Spy in every blink

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MP Cabinet pledges to build developed state by 2047, credits PM Modi's leadership



Bhopal, Oct 12 The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet on Monday pledged to work towards building a developed state by 2047, aligning its development agenda with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a developed India, while highlighting investments, infrastructure expansion, employment generation and welfare initiatives.

At a special meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav at the Mantralaya, the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution marking 25 years of Modi's public life, describing his tenure as an inspiration for governance and development.

Yadav later briefed the media on the resolution, which also outlined the state government's priorities and achievements under the BJP's double-engine government.

"By making Prime Minister Modi's mantra our mission and leveraging our capabilities and dedication, we will build a developed Madhya Pradesh for a developed India," Yadav said.

The resolution highlighted major infrastructure and investment projects in Madhya Pradesh, including the Ken-Betwa, Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal and Tapi basin projects aimed at expanding irrigation capacity.

It also cited the development of metro rail projects worth around Rs 23,000 crore in Bhopal and Indore, improved air connectivity and the establishment of the PM MITRA textile park in Dhar

The state government said investment proposals worth more than Rs 30.77 lakh crore were received during the Global Investors Summit 2025, with projects worth around Rs 10 lakh crore under implementation.

The state has introduced 25 industrial policies to facilitate investments, while a telecom manufacturing zone is planned in Gwalior.

Yadav said PM Modi's 25 years in public life, from serving as Gujarat Chief Minister to leading the country, reflected sustained efforts towards public welfare and national development.

"Through tireless and ceaseless effort over his 25 years of public service, the Prime Minister has not only made resolutions but has also successfully realised them," he said.

The resolution also highlighted the state's wildlife conservation efforts, noting that Madhya Pradesh's cheetah population had reached 60, with habitats established at Kuno, Gandhi Sagar and Veerangana Rani Durgavati Tiger Reserves.

On employment, the government said it aims to create more than two lakh government jobs. Plans for the coming year include 12 new medical colleges, 12 skill universities, industry-oriented training for one lakh youths and artificial intelligence and advanced computing laboratories in colleges.

The cabinet cited women's self-help groups, irrigation projects, renewable energy expansion and public transport initiatives among the state's development priorities.

It also noted that the Madhya Pradesh Assembly had passed the Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026, by a voice vote.

"The state government is committed to working shoulder-to-shoulder with the Prime Minister's leadership to realise the goal of a developed Madhya Pradesh and a self-reliant India," Yadav said.

The resolution further referred to preparations for the 2028 Simhastha in Ujjain, with the government targeting completion of the related development works by Diwali 2027.

Osmania Hospital faces disruption as medical students and residents strike

Hyderabad: Outpatient services and elective surgeries at Osmania General Hospital (OGH) faced disruptions on Monday after undergraduate students, interns, postgraduate residents and senior residents boycotted their regular duties and classes as part of an indefinite strike called by the Osmania Medical College Junior Doctors Association (OMC JUDA).

From Monday morning, MBBS students, interns and resident doctors began gathering on the OGH campus, raising slogans over what they described as neglected medical infrastructure at the hospital and other medical colleges in Telangana.

Emergency services at OGH, however, remained unaffected, with medical personnel continuing to attend to patients in the casualty department.

The protesters said they were agitating over long-pending infrastructure deficiencies at OGH and Osmania Medical College (OMC), which they said were severely affecting patient care and the quality of medical education.

Four burnt alive as car catches fire in Vijayawada

Vijayawada, Oct 12 Four persons, including a child, were burnt alive as an electric car caught fire after hitting a road divider in Andhra Pradesh's Vijayawada on Monday.

Another person was critically injured in the horrific accident that occurred on the Vijayawada West Bypass Road.

Police and fire-fighting personnel rushed to the spot and doused the fire. The vehicle was completely gutted in the fire.

The deceased were identified as Kommareddy Ramdev, 39, his mother Kommareddy Aruna, T. Vijay and a child. They were all residents of Nunna and Namburu.

Tragedy struck them while they were returning from a function in Namburu.The car caught fire after hitting the road divider, and within seconds, flames engulfed the entire vehicle, trapping four of the occupants. The fifth person sustained grievous injuries and was shifted to a hospital, where his condition is stated t be critical.Police registered a case and took up the investigation to ascertain the cause of the crash.Minister for Human Resource Development and IT, Nara Lokesh, termed the death of four individuals in a road accident on the Vijayawada West Bypass as deeply shocking. He offered his condolences to the families of the deceased.



