saying Europe trades far more with Russia than India does.

"And when people say we are funding the war and putting the money, Russia-European trade is bigger than India-Russia trade. So, European money is not putting coffers? The overall Russia-EU trade is bigger than the Russia-India trade. If the argument is energy, they (EU) are bigger buyers. If the argument is who is the bigger trader, they are bigger than us. India's exports to Russia have grown, but not that much," he added.

A planned visit by US trade negotiators to New Delhi from August 25-29 has been called off, dashing hopes that the levies may be lowered or postponed.

RS 12 CRORE CASH, CARS WITH SAME VIP NUMBERS: CONGRESS MLA ARRESTED IN BETTING RACKET

**Diary Times Desk :** Karnataka Congress MLA K C Veerendra 'Puppy' was arrested from Sikkim in an alleged illegal betting racket after the Enforcement Directorate carried out a two-day search operation across India on Saturday. The investigation revealed a huge illegal betting network, including links to international casinos and gaming operations in Dubai.

The raids were carried out in many states, including Sikkim, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Goa, on August 22 and 23. The probe agency officials targeted five casinos in Goa - Puppy's Casino Gold, Ocean Rivers Casino, Puppy's Casino Pride, Ocean 7 Casino and Big Daddy Casino.

According to the probe agency, the Congress MLA was running multiple betting websites such as 'King567' and 'Raja567', while his brother K C Thippeswamy operated three Dubai-based entities linked to call centre services and gaming operations. Investigators also recovered.

MASSIVE TWIST IN DHARMASTHALA MASS BURIALS CASE AS 'WHISTLEBLOWER' ARRESTED FOR PERJURY

**Diary Times Desk :** In a massive twist, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Dharmasthala mass burial allegations in Karnataka has arrested the former sanitation worker on whose complaint the probe was launched in the temple town, about 300 kilometres from Bengaluru. A senior police officer in the know confirmed the alleged whistleblower's arrest to ThePrint, adding that he was sent for a subsequent medical check-up and then being produced before a local court.

"It is on the same complaint that he has given. In his own complaint, he was arrested for perjury for lying under oath," said the officer, requesting anonymity. The allegation by the former sanitation worker sent shockwaves across the state as it pointed towards one of the most powerful, wealthy and politically influential families in the state—that of Rajya Sabha MP Veerendra Heggade, who is the chief administrator (Dharmadhikari) of the Dharmasthala temple.

## PUTIN OPTIMISTIC ABOUT RUSSIA-US RELATIONS AS TRUMP THREATENS SANCTIONS

**Diary Times Desk :** Russian President Vladimir Putin says there is "light at the end of the tunnel" in Russia-United States relations, while US President Donald Trump renewed a threat to impose sanctions on Moscow if there is no progress towards a peaceful settlement in Ukraine in two weeks.

The Russian president, answering questions during a visit to a nuclear research centre on Friday, said he was sure Trump's leadership qualities would help in restoring relations from recent lows.

"With the arrival of President Trump, I think that a light at the end of the tunnel has finally loomed. And now we had a very good, meaningful and frank meeting in Alaska," Putin said, referring to last week's summit.

"The next steps now depend on the leadership of the United States, but I am confident that the leadership qualities of the current president, President Trump, are a good guarantee that relations will be restored."

Putin also said the two countries were discussing joint projects in the Arctic, but he did not give any details.

## IS A CLEAN RECORD NOT ENOUGH? WHAT TRUMP'S NEW US CITIZENSHIP RULES DEMAND OF IMMIGRANTS

**Diary Times Desk :** For decades, immigrants seeking to become American citizens have had to demonstrate "good moral character." Traditionally, this meant avoiding serious crimes such as murder, aggravated felonies, or repeat drunk-driving convictions. But the Trump administration has now dramatically expanded the standard, ordering officers to go beyond the absence of wrongdoing and assess an applicant's entire life, from community ties to social media activity.

The new directive from the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is part of President Donald Trump's wider second-term agenda to restrict both legal and illegal immigration. While the agency says the changes ensure citizenship goes only to the "best of the best," immigration experts.

## REASONS WHY TRUMP'S NOBEL CHASE REMAINS A PIPE DREAM

**Diary Times Desk :** While the second government of US President Donald Trump looks completely different from the first one, there has been one thing that has remained constant in both terms: His dream to win a Nobel Peace Prize. Even before he became the President of the United States for the first time, Trump had been eyeing a Nobel.

He was critical of US President Barack Obama winning the award, just one year after he assumed the White House. When it was his time, Trump often claimed that he was one of the best contenders for the prestigious award.

In his second term, Trump and his White House outrightly expressed his Nobel ambition, frequently claiming that the Potus has ended seven global conflicts. However, one thing which even the sceptics pointed out was the fact that Trump was unable to swiftly end two of the biggest wars gripping the world right now: the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas war.

## FRUSTRATED, TRUMP SIGNALS PAUSE IN HIS UKRAINE PEACE EFFORT



**Diary Times Desk :** President Donald Trump is signaling that he would step back for now from efforts to reach a Ukraine peace deal, expressing frustration over rising casualties and the failure of the two sides to come closer to a peace agreement. "I'm not happy about anything about that war. Nothing. Not happy at all," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office on Friday.

He added that he would make an important decision about the future of the conflict in "two weeks," a phrase that he often uses not to specify a precise time frame, but to indicate that he wants to put off a decision for a while. After that time, he said, "We'll know which way I'm going, because I'm going to go one way or the other."

The comments amounted to a significant shift from a president who had projected great confidence over the past several weeks in his ability to obtain security guarantees for Ukraine and a swift meeting between the warring leaders, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

## TRUMP REPEATS HE STOPPED INDIA-PAKISTAN CONFLICT, BUT THIS TIME WITH 'RIGHT ABOUT EVERYTHING' CAP

**Diary Times Desk :** US President Donald Trump, wearing a cap that read "Right About Everything" in the Oval Office, once again claimed credit for stopping a "nuclear war" between India and Pakistan.

Although Trump has repeated the claim multiple times, New Delhi has firmly rejected it, stressing that Pakistan sought the ceasefire after sustaining significant losses in Operation Sindoor.