Telangana CM sanctions Rs 6 lakh to bring body of man killed in Russia-Ukraine war

Hyderabad, Oct 12 (Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has sanctioned financial assistance of Rs.6 lakh for the repatriation of the mortal remains of a man who lost his life in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Vavilala Sudarshan Goud from Hasanabad village in Jagtial district was killed on September 1, 2026, in the Russia-Ukraine war.

According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Sudarshan Goud, who had gone to Ukraine four months ago in search of employment, lost his life in a drone attack.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed profound shock and grief over the incident. He assured that the government will stand by the bereaved family during this tragic time.

When Minister for Development of Scheduled Castes, Adluri Lakshman Kumar brought the incident to the Chief Minister's attention following an appeal from Sudarshan Goud's wife, the Chief Minister immediately responded by announcing financial assistance of Rs. 6 lakhs to the affected family.

Following the Chief Minister's directive, officials have issued orders to provide this financial assistance from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

They have also been instructed to take necessary steps to bring Sudarshan Goud's mortal remains back to the country.

According to a note from the OSD to the Chief Minister, a letter was received from Adluri Lakshaman Kumar in which he stated that Sudarshan's wife Vailala Bhargavi submitted a representation during the Praja Vani programme, requesting financial assistance of Rs.6 lakh for the repatriation of the mortal remains of her husband, so that his final rites be performed with dignity and in accordance with their traditions.

The Chief Minister directed officials to sanction ex-gratia assistance of Rs.6 lakh to Vailala Bhargavi from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Meanwhile, another from Telangana is feared dead in the Russia-Ukraine war. Mohammed Afzal Khan (43) from Banswada in Kamareddy district went to Russia in February 2026, after being falsely promised a civilian job in the oil industry.

Afzal Khan's family has sought the intervention of the Ministry of External Affairs to verify his whereabouts.

According to Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) leader Amjed Ullah Khan, who met Afzal Khan's family members, they received a voice message claiming that Afzal Khan died while fighting for Russia near the Russia–Ukraine border."I request the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Embassy in Moscow to urgently contact Russian authorities, verify the facts and inform the family. If confirmed, please facilitate the repatriation of his mortal remains. This family deserves answers, compassion and urgent diplomatic intervention," said Amjed Ullah Khan.

Rajgopal Reddy targets Revanth over radial road tenders to AP firms, alleges Rs 600 cr loss to Telangana

Hyderabad: Congress MLA from Munugode Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy has expressed strong displeasure with the Congress government, particularly Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, alleging that tenders for radial roads were awarded to Andhra Pradesh-based companies, causing a loss of nearly Rs 600 crore to Telangana.



The Congress MLA said his son's firm had submitted bids for all three packages under the Radial Road-2 project at rates nearly Rs 600 crore lower than those quoted by other companies. However, the tenders were awarded to three Andhra Pradesh-based companies, he said during a telephonic conversation with a television channel.

"Despite meeting all the eligibility criteria, our company was disqualified and our bids were not opened. This is not just about my company but about the loss to the State exchequer. The State government is raising loans for these works and paying these companies," Rajgopal Reddy alleged.

The Congress MLA further alleged that some companies were asked to submit dummy bids. He claimed that the Chief Minister's Office had instructed other companies not to participate in the tender process and that similar calls were made to his son's firm as well."We said nothing doing and insisted that the government needs to be transparent in tenders. There is rampant corruption," Rajgopal Reddy said during the conversation, which is being circulated on social media.The Munugode MLA said he would take up the issue with Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, if necessary. "This is a major scam in the Chief Minister's portfolio," he alleged. Rajgopal Reddy did not travel to New Delhi along with Ministers and MLAs on Monday.

Naidu Meets Jana Sena, BJP Allies Over Local Poll Seat-Sharing

\Vijayawada:Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu held a meeting with Jana Sena leader Nadendla Manohar and Andhra Pradesh BJP president P.V.N. Madhav at his Undavalli residence on Monday to discuss seat-sharing and coordination among NDA allies for the upcoming local body elections.