Reiterating his version of events on Saturday, Trump said: "We solved what could've been a nuclear war with India and Pakistan. It was getting ready to be a nuclear war."

Since May 10, when Trump declared on social media that Washington had brokered a "full and immediate" ceasefire between India and Pakistan after a "long night" of negotiations, he has reiterated more than 40 times that he was the one who "helped resolve" tensions between the two neighbours.



## VISA FRAUD CASE: RAMBHAJI PATEL GETS JAIL AND DEPORTATION OVER FAKE ROBBERY SCHEME

**Diary Times Desk :** Rambhaji Patel, a 37-year-old Indian-origin man residing in New York, has been sentenced to 20 months and eight days in prison for his involvement in a visa fraud conspiracy. Following his jail term, Patel will undergo two years of supervised release and is subject to deportation. Additionally, he must forfeit approximately \$850,000, the amount he earned from the fraudulent operation.

Beginning in March 2023, Patel and his co-conspirator, Balwinder Singh, orchestrated at least 18 staged armed robberies at convenience stores, liquor stores, and fast-food restaurants across the United States, including five incidents in Massachusetts. These fake robberies were designed to enable store clerks and owners to claim they were victims of violent crimes on their U nonimmigrant status (U visa) applications.

The U visa is intended for victims of certain serious crimes who have experienced mental or physical abuse and who cooperate with law enforcement during investigations and prosecutions.

## NETANYAHU: ISRAEL WILL SEIZE GAZA EVEN IF HAMAS ACCEPTS CEASEFIRE

**Diary Times Desk :** 'Israeli' Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu affirmed plans to conduct a full military takeover of Gaza in an interview with Sky News Australia, even if Hamas agrees to a ceasefire and releases captives. Netanyahu said that 'Israel' is "on the verge of completing this war," a claim he has made repeatedly over the past year and a half regarding operations in Gaza. After 22 months of resisting calls to end the war in exchange for the release of the captives, the 'Israeli' government recently approved plans to seize Gaza City, where roughly one million residents are sheltering. The plan has faced international criticism for its potential humanitarian impact and risks to hostages. When asked if 'Israel' would continue its military campaign even if Hamas agreed to a truce, Netanyahu replied, "We're going to do that anyway. That there was never a question that we're not going to leave Hamas there," adding that the war "could end today" if Hamas "lays down its arms and releases the remaining 50 hostages, at least 20 of which are alive." Netanyahu framed the operation as a liberation from Hamas rule, saying his goal is "to free Gaza, free them from Hamas tyranny, free Israel and others from Hamas terrorism, give Gaza and Israel a different future."

MADURO RAILS AT 'ILLEGAL' U.S. DEPLOYMENT OFF VENEZUELA

**Diary Times Desk :** President Nicolas Maduro on Friday (August 23, 2025) hit out at the U.S. deployment of three warships off the coast of Venezuela as part of efforts to curb drug trafficking, calling the operation an "illegal" attempt at regime change.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has stepped up the pressure on Mr. Maduro, doubling its bounty to \$50 million earlier this month on drug charges against the leftist strongman.

Earlier this week, a U.S. source confirmed to AFP that three Aegis-class guided missile destroyers were heading to international waters off the South American country. U.S. media reported that 4,000 Marines could also be deployed.

"What they're threatening to do against Venezuela — regime change, a military terrorist attack — is immoral, criminal and illegal," Mr. Maduro told lawmakers.

"This is a matter of peace, of international law, for Latin America and the Caribbean. Anyone who commits an act of aggression against a country in Latin America is attacking all countries," he said. In 2020, during Mr. Trump's first term in office, Mr. Maduro and other high-ranking Venezuelan officials were indicted in a U.S. federal court on several charges including participating in a "narco-terrorism" conspiracy. The U.S. Justice Department accused Mr. Maduro of leading a cocaine trafficking gang called "The Cartel of the Suns" that shipped hundreds of tons of narcotics into the United States over two decades, earning hundreds of millions of dollars.

US DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY CHIEF FIRED. HE HAD DENIED TRUMP'S IRAN CLAIM

**Diary Times Desk :** US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth on Friday fired Lt Gen Jeffrey Kruse, the head of the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and two other senior officers, Reuters reported. Apart from Kruse, Hegseth removed Vice Admiral Nancy Lacore, the chief of US Naval Reserves, and Rear Admiral Milton Sands, the commander of Naval Special Warfare Command, an official, on condition of anonymity, told the news agency. The three officials said they had no idea why they were fired. The removal came after DIA's initial findings into the US attack on Iran appeared to contradict President Donald Trump's claims. The agency's June assessment stated that the strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities caused only limited damage. But Trump claimed that the facilities had been "completely obliterated". Both the Pentagon and the White House confirmed the removal of Kruse, but they didn't state the reason behind this move. The dismissal was also confirmed by congressional officials, who claimed to have been informed that it was due to a "lack of confidence," a generic term the military uses frequently to cover to remove someone, NBC News reported.

GETTING ZELENSKY-PUTIN TOGETHER LIKE MIXING "OIL AND VINEGAR", SAYS TRUMP



**Diary Times Desk :** US President Donald Trump said Friday he would make an "important" decision in two weeks on Ukraine peace efforts -- specifying that Moscow could face massive sanctions or he might do nothing. Trump told reporters in the Oval Office that he was "not happy" about a Russian strike Thursday that hit a US-owned factory in Ukraine "and I'm not happy about anything having to do with that war." But he said he wanted to see whether Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky would meet first. "I think I'll know. I think I'll know the attitude of Russia, and, frankly, of Ukraine. It takes two," Trump said when asked what he would do at the end of a two-week timeframe he set for assessing the state of peace talks.

SOUTH KOREA FIRES WARNING SHOTS AT NORTH KOREAN TROOPS CROSSING BORDER

**Diary Times Desk :** South Korea has confirmed it fired warning shots earlier in the week at North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the heavily-fortified border between the two countries.