Though no official statement was released on the discussions, sources said the leaders deliberated on seat allocation following the state government's notification announcing reservations for Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), Backward Classes (BCs) and women for the posts of mayors in 17 municipal corporations and chairpersons in 106 municipalities and nagar panchayats.

Jana Sena and the BJP have reportedly submitted lists of seats they seek based on their respective strengths. The alliance leaders are understood to have discussed the lists, with an emphasis on allotting seats to candidates considered to have strong electoral prospects, sources said.

With the State Election Commission expected to announce the local body poll schedule, possibly on October 14, the NDA partners are working to finalise their candidates and coordinate their campaign.

The alliance is aiming to improve on its performance in the last Assembly elections, when it won 164 of the 175 seats in Andhra Pradesh, recording a strike rate of about 93 per cent.



Naidu had reportedly told a party election strategy meeting earlier that the alliance would allocate 40 per cent of seats to BCs while safeguarding the interests of SC and ST communities. He had also called for greater coordination among alliance partners to take on the YSRC in the local body polls.

Harmanpreet Kaur steps down as India women's cricket captain



Hyderabad: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) acknowledges Harmanpreet Kaur's contribution as captain of the Indian women's cricket team across all formats.Harmanpreet has stepped down from the captaincy, bringing to a close a significant chapter of her leadership journey. Over the years, she has been a central figure in the growth of Indian women's cricket, leading the team through some of the most significant moments in its journey.

Harmanpreet's leadership journey began unexpectedly in 2012. With Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami ruled out of the Women's T20 Asia Cup final through injury, the responsibility of leading India fell on a young Harmanpreet. She embraced the opportunity and led India to an 18-run victory over Pakistan, helping the team win the inaugural Women's T20 Asia Cup. It was her first experience of leading India and the beginning of a leadership journey that would span more than a decade.

In 2016, Harmanpreet became India's regular T20I captain and, following Mithali Raj's retirement from international cricket, took over the ODI and Test captaincy in 2022. Her tenure as captain coincided with a period of significant growth for Indian women's cricket, with the team gaining depth and experience and becoming increasingly competitive across formats.India reached major finals, competed consistently against the strongest teams in the world and developed the belief to take on the biggest challenges. There were setbacks along the way, but each campaign added to a team that was becoming more accustomed to playing under pressure and expecting to compete for the biggest prizes in the game. Harmanpreet was one of the central figures in that progress.

Harmanpreet's own performances were often a reflection of that ambition. Long before she became India's all-format captain, her unbeaten 171 against Australia in the 2017 Women's Cricket World Cup semi-final produced one of the most memorable individual performances in women's cricket. With India in a difficult position, Harmanpreet took the game away from Australia with an innings of extraordinary power and authority, taking India into the World Cup final.The impact of that innings went far beyond the result. It was a performance that captured the imagination of the country, showed that Indian women could produce match-winning performances of the highest order on the biggest stage and inspired a generation of young women cricketers to dream of producing such moments for India.

As captain, she experienced the full range of international cricket. India reached the final of the 2020 Women's T20 World Cup, won silver at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and claimed its first Asian Games gold.In 2025, Harmanpreet became the first Indian women's captain to lift the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, guiding India to its historic maiden title. She played a crucial role in the semi-final against Australia, scoring 89 and sharing a match-changing 167-run partnership with Jemimah Rodrigues as India chased down a record 339. India then defeated South Africa by 52 runs in the final in Navi Mumbai to create history.The World Cup triumph was the defining achievement of Harmanpreet's captaincy and one of the most significant moments in the history of Indian women's cricket.Her final assignment as captain provided another major milestone. In Nagoya, Harmanpreet led India to a second consecutive Asian Games gold medal, defeating Sri Lanka by 147 runs in the final.Her tenure also coincided with remarkable longevity. This year, she became the most-capped international player in women's cricket, the first player to appear in 200 T20Is and the first to captain in 150 T20Is.