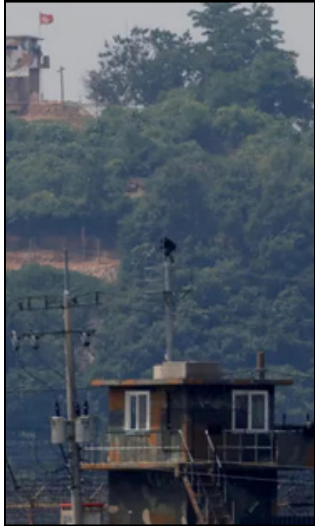
North Korean state media called the shots a "deliberate provocation" and Pyongyang has accused Seoul of risking "uncontrollable" tensions.

The incident was made public as new South Korean President Lee Jae Myung departed Seoul on Saturday for a visit to Tokyo and Washington.

Pyongyang has upped the ante in recent weeks, with leader Kim Jong Un's sister rebuffing efforts towards reconciliation made by Lee's government.

The incident took place amid continuing work by North Korea since last year to permanently seal its border with the South.

A strip of no-man's land called the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) separates the north and south, with intrusions often increasing tensions. The DMZ border is not fenced and the signposts are obscured by dense vegetation.



HUNGARY, SLOVAKIA FEAR OIL CUTS AFTER UKRAINIAN ATTACK ON RUSSIAN PIPELINE

**Diary Times Desk :** Hungary and Slovakia have raised the alarm over possible fuel shortages after a Ukrainian strike on Russia's Druzhba pipeline, saying deliveries could be suspended for several days. On Friday, officials from both countries warned that the attack on the Urecha oil pumping station, a key hub in western Russia, risked halting supplies for at least five days. The Soviet-era pipeline, which runs through Belarus and Ukraine, is a crucial route for Russian oil to reach Central Europe. Hungary's Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto and Slovakia's Foreign Minister Juraj Blahar wrote a joint letter to the European Commission urging Brussels to step in and guarantee secure energy flows. "The physical and geographical reality is that without this pipeline, the safe supply of our countries is simply not possible," they wrote. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban also made the strike a political issue, releasing a letter he had sent to US President Donald Trump. In it, Orban said Ukraine had attacked Druzhba just days before Trump's August 15 meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska, calling the move a "very unfortunate" escalation.

GHISLAINE MAXWELL DENIES SEEING 'INAPPROPRIATE' CONDUCT BY TRUMP

**Diary Times Desk :** Ghislaine Maxwell, the jailed associate of sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, has told US officials she did not witness any inappropriate conduct by Donald Trump or former President Bill Clinton. The Trump administration has faced pressure to disclose information about Epstein, who the US president was previously friendly with. Maxwell was interviewed from prison in July and, according to the newly released transcript, told Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche that a much-discussed Epstein "client list" does not exist. She also called allegations of Prince Andrew having sexual relations with an underage girl in Maxwell's home "mind-blowingly not conceivable". Maxwell is seeking a pardon from Trump and has been accused of lying to federal officials.

Shortly after the interview with Blanche - who previously worked as Trump's personal attorney - she was moved from a Florida prison to a new minimum-security facility in Texas. It is unclear why the move was made.



INDIANS, CHINESE TOURISTS AMONG 54 ON BOARD BUS THAT CRASHED IN NEW YORK

**Diary Times Desk :** At least five people were killed after a tourist bus crashed on a New York highway while returning from Niagara Falls. As per reports, the 54 passengers on board the bus include tourists from India. Apart from Indian tourists, the bus also had passengers from China and the Philippines as well. The wreck happened 40 kilometres (25 miles) east of Buffalo as the tourists headed back to New York City after visiting Niagara Falls. The authorities said that the driver became distracted, leading to the crash.

"It's believed the operator became distracted, lost control, over-corrected and ended up... over there," AFP quoted New York state police commander Major Andre Ray as saying.

The bus had a total of 54 people on board at the time of the tragedy. Apart from the five fatalities, crash, nobody else was in a life-threatening situation, Ray told the media.



PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MOHAMMED ISHAQ DAR REACHES BANGLADESH

**Diary Times Desk :** Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammed Ishaq Dar reached Bangladesh on Saturday (August 23, 2025), the Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh has announced. Mr. Dar was received at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Asad Alam Siam, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh Imran Haidar and High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan Muhammad Iqbal Khan and officials of the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka.

Soon after reaching Dhaka, Mr. Dar held a series of meetings with political parties of Bangladesh. The first to meet him was a team from Bangladesh Jamaat-E-Islami (JEI). "The ways to strengthen Pakistan-Bangladesh relations and the recent developments in the region were two key areas of discussion.

ISRAELI ATTACKS KILL 51 IN GAZA AS MORE PALESTINIANS DIE FROM STARVATION

**Diary Times Desk :** At least 51 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli attacks across Gaza, medical sources tell Al Jazeera, as health authorities in the besieged territory recorded eight more deaths from malnutrition amid a deepening hunger crisis. Israeli artillery shelled tents sheltering displaced families in the Asdaa area northwest of Khan Younis in southern Gaza on Saturday, killing 16 people, including six children, the sources said. In central Gaza, two people were killed in an Israeli drone strike on a house in the Maghazi refugee camp. At least 16 Palestinians also were killed while seeking humanitarian aid in the coastal enclave, including a Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli forces near a distribution point close to the so-called "Morag axis", southeast of Khan Younis.

DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER RESIGNS AFTER FAILING TO SECURE SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL

**Diary Times Desk :** Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp resigned Friday evening, after he failed to secure new sanctions against Israel over the war in Gaza.

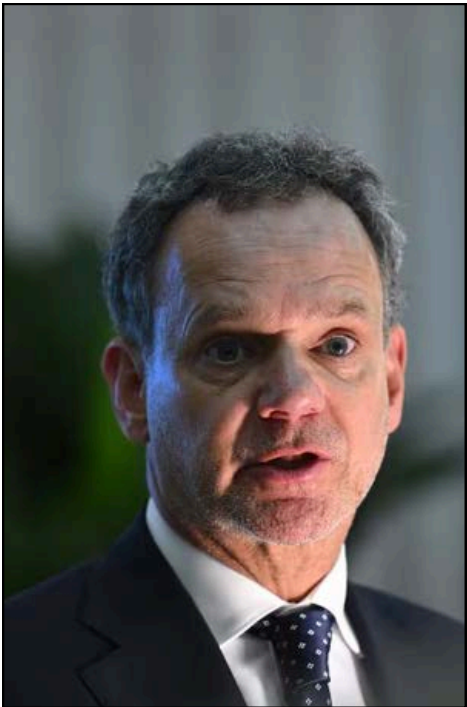
Veldkamp had informed the country's parliament he intended to bring in new measures in response to Israel's planned offensive in Gaza City and other heavily populated areas but was unable to secure the support of his coalition partners.