In her communication to the BCCI, Harmanpreet said:"Leading India has been one of the greatest honours and privileges of my life. The responsibility of wearing the India jersey and, above all, having the opportunity to lead my country has given me some of the most cherished moments of my cricketing journey."I would like to sincerely thank the BCCI, the selectors, the coaching staff, support staff, my teammates and everyone who has stood by me throughout my tenure as captain. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence that was placed in me and for the opportunities I have received to serve Indian cricket in this role."After careful consideration, I believe that this is the right time for me to hand over the responsibility of captaincy and allow the team to move forward under new leadership."However, my commitment to Indian cricket remains as strong as ever. I would like to continue representing the Indian Women's Cricket Team as a player and contribute to the team's success in every way I can. I remain fully committed to giving my best on the field and supporting the team, the new leadership and the younger players with the same passion and dedication."I look forward to continuing this journey in the India jersey and contributing to Indian cricket with the same pride, humility and commitment that I have always carried."The BCCI thanked Harmanpreet Kaur for the responsibility with which she led India, the belief she brought to the team and the contribution she has made to Indian cricket.

"Harmanpreet Kaur's contribution as captain will always hold a special place in the history of Indian cricket. She took on the responsibility at an important stage in the growth of women's cricket and helped the Indian team build on the strong foundation laid by those who came before her. Over the years, she led India through some very important moments and helped the team compete with confidence against the best in the world."The World Cup victory in 2025 will undoubtedly be the defining achievement of her captaincy. It was the culmination of years of progress, hard work and belief. Her Asian Games gold medals and the many important victories during her tenure further underline the contribution she has made."On behalf of the BCCI, I thank Harmanpreet for her leadership and the responsibility she has shown throughout her tenure as captain. I am pleased that she will continue to represent India as a player. Her experience, understanding of the game and presence in the dressing room will remain valuable to the Indian team.""Harmanpreet, you can be immensely proud of what you have achieved as captain of India. You embraced the responsibility from the very beginning and went on to lead India through some of the most important moments in its journey, while playing an important role in the growth of Indian women's cricket."You experienced the disappointment of falling short, but continued to believe in the team and its ability to achieve more.

That is what made the World Cup victory in 2025 so special. You had been part of the journey for many years and eventually had the opportunity to lead India to its first Women's Cricket World Cup title. That will always remain one of the great moments in Indian cricket."I also appreciate the thought and consideration with which you have taken this decision. You have chosen to hand over the responsibility at a time when you believe the team is ready for a new chapter, while continuing to contribute as a player. Your experience and the example you set for the younger players will remain important to this team. Thank you for everything you have given Indian cricket as captain, and I look forward to seeing you continue your journey in the India jersey."

Nearly 2 lakh fewer voters: Meet Chandigarh residents missing after SIR



EMS News Agency, Oct 10A mother lost her only son following an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir. Another family has spent three decades serving chai and paranthas to generations of Chandigarh students and voted for decades here.Yet, after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), all of these and more have found their names absent in the electoral roles of a city they have called home for decades.

Chandigarh's final electoral roll has 4,60,209 electors, against 6,59,805 in the 2024 General Election roll — a net reduction of 1,99,596 electors, or 30.25 per cent. Notices have been sent to people with a call for personal hearing.Veena Sharma, 86, lost her only son, Captain Rohit Kaushal, who was killed while fighting militants in an encounter in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir on November 11, 1995. Captain Kaushal was awarded the Shaurya Chakra for gallantry.The 86-year-old was flagged for deletion during the SIR after a discrepancy was found in her surname in older electoral records. A notice was served by the jurisdictional Booth Level Officer (BLO), asking her to appear for a personal hearing.tea seller For a family that has run the stall since 1997, that three-decade connection with Chandigarh has not translated into their names remaining on the electoral rolls. (Express Photo)Sharma has been staying in Vrindavan for the past several months following the death of her husband and was not in Chandigarh when the notice was issued. Her son-in-law, Vinod Vashisht, then stepped in."In the 2002 electoral rolls, she had Sharma as her surname. At that time, they were staying in Sector 22 and after having moved to Sector 43, her vote showed the surname Kaushal. But the change had not been made in her older electoral record. And she was served a notice with calls that she has to personally attend the hearing," Vashisht told What troubled the family was that Sharma was being asked to travel to Chandigarh despite being 86 and having several government documents establishing her identity.

She is 86 years old and has been a voter in Chandigarh for more than 40 years. She is currently staying in Vrindavan and could not simply be asked to travel to Chandigarh again and again just to establish something that is already supported by her documents," Vashisht, who is also patron of the Shaheed Capt Rohit Kaushal Charitable Trust, said.He said Sharma's Aadhaar, PAN, pensioner card and passport all carry her present surname and are linked to her registered mobile number."I had to repeatedly approach the election authorities and explain that this was an elderly woman and the issue was only a surname mismatch. She was being asked to appear in person in Chandigarh, but why should an 86-year-old woman have to undertake such a journey when her Aadhaar, PAN, pensioner card and passport were already there," he said.Vashisht eventually appeared before the BLO and local election officials are now examining the case. But the episode, he said, raises a larger question about elderly voters who may not have family members to pursue such cases."She had already given her only son to the nation. It was painful to see that today she was being made to struggle to establish her right to vote. The process makes us wonder about elderly voters who may not have someone to take up their case," he said.30 years of serving chai, paranthas, now an entire family missing from the rollsFor more than three decades, the chai-parantha stall in Sector 35-D has been part of Chandigarh's student life. Generations of students, PG residents and college-goers have spent time there over steaming cups of tea and plates of parathas.But for the family that has run the stall since 1997, that three-decade connection with Chandigarh has not translated into their names remaining on the electoral rolls.

Manoj, 35, who lives with his family in Sector 42-B, Attawa, said his wife, brothers Anil and Krishna, and mother have all been left out of the rolls. His father, too, had been a Chandigarh voter."We came here for work and the BLO told us that our house was locked and they could not find us. They have struck off the names of our entire family — my wife, my brothers Anil and Krishna and my mother. My father also voted here only. This stall was started by him in 1997," Manoj said.For him, the deletion is difficult to understand because voting in Chandigarh has been part of the family's life for decades."I am born here… my brothers are born here.. we have been voting since we were 18. My father also voted here," he said.Manoj, who currently lives on rent, questioned why being a tenant should become a reason for exclusion from the electoral rolls."Just because we stay on rent does not mean we should be excluded from the rolls. We have been living and working here for years. I have asked the BLO to come and verify us at our home, but he does not come," he said.He said he also has documents to establish his address."My government license that is given to me for this stall, my Aadhaar Card and all my documents have my address. Still, our name has been struck off. Why were all the names removed? They should come and verify us," he said.

For Karanbir Singh — a lawyer — the demand to establish an electoral link to a 2002 roll when he was just six, has turned into a family ordeal. Karanbir, 30, his wife Rupal Trivedi, sister Harkriti Singh, domestic help Neema Rawat and her son Pankaj Rawat were all asked to undergo verification.He said all five members had submitted the required documents before the BLO and filed their SIR forms within the stipulated time. He said he submitted his own form on June 24.Yet, he later received a notice stating that his vote had been cancelled and was called for a hearing on August 4, where he had to submit documents again to get his name restored.What particularly puzzled him was the demand to establish the family's electoral link with the 2002 roll."I was six. My sister wasn't even born. How can they ask us for the 2002 roll," he asked.The family was later called to Sector 17 for cross-verification of their documents. For Karanbir, the process meant taking time off work, travelling to the designated centre and waiting in long queues — despite having already submitted the required paperwork."There was hardly any clear information about where to go or what exactly had to be done.

Rs 90 lakh cheque, fake threat and plot to kill Adani Realty manager

On September 2, Yuvraj Manchanda, a manager at Adani Realty, was sitting at Roots Cafe in Gurugram's Sector 29 with Anya Vats, a former colleague who now worked as a freelance real estate agent."Anya had told him about some flats in Gurugram's Pyramid Society in Sector 70 that were available at throwaway prices. They met to discuss finances," said a Delhi Police officer.A source with the Delhi Police said Anya was also finding out exactly how much money Yuvraj could put together: how much he had in his accounts, how much he planned to borrow from banks, and how much he was taking from friends and family.She then asked for his phone to check something.