The 61-year-old former ambassador to Israel told reporters he felt he was unable "to implement policy myself and chart the course I deem necessary."

Following Veldkamp's resignation, the remaining Cabinet members of his center-right New Social Contract party also quit, leaving the Dutch government in disarray.

"In short we are done with it," party leader Eddy Van Hijum said, calling the Israeli government's actions "diametrically opposed to international treaties."

The Dutch government already collapsed in June when anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders pulled out of the country's four-party coalition over a fight about immigration.



INDIA TO TEMPORARILY STOP POSTAL SERVICES TO US FROM AUGUST 25

**Diary Times Desk :** The Department of Posts announced in a statement on Saturday that all postal services to the United States will be temporarily suspended from August 25, due to changes in US customs rules set to come into effect later on this month.

In a press statement, the department said that from August 29, "all international postal items destined for the USA, regardless of their value, shall be subject to customs duties as per the country-specific International Emergency Economic Power Act (IEEPA) tariff framework."

According to Executive Order No. 14324, issued on July 30th 2025, duty-free exemption on imported goods worth up to \$800 is withdrawn. However, letters, documents and gift items up to \$100 will remain duty-free.

The change comes amid trade tensions, after US President Donald Trump imposed 25 per cent tariff on India along with an additional 25 per cent as penalty for purchasing Russian oil.

SRI LANKA OPPOSITION SAYS EX-LEADER JAILED TO STOP COMEBACK

**Diary Times Desk :** Opposition parties in Sri Lanka accused on Saturday the government of jailing the country's former president over fears he could return to power.

Former leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, 76, who lost the last presidential election in September to Anura Kumara Dissanayake, was remanded in custody Friday on charges of misusing state funds for foreign travel.

Anti-graft units have ramped up investigations since Dissanayake came to power on a promise to fight endemic corruption in the island nation, which is emerging from its worst economic meltdown in 2022.

Nalin Bandara, a member of parliament for the main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) party, who visited Wickremesinghe at Colombo's New Magazine Prison, said the former leader had called for unity to challenge Dissanayake's leftist administration.

"What the former president says is that we should get onto a common stage to fight the oppression of the new government," Bandara told reporters outside the prison.

Wickremesinghe's own United National Party (UNP), which has two seats in the 225-member parliament, said the government felt threatened by the former president.

'WON'T LET CENTRE DELETE ANY NFSA BENEFICIARIES': PUNJAB CM MANN

**Diary Times Desk** : Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday stated that he would not allow the BJP-led Central Government to delete any beneficiaries from the National Food Security Act (NFSA), which provides subsidised wheat to them.

Mann's statement came in response to a report by The Tribune, which revealed that the Centre had asked the Punjab Government to verify lakhs of "suspicious" NFSA beneficiaries. According to the report published on Thursday, the Centre directed the state to remove these beneficiaries by September 30.

The individuals flagged by the Centre are reportedly either income tax payees, directors in companies, owners of more than five acres of land, or possessors of four-wheelers.



LAND POOLING SCRAPPED, PUNJAB GOVT PLANS TO DEVELOP, AUCTION OWN PROPERTIES

**Diary Times Desk** : The cash-strapped Punjab Government is now looking at a 28-year-old scheme to rev up its income, after its Land Pooling Scheme had to be withdrawn under public pressure. The Aam Aadmi Party government is all set to reintroduce the Optimum Utilisation of Vacant Government Lands ( OUVGL) Scheme, which was first introduced in 1997. Under the OUVGL Scheme 2.0, all prime, unutilised state government properties are proposed to be transferred to the Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority, which will develop these properties into residential, commercial and industrial areas before auctioning these properties. Yesterday, Punjab Chief Secretary KAP Sinha took a meeting of all administrative secretaries to discuss how to implement the scheme and identify land or properties that can be transferred to PUDA for auctioning it later. This will help the state, reeling under a financial crisis, to earn the much-needed revenue. Under OUVGL scheme, both SAD-BJP and Congress governments in the past also earned the revenue. The state government proposes to use revenue thus earned for capital expenditure (infrastructure development) and also to run its populist schemes, including implementation of the Rs 1,100 per month for women.

TMC LEADERS CLAIM AGGRESSIVE RAVNEET SINGH BITTU PUSHED MURSHIDABAD MP ABU TAHER IN LOK SABHA

**Diary Times Desk** : Trinamool Congress leaders have written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, alleging Murshidabad MP Abu Taher Khan was pushed by Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu on Wednesday during the introduction of the Bills for the removal of jailed ministers. The lawmakers also said they were exercising their right to protest while the Bills were being introduced, but they were rendered "helpless by the throttling."

ONE-TIME SETTLEMENT OF PROPERTY TAX: DEADLINE NEARS, SUVIDHA KENDRAS IN LUDHIANA OPEN ON WEEKENDS

**Diary Times Desk** : In a bid to facilitate residents ahead of the August 31 deadline under the one-time settlement (OTS) policy, the Ludhiana Municipal Corporation (MC) has announced extended working hours at its zonal Suvidha Kendras, including weekend operations. The Kendras will remain open on Saturdays (August 23 and 30) and Sundays (August 24 and 31) during regular office hours to ensure maximum public convenience.

MC Commissioner Aaditya Dachalwal said the decision was taken in the interest of residents, as August 31 marks the last day to pay pending property tax without incurring penalty or interest under the OTS scheme notified by the state government. Officials reiterated that property tax is to be paid annually on a self-assessment basis. Failure to do so results in a 20 per cent penalty and 18 per cent annual interest on outstanding amount. The OTS policy offers defaulters a rare opportunity to clear dues without this additional financial burden.