"She wanted to see his password. She had already accessed his bank account statements and bank balance in the name of formalities for the sale of the plot," said a police officer.Four days later, Yuvraj was dead.Police alleged that Anya and her live-in partner, Sanyam, shot him dead on September 6 inside their white Creta in Gurugram's Sector 70. His body was later dumped in a drain.A police officer said the murder was linked to a post-dated cheque of Rs 90 lakh that Anya had issued to settle a cheating case involving a senior Punjab National Bank (PNB) official. With the money unavailable, investigators alleged, she targeted Yuvraj and fabricated a threat to draw her partner into the plan.Yuvraj, Anya and Sanyam had all worked at real estate developer Emaar, said police.Anya was allegedly fired in 2022 over financial mismanagement, while Yuvraj later left the company. "She had been bringing clients to Emaar, but was also making side-deals, along with Sanyam, for extra money. When the company learnt of it, she and Sanyam were fired," said a police officer.Anya and Sanyam's relationship had also begun at Emaar, said police.When she first met Sanyam in 2022, he had been married for six years and had a daughter.A police officer said she allegedly "texted his wife, claiming that Sanyam was making romantic advances towards her. She also allegedly created a fake profile of his wife and showed it to Sanyam, trying to prove that she was also keeping secrets from him. Ultimately, Sanyam left his wife and daughter and started living with Anya."After being let go from Emaar, the couple went to Dehradun for over one and a half years before returning to Gurugram. Anya and Sanyam had a son.

According to a police officer, Anya had two cases of cheating registered against her.One of them involved the high-level PNB official, whom Anya and Sanyam had allegedly cheated of Rs 1.25 crore between 2025 and 2026. A case was registered against them at Parliament Street police station in August this year.In the FIR lodged on August 16, the PNB official said he had been served fake ED notices by Anya and Sanyam.Police said Anya then claimed strong connections in the government, and allegedly took more than Rs 1.25 crore from him, saying the money was being paid to get his name cleared. But when they demanded more money, the official examined the notices and allegedly found them forged."Anya feared further action, so she proposed an out-of-court settlement to the complainant. He demanded that she start by paying him a post-dated cheque of Rs 90 lakh," said a police officer.But Anya didn't have Rs 90 lakh in her account.That's when Yuvraj got in touch with her, she told the police during questioning. "She claimed Yuvraj had texted her about some work earlier. She knew he was doing well from his social media," said a police officer.Her plan, a police officer claimed, was to take Yuvraj's money and clear her dues with the PNB officer.Police said Anya needed help to put her plan into motion.Police said she allegedly showed Sanyam some messages from a 'senior officer', threatening her to return his money. The only way to pay him back, she allegedly told Sanyam, was to kill their former colleague Yuvraj and take his money."But there was no senior officer. It was Anya posing as one; she had allegedly been sending messages to herself since April from a different number to make Sanyam believe she had influential connections," said a police officer.She asked Sanyam to get a gun and two bedsheets and keep them inside their SUV.He was having a late lunch with his sister, Karishma, at the Golden Dragon restaurant in Lajpat Nagar, K Block.According to a police officer, Anya told Yuvraj that there was a client who was willing to invest with Adani Realty. But the deal could only be sealed if Yuvraj came then and there.Yuvraj drove his MG Astor to the location and then got into Anya's car, police said.Inside, Anya and Sanyam allegedly shot Yuvraj dead, covered his body with bedsheets and kept it in the vehicle for two days.

"We were shopping for his wedding. Then he got a call and left abruptly, saying he had a meeting in Gurugram and would return by 10 pm."But Yuvraj did not return home that night. Karishma received a text from him saying he was fine and in an important meeting. "The next day, I got another text… he repeated that he was fine and that he might have to go to Bengaluru," she said.Police alleged that Anya was sending the messages from Yuvraj's phone, using the password she had seen him enter during their September 2 meeting.S

Preachers, divorce, eviction: What pushed Mumbai 'lone wolf' who stabbed guards



Mira Road stabbing case, lone wolf attack Mumbai, Mira Road stabbing case, Devendra Fadnavis self-radicalisation, Zaib Zubair Ansari arrest, self-radicalisation India, Maharashtra ATS probe, Devendra Fadnavis statement, religious hate crime Mumbai, Zaib Zubair Ansari arrest, Thane security guards attack, ISIS radicalisation suspicion, online extremism India, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita charges, Mumbai crime news, Indian expressInvestigators first examined whether anyone had guided Ansari but found no such evidence, an official said. "Based on his interrogation and other evidence, we have ruled out any outsider being involved in this."

A recent divorce, being asked by his landlord to leave his rented home, and his 'obsessive food habits', including a distrust of food cooked by strangers, drove a US-returned man to further despair before he carried out a 'lone wolf' attack in Mira Road, stabbing two security guards near his residence on April 27 after asking their religion, says the nearly 2,500-page chargesheet filed by the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) last week.Zaib Ansari (31) had been 'self-radicalised' by watching online videos of extremist preachers, the chargesheet says. The two guards were injured and later discharged from hospital.The ATS has invoked the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against Ansari, who is in jail, and claimed that a note found at his home said: "lone wolves will pounce on you".