UNFAZED BY CRACKDOWN, BJP CARRIES OUTREACH PROGRAMME 'BJP DE SEWADAR, AA GAYE TUHADE DWAR'

**Diary Times Desk** : Although the district administration formed a three-member committee yesterday to identify those organising data-collection camps – and warned that violators would face legal consequences – BJP appears unwilling to yield to such pressure.

Police had yesterday thwarted a second attempt to organise a camp at Raipura village and detained BJP state president Sunil Jakhar, his nephew Sandeep Jakhar MLA, former minister Surjit Jyani and many others, who were released after about five hours from different police stations. BJP state secretary Vandana Sangwal, who was detained for the second consecutive day, has resumed taking the welfare schemes run by the Modi government to every household. She is in high spirits despite police action. She was first detained along with BJP district president Sukhwinder Singh Kaka Kamboj at Raipura on Thursday and again on Friday.

SC 'FAILS' TO UNDERSTAND PUNJAB & HARYANA HC JUDGE'S VERDICT, SENDS IT BACK FOR FRESH HEARING

**Diary Times Desk** : Badly written judgments and orders of a Punjab and Haryana High Court judge continues to haunt the Supreme Court even after his retirement in May this year.

While hearing appeals challenging an October 1, 2024, verdict of the Punjab and Haryana High Court delivered by a Bench led by the same judge, a Bench led by Chief Justice of India BR Gavai on Friday recalled how the top court judges had a difficult time attempting to comprehend verdicts of the High Court judge in question. "Fortunately, he (HC judge) has demitted office," the CJI said, adding every verdict of the judge was "overturned" when it was challenged before the Supreme Court.

In February, Justice Gavai had told the appellants' counsel to wait for the retirement of the said judge as the matter could be reassigned to him, if sent back for reconsideration. By the impugned judgments and orders dated October 1, 2024, and November 5, 2024, the High Court reversed the acquittal and convicted appellant(s), including one Raj Kumar, of murder and sentenced them to rigorous imprisonment for life.

2 DEAD, 21 INJURED IN LPG TANKER EXPLOSION IN PUNJAB'S HOSHIARPUR

**Diary Times Desk** : Two people were killed and 21 others injured after an LPG tanker exploded following a collision on the Jalandhar-Hoshiarpur road near Mandiala village on Friday night, officials said Saturday.

The blast occurred after an HP Petroleum tanker, attempting an improper turn, collided with a vegetable-laden Mahindra pickup, triggering a massive explosion that also damaged nearby buildings. Civil Surgeon Dr Pawan Kumar and Senior Medical Officer Dr Kuldeep Singh reported that 23 patients were brought to Hoshiarpur Civil Hospital.

One was declared dead on arrival, and another succumbed while being taken to a private hospital. Currently, five patients remain admitted at the civil hospital, 14 have been referred to other facilities, and two have been discharged, they added.



SHAPING THE FUTURE  
IIIT-UNA'S  
CONVOCATION  
CEREMONY TO HONOUR  
STUDENTS'  
ACHIEVEMENTS

**Diary Times Desk :** The Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Una will hold its seventh convocation ceremony on Saturday, announced Institute Director Prof Manish Gaur while addressing the media on Friday.

He said Prof Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman of the National Educational Technology Forum and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), will grace the occasion as the chief guest, while Lok Sabha MP Anurag Thakur will attend as the guest of honour. A total of 135 BTech degrees and one PhD degree will be awarded at the ceremony.

Prof Gaur noted that in a short span of just 10 years, IIIT-Una has made significant achievements, with 85 per cent of its graduating students placed successfully. He added that the highest annual package offered to the 2024-25 batch stands at Rs 31.5 lakh, a testimony to the growing reputation of the institute.

Highlighting the institute's academic and research initiatives, Prof Gaur said a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence in Drone Technology has been established in collaboration with Garuda Aerospace. The centre will focus on innovation, research and development in areas such as agriculture, surveillance and disaster management, while also offering advanced training, fostering AI-driven research and supporting UAV-related start-ups in line with the Government of India's Drone Shakti Mission.

RAINFALL ACTIVITY  
LIKELY TO SPIKE IN  
HIMACHAL TILL AUGUST

**28**  
**Diary Times Desk :** The rainfall activity is likely to spike in the state till August 28. During this spell, the peak rainfall activity will be witnessed on August 23 and 26. As per the weather department, light to moderate rainfall is likely at most places across over the state in this period, with heavy rainfall at isolated places.

2 DIE, TWO HURT IN SEPARATE ROAD ACCIDENTS IN SIRMAUR

**Diary Times Desk :** Two separate road accidents in Sirmaur district within a span of a few hours claimed the lives of two young men and left two others injured, casting a pall of gloom in the region.

The first accident occurred late yesterday night in Paonta Sahib subdivision when a speeding motorcycle lost control near a petrol pump close to Surya Colony on the Bangran road. Before crashing, the bike struck a pedestrian, Rohit, son of Jodhan Singh, resident of Ward No. 6 Shubhkhedra, Paonta Sahib, who was left injured.

The rider, identified as 25-year-old Gopi Kishan, son of Dhanbir Singh of Kalatha Kilod village in the Anjibhoj area, was thrown off the bike and sustained fatal head injuries, dying on the spot. He had been residing in a rented room in Paonta Sahib. The second tragedy took place this morning around 6.30 on the Paonta Sahib-Kala Amb National Highway (NH-07) near Kutasan Devi temple.



POWER SUPPLY BRINGS RELIEF BUT  
ROADS NOT RESTORED IN FLOOD-HIT  
MIYAR VILLAGE IN LAHAUL-SPITI  
DISTRICT

**Diary Times Desk :** In the wake of devastating flashfloods that struck the Miyar Valley in Lahaul-Spiti district recently, severely- affected Karpot village has seen a ray of hope. Displaced villagers, currently residing in makeshift tents after fleeing their flood-ravaged homes, are now being supplied electricity after several days after the installation of two solar power plants facilitated by local MLA Anuradha Rana. The two solar units, with capacities of 1.5 KVA and 2.0 KVA respectively, have brought relief to 27-28 tents, providing lighting and phone charging facilities. For many, this basic amenity has become a lifeline in the absence of conventional electricity. Villagers can now perform daily chores such as churning curd into buttermilk, previously a struggle without power.

Dalip Bodh, vice president of the block committee, shared that the solar installations came after MLA Anuradha Rana visited Karpot village four days ago and listened to the villagers' demand for electricity. Moved by their plight, she ensured swift action, resulting in the solar setup being completed within days.

HPMC TO USE APPLES FOR WINE  
AND LIQUOR PRODUCTION

**Diary Times Desk :** The Himachal Pradesh Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (HPMC) has announced that it will focus on producing alcoholic beverages such as wine, liquor, and schnapps from apples procured under the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS). Until now, most apples processed at HPMC facilities were used for juice and apple concentrate production.

Horticulture Secretary C. Paulrasu said, "This year, more emphasis will be placed on manufacturing alcoholic beverages."

In a departure from past practice, apples collected this season will not be auctioned at Parwanoo. Instead, HPMC has engaged a company that will purchase the harvested apples at a fixed rate of ₹8 per kilogram. After meeting HPMC's processing requirements, the company will be supplied with any surplus fruit.

Previously, the harvested apples were transported to Parwanoo for auction, often fetching only ₹3 to ₹4 per kilogram. Paulrasu noted that the new arrangement ensures better prices without the need for auctions. HPMC will continue to bear the cost of transporting apples to Parwanoo.

CONCERNS RAISED OVER NHAI'S ₹100-CRORE CHAKKI BRIDGE  
PROTECTION WORK AFTER WALL DAMAGE

**Diary Times Desk :** Experts warn that the damage puts the entire protection system at risk, as strong river currents could compromise the remaining structures in the days ahead. The project, designed with inputs from IIT-Roorkee after the bridge suffered severe damage from flash floods caused by illegal mining, was intended to provide long-term stability to the rivulet's course and safeguard the exposed P1 and P2 pillars.

The Chakki Bridge was closed to traffic in August 2022 following the floods and reopened in phases — first to passenger vehicles in March 2024, and later to heavy transport in June 2024 — after inspections and approvals by IIT-Roorkee experts. This was not the first attempt at protective measures; earlier cemented reinforcements around the eroded pillars had also failed within months. Responding to concerns, Vikas Surajewala, Project Director of NHAI Palampur, maintained that the damage to the smaller wall poses no immediate threat to the larger structure or check dam, and assured that repairs would be undertaken once the monsoon season ends.





Ukraine a Bad Hand

For Ukraine, history is a battlefield. Months before Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his full-scale invasion, he published a brooding, 5,000-word article that made the case for dismantling the country; in his speech to mark the start of Russia's offensive he reeled off a litany of historical grievances against the West; and months into the war, he cast himself as the successor to Russia's modernizing tsar Peter the Great.

History lessons are now haunting Ukraine again. As US President Donald Trump pushes for a negotiated end to the war there, politicians and pundits are searching for the right analogies to explain the precarious moment Ukraine finds itself in – and to gauge the risks it faces in any diplomatic process.

Parallels are imprecise, but the current moment resonates with three key chapters in 20th century diplomatic history: Munich in 1938, Yalta in 1945 and Budapest in 1994.

The Munich Agreement – the deal that ceded the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia to Adolf Hitler's Germany in a bid to avert war in Europe – is the granddaddy of historical analogies.



Nathan Hodge  
But the Yalta option is not the only diplomatic avenue available today, Radchenko added

Over the years, it's become convenient shorthand for appeasement: Giving away the Sudetenland emboldened Hitler and paved the way to a world war. Critics of Trump have likened the president's willingness to meet Putin one-on-one in Alaska – and his suggestion that Ukraine may have to accept the loss of territory – to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's mistake of taking Hitler at his word.

"Trump's magical thinking threatens a slow-motion Munich – repeating the mistake of appeasement," Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal wrote on X. "Coddling a bloodthirsty murderer with pieces of territory & promises of good behavior didn't bring 'peace in our time.' Appeasement will bring Trump no closer than Chamberlain to the Nobel Peace Prize."

But there's also a specific military angle to the Munich comparison. The deal allowed the Nazis to bypass an extensive network of fortifications, essentially rendering Czechoslovakia defenseless. Likewise, military analysts note that if Russia is allowed to occupy the rest of Ukraine's Donetsk region in any peace deal, it will potentially hand Putin's forces control of fortress cities such as Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, which form a vital part of Kyiv's defensive belt.

The Yalta Conference

Another historical parallel in play is the 1945 Yalta Conference, a meeting between US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet dictator Josef Stalin that set the terms of the post-World War II order in Europe.

Seen at the time as a triumph of wartime diplomacy, the legacy of Yalta is today viewed through a more pessimistic lens – particularly in Eastern European countries, where it is seen as the meeting that ultimately left them behind the Iron Curtain and consigned millions of people to live under Communist rule.

To some observers, Trump's push for a potential grand bargain with Putin also carries risks of selling out Kyiv, especially if possible outcomes are negotiated over the heads of the Ukrainians. In a post on X ahead of the Trump-Putin meeting in Alaska, former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul wrote, "The Trump-Putin meeting in Alaska cannot become Yalta 2.0. I hope President Trump, @SecRubio, and their team are working hard to make this a meaningful summit, and not a moment of capitulation."

Not surprisingly, Putin is a fan of great-power deals. In a speech at the UN General Assembly in 2015 – delivered on the eve of his country's military intervention in Syria – Putin spoke approvingly of Yalta, saying the security architecture hammered out at the Soviet resort "helped humankind pass through turbulent.

Ukraine Stepping Attacks on Russian Energy

A dramatic rise in Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil refineries has sent gasoline prices in Russia to record highs, despite the government banning petrol exports to cope with the crunch.



Tim Lister

Despite government subsidies, Russian consumers are paying more at the pump. Wholesale petrol prices on the St Petersburg exchange have risen by nearly 10% this month alone, and by about 50% since the beginning of the year.

Ukraine is focusing drone attacks on refineries, pumping stations and fuel trains in an effort to hurt the Russian war machine – but also to disrupt daily life in Russia. Summer sees peak demand among Russia's drivers and farmers for petrol.