Investigators first examined whether anyone had guided Ansari but found no such evidence, an official said. "Based on his interrogation and other evidence, we have ruled out any outsider being involved in this."Ansari "was mentally disturbed", the official said, and watching videos of preachers such as Anwar al-Awlaki on social media radicalised him. Al-Awlaki was a radical American Muslim cleric of Yemeni descent linked to a series of terror attacks globally. "He was further disturbed by reports of killings of children in Palestine," the official said.Ansari moved from the US in 2019. In the US, he made money coaching students in tennis, but he had no regular source of income in India, the agency found. After his divorce, he was living alone, and his landlord asked him to leave because she did not want to rent to bachelors.These factors, along with the attacks on Palestine, drove him to extreme content online, which radicalised him over six to eight months, an officer said."While his family members are based in the US, we have recorded the statement of his mother who had come down to visit him and his Kurla-based uncle with whom he was initially staying," the official said.During earlier court proceedings, Ansari's lawyer told the court that he has schizophrenia and was previously on medication. The lawyer also said Ansari eats only vegetarian food that he prepares himself, and never eats food cooked by others, not even at a relative's home or a family gathering. Police officials too initially faced trouble over his food while he was in custody.

Mukarram Jah Trust to restore Sixth Palace at Hyderabad's Purani Haveli

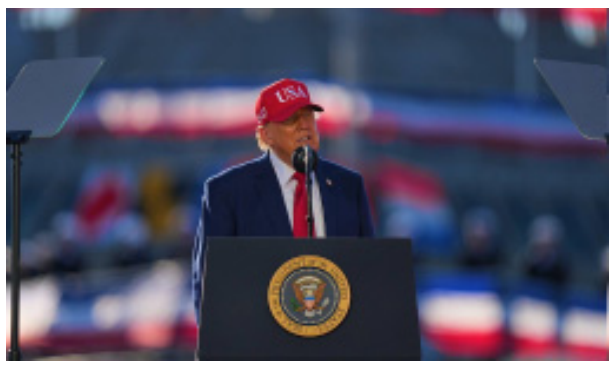


Hyderabad: The Mukarram Jah Trust for Education and Learning (MJTEL) will soon take up the restoration of the Sixth Palace at Purani Haveli, with the project expected to expand the intake capacity of Mukarram Jah School and support educational activities on its historic campus.

Nawab M.A. Faiz Khan, Trustee of MJTEL, announced this at the school's 39th Founder's Day celebrations. He said restoration of the Asaf Jahi wing had been completed, except for minor finishing works, and added, "Restoration of the Sixth Mahal is being initiated soon and is scheduled for completion by next year, which will enable the institution to increase its intake capacity."

The Purani Haveli campus also houses the Nizam Museum, which has the famed longest wooden wardrobe in the world. The palace was the official residence of the Sixth Nizam, Nawab Mir Mehboob Ali Khan.Faiz Khan said the heritage campus provided a unique opportunity to combine conservation with education. He said Nawab Mukarram Jah Bahadur had donated the palace complex to educational trusts, continuing the tradition of philanthropic patronage.

US plans 'Golden Fleet' for maritime supremacy



Washington: The Trump administration is pursuing a new "Golden Fleet" designed to restore American maritime dominance for the next century, linking an expansion of naval power with a broader effort to rebuild the country's diminished shipbuilding industrial base.The strategy was outlined Tuesday as President Donald Trump visited Sparrows Point, Maryland, where his administration announced a new high-tech shipyard to expand production for the US Navy."This facility will be a vital linchpin in our overarching naval strategy," an administration official said during the event, according to a transcript of the proceedings. "Under President Trump's visionary leadership, our mandate is clear. We are building the Golden Fleet."