Ukrainian drones have struck at least ten key Russian energy facilities this month alone, according to a tally of attacks.

And the strategy seems to be working. The refineries struck account for more than 44 million tons of products annually – more than 10% of Russia's capacity – according to Ukraine's intelligence service. Among the targets – the giant Lukoil refinery in Volgograd, the largest in southern Russia. geolocated clouds of smoke billowing from the plant, which was struck in the early hours of August 14. The Russian defense ministry acknowledged damage to the plant, which was attacked again on August 19.



The military is less affected because its demand is mainly for diesel, supplies of which are less impacted.

The Ukrainian military and intelligence services have developed long-range warfare using drones, missiles and sabotage even as a very different conflict unfolds on the ground. The military claimed this month that long-range attacks this year have caused \$74 billion in damage, with nearly 40% of strikes at least 500 kilometers inside Russia.

It's not possible to verify such claims, but there is plenty of visual evidence of the damage done to refineries, storage tanks and pumping stations in recent months. Repairing such infrastructure is complicated by European and US sanctions.

In a report on Thursday, Ukraine's foreign intelligence service said that Russian companies were urgently purchasing petroleum from Belarus to address domestic shortages. The state-owned refiner in Belarus, Belneftekhim, says that in the last week "interest in Belarusian oil products on the Russian market has surged."

Ukraine is also trying to impede Russian exports of oil. Last week its drones struck the Druzhba pipeline that supplies Russian oil to Hungary and Slovakia – two EU countries whose governments remain on good terms with Moscow.

Both complained to the EU, saying that "with these attacks Ukraine is not primarily hurting Russia, but Hungary and Slovakia."

US President Donald Trump also intervened, saying in a handwritten note to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban that he was "very angry" about the disruption. But for Ukraine, under pressure on the frontlines, attacks on Russia's vital energy industry are a way to counter Moscow's narrative that its victory is ultimately inevitable.

Ukraine is trying to add to its arsenal of long-range weapons and last week unveiled a domestically produced cruise missile called the Flamingo. The manufacturer aims to produce 200 a month.

Missile expert Fabian Hoffman says that for a soft target such as distillation columns of Russian refineries, for example, the Flamingo's lethal radius would be upwards of 38 meters. That would cause substantial damage. INFA

Million Turning

WORLD'S OLDEST PASSENGER SHIP

In 1914, two years after the Titanic embarked on its ill-fated maiden voyage, the steam-powered SS Medina rolled off the shipyard at Newport News, Virginia.

The vessel has had many lives – and many names – since, in a career that eventually made it the oldest active passenger ship on the oceans. But the 111-year-old boat's latest assignment is, perhaps, the unlikeliest of them all.

Originally used to transport onions and other goods, the Medina was conscripted to assist America's World War II efforts. It was then converted into a passenger ship, the SS Roma, and fitted with a diesel engine before serving as a cruise liner under the name MS Franca C. In 1977, it was acquired by a Christian organization and renamed MV Doulos, a missionary ship and floating library.

Over the next three decades, the vessel sailed over 360,000 nautical miles and docked in over 100 countries. It was once even attacked with grenades by Muslim separatists in the Philippines in a 1991 terrorist incident that left two evangelists dead.

Now, after more than a century at sea, the ship has come to rest – on dry land – in Bintan, a tropical Indonesian island known for all-inclusive beach resorts. Singaporean businessman Eric Saw, the historic vessel's latest owner (or current "steward," as he prefers to be known), has spent the last 15 years and around 23 million Singapore dollars (\$18 million) of his own money transforming it into a luxury hotel. "If I didn't have this project, maybe I'd have a Ferrari and a Lamborghini at home, and I'd be sailing around the world every year with my family," the 74-year-old reflected over lunch at the hotel's restaurant, which is part of a new two-story structure built to the vessel's bow. The gargantuan task of purchasing, renovating and hauling the historic ship ashore was, however, "a calling from God."

Now named Doulos Phos, or "Servant of Light" in Greek, the ship stands on an anchor-shaped spit of land reclaimed from the South China Sea specifically for Saw's venture. Its huge propeller, long hidden beneath the waterline, is today fully visible. So, too, is the underside of the ship's 428-foot-long hull, which, like the Titanic's, was constructed with steel plates joined together by rivets. (Welding wasn't widely used in shipbuilding until the 1930s.)

Inside, low-ceilinged passageways lead to around 100 rooms and suites. Some still feature circular portholes for windows. Others contain heavy metal doors, with pull-down handles, opening onto side decks that were once used by sailors to move around the ship but now are subdivided into private, sea view balconies.

The hotel's original opening in 2019 proved a false start. Strict Covid-19 travel restrictions imposed by Indonesia and nearby Singapore, whose affluent vacationers underpin Bintan's tourist-centric economy, effectively brought operations to a halt. Singapore did not fully lift border measures until 2023. But now, open for business once again, Saw hopes to attract everyone from young families to maritime history buffs.

The businessman clearly relishes giving visitors a seafaring experience. While giving CNN a tour around the boat, he repeatedly corrected language associated with conventional hotels: The employees here aren't staff, they're "crew." Guests don't sleep in rooms, these are "cabins." This is not a floor, it's a "deck."

Before Saw took ownership of the vessel in 2010, its future appeared bleak. MV Doulos was no longer considered seaworthy – and complying with new maritime regulations on passenger safety and fire prevention would have likely required millions of dollars in extra investment.

This proved to be just a fraction of the project's total cost. For more than three years, Saw hemorrhaged money on dockage fees and upkeep as he lobbied authorities in his native Singapore to provide a permanent site. Negotiations failed, so he looked further afield.



Oscar Holland

A developer offered to reclaim more than three acres of land off Bintan's north coast, where Saw could acquire a long-term lease. "I then had the temerity to ask for an anchor-shaped island, rather than just a rectangular piece of land," he recalled with a smile.

DURAND CUP: NORTHEAST UNITED FC TROUNCES DIAMOND HARBOUR FC TO RETAIN TITLE

**Diary Times Desk :** NorthEast United FC ended the giant killing run of Diamond Harbour FC with a crushing 6-1 win in the final to retain the Durand Cup title in style, at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Saturday. Leading 2-0 in the first half, NEUFC scored four more after the break to bring the high-flying DHFC crashing down to earth. For NEUFC Asheer Akhtar began the scoring at the half-hour mark before Parthib Gogoi doubled the lead in added time of the first half. Thoi Singh, substitute Jairo Samperio, Andres Rodriguez and Alaeddine Ajarale, who scored a penalty, completed the Highlanders' tally in the second half to make it the biggest win by any team in the final in the post-Independence period of the 137-year-old tournament.



IT'S OFFICIAL: MESSI-LED ARGENTINA TO PLAY A FRIENDLY IN KERALA IN NOVEMBER

**Diary Times Desk :** On one moment, off the next — the Messi-coming-to-Kerala saga has kept fans on edge for nearly a year. Now, the Argentine Football Association (AFA) has confirmed that Lionel Messi and Argentina's World Cup-winning will come to Kerala between November 10 and 18, 2025. "Information about the 2025 international friendlies that will face the national team led by Lionel Scaloni: In FIFA date for the month of October, between the dates 6th and the 14th, will be played in the United States, and for the month of November, between 10th and 18th, in Luanda (Angola) and Kerala (India). Rivals to be determined," according to the official AFA announcement on X. Adding to this, AFA India posted on X: "The Argentine National Team will visit Kerala this November as part of its international friendlies! A project we began over a year ago in Madrid with the Kerala Govt now opens a new chapter in AFA's global expansion." The announcements mark the strongest signal yet that Kerala will host Messi, after months of wrangling over finances and scheduling. Reports of delayed sponsor payments, and even allegations from the state.

OLD PROBLEMS COME BACK TO BITE MANCHESTER CITY AS TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR REGISTER STATEMENT WIN

**Diary Times Desk :** Manchester City's troubles from last season were exposed once more in a humbling 2-0 home defeat to Tottenham on Saturday that raised questions over their quest to regain the Premier League title. Brennan Johnson and Joao Palhinha struck for the Europa League winners just before half-time as Spurs went top of the table, making it a perfect start for Thomas Frank after two league games in charge. City's run of four consecutive titles came to a spectacular end last season as they finished a distant third behind Liverpool and Arsenal. A 4-0 thrashing of Wolves on the opening weekend of the campaign showed glimpses of a new-look City back to their best. However, a series of defensive issues remain unresolved, while manager Pep Guardiola must decide on who will be his number one goalkeeper going forward after a day to forget for James Trafford. The England international retained his place in goal despite the return to fitness of Ederson. The Brazilian is reportedly on the verge of joining Turkish giants Galatasaray, which would free up City to make a move for out-of-favour Paris Saint-Germain 'keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

MANCHESTER UNITED REPORTEDLY EXPLORE MOVE FOR 24-YEAR-OLD MIDFIELDER IN FINAL TRANSFER PUSH

**Diary Times Desk :** Manchester United, under Ruben Amorim, are reportedly close to finalising a deal for Royal Antwerp goalkeeper Senne Lammens. Following this potential signing, Amorim may focus on other key areas, particularly midfield. Having already splurged over £200 million in the ongoing summer transfer window, the Red Devils may face financial constraints, and on top of that, they have still not managed to attract offers for the players they desire to sell. However, that has not stopped them from continuing to explore the market. According to Manchester Evening News, the club has listed further targets and may work their way to rope them in during the days leading up to the transfer window deadline, September 1.

MATCH AWARDS FROM BAYERN MUNICH'S 6-0 DEMOLITION OF RB LEIPZIG

**Diary Times Desk :** Bayern Munich kicked off the 63rd Bundesliga season with a game at home against RB Leipzig. The stage was set for an entertaining game — Leipzig's new squad looked rather interesting and Bayern were fresh out of the Supercup win. What ensued was an incredible display of Bavarian dominance as Bayern demolished Die Roten Bullen 6-0. Here are the match awards from the game. Jersey Swap — Antonio Nusa Leipzig made several mistakes and were not at their best tonight, but the cardinal sin of the night was them not starting Antonio Nusa. The Norwegian youngster was subbed on only in the second half and had an immediate impact, threatening the clean sheet. He was a constant trouble to the backline, especially Dayot Upamecano. The goal he had in the 68th minute (which was later disallowed) was from an incredibly difficult situation, and it is testament to what he is capable of, even at such a young age. Recovering lost possession, pushing to press, and finding areas to score from, he did it all, and Leipzig might just have started drafting a hefty release clause after tonight. Bayern needed someone to complement Dayot Upamecano, and the answer was Jonathan Tah. The duo of Tah and Upamecano have developed a perfect understanding, which enables them to utilize each other's strengths effectively. Whether it be Tah's physicality, or his aerial abilities, they meshed well with the Frenchman's pace and intelligence, helping create a tight seal around Leipzig's attack.

IVAN TONEY TAKES BRUTAL DIG AT SAUDI AUTHORITIES OVER 'CRAZY' AL-AHLI TREATMENT BEFORE CRISTIANO RONALDO VS AL-NASSR

**Diary Times Desk :** Ivan Toney and Cristiano Ronaldo square off in the Super Cup final after finishing the previous season as the top two goal scorers in the Saudi Pro League. Although Toney scored 23 goals compared to Ronaldo's 25, the former Bees star also assisted Al-Ahli in winning the AFC Champions League Elite trophy. Speaking about the preparation, Toney took a swipe at Saudi authorities, saying that "To be honest, the preparation and how we've been treated is crazy." "We've been on the worst pitch, and trained after other teams. We've been the most hated, the team nobody wants to win; it gives us that extra hunger and fight to win something against these teams. You saw in the semi-final: we had no remorse, we wanted to score more and more, and we did," he added. In their semi-final last Wednesday, Al Ahli defeated Al Qadisiyah 5-1, demonstrating their strength, as Toney asserted.



The England international scored from the penalty spot in the 28th minute. After Sadio Mane was sent off halfway through the first half, they were reduced to ten men for 65 minutes, but their victory guaranteed them a berth in the final against Ronaldo's Al Nassr, who defeated Al Ittihad 2-1.