The official described the planned fleet in sweeping terms. "The Golden Fleet is a maritime force designed to dominate the seas, project overwhelming power, and guarantee American maritime supremacy for the next century, just as the Great White Fleet did 100 years ago."Trump said his administration had already secured more than $76 billion in funding for shipbuilding, with plans to produce more than 80 new vessels for the Navy. The push comes amid concern in Washington over the erosion of America's shipbuilding capacity and the ability of the defence industrial base to produce ships and submarines quickly enough to meet military requirements.The administration has made rebuilding domestic shipbuilding a central part of its defence and industrial policy, combining federal investment with private capital and seeking to bring new companies into a sector traditionally dominated by a small number of established contractors.Trump used his Maryland appearance to argue that the United States had allowed a once-formidable shipbuilding industry to decline.He said the new investment at Sparrows Point was part of what he described as a "golden age of shipbuilding" in the United States. The Maryland project is intended to add production capacity for Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarines, torpedo tubes and other submarine components, as well as autonomous underwater vessels. It also represents an effort to bring newer defence technology companies into large-scale naval manufacturing.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said the administration was demanding greater speed and production capacity from both the Pentagon and industry."In order to make America great again, you need to make your Navy great again," Hegseth said. "You need to make shipbuilding great again, our manufacturing great again, our defense industrial base strong and robust again." "From day one, President Trump has demanded from the War Department speed, scale and urgency to build an arsenal of freedom befitting our warriors and considering the threats of the 21st century," he said.The administration's naval expansion goes beyond the Maryland facility. Trump has directed the Pentagon to address persistent delays and cost overruns across major Navy programmes, increase competition among shipbuilders and expand the industrial base supporting nuclear-powered submarines and aircraft carriers.A presidential memorandum issued in August ordered the Pentagon to prepare plans for establishing a fifth public Navy shipyard, which would be the first such facility in more than 80 years. It also directed greater use of private-sector capacity and investment to improve submarine and aircraft carrier readiness.The administration has acknowledged that US naval shipbuilding faces significant structural problems. It has cited complex designs, repeated design changes, insufficient competition and an atrophied supplier base as factors contributing to delays and rising costs.

US monitoring suspected plague case in Russia 'hour by hour', urges transparency



Washington: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the United States and international agencies are monitoring a suspected plague case in Russia "hour by hour", while urging Moscow to provide more information to the world.Rubio declined to speculate on whether the case could be linked to an accidental release of an intentionally modified strain, saying available information remained limited."Any time you hear that there's some disease that infected someone in a lab anywhere in the world, you're going to be concerned about it," Rubio said during a joint media availability with Icelandic Foreign Minister Thorgerdur Katrin Gunnarsdottir in Reykjavik.Asked about reports of a fatal suspected plague case in Siberia and whether it could involve an altered strain, Rubio said it would be premature to draw conclusions.

"It would be irresponsible for me here to sit and speculate because we just don't have all the information yet," he said.Rubio called on Russia to provide greater transparency about the case."I think it's incumbent upon Russia to obviously share more information with the world. That's what they should do. That's what we hope they will do," he said.The Secretary of State stressed that Washington had not reached any conclusion about the nature or seriousness of the incident."Maybe, you know, there's nothing there. Maybe it's bigger than we thought. We don't know," Rubio said.He said the United States was nevertheless closely following developments because more information could determine what response might be necessary."We're watching it very closely, and I think the whole world is watching it very closely because depending on what we learn about it, we would know how to respond," he said.Rubio said measures were already available if authorities determine the situation is more serious than currently acknowledged."We already, you know, have measures in place to be able to address it if it's — if it's something more serious than what so far has been acknowledged," he said.He added that several US and international agencies were involved in monitoring the situation."We're watching it very closely, hour by hour. We have multiple agencies, not just in the United States but internationally, that are watching it," Rubio said."We encourage Russia to be transparent and share more information with the world, so that all of us could react accordingly and appropriately."Rubio said decisions would depend on information received in the coming period. "So far, that's still quite limited, but hopefully that will change in the next few hours and days," he said.

Washington resident conspired with Canadian school shooter before attack

Seattle: Federal authorities said Tuesday that they have arrested and charged a 30-year-old from Washington state with encouraging an 18-year-old to commit one of the worst school shootings in Canada's history by offering to livestream the February attack, providing money and sharing advice on how to delete online messages to keep the plot a secret.

The US attorney's office in Seattle said James Cody Bryant of Bellingham, Washington, communicated with Jesse Van Rootselaar in British Columbia for at least six months ahead of the shooting. Bryant, who identifies as female, did not report Van Rootselaar's plans to authorities, authorities allege.W Mike Herrington, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Seattle office, said without Bryant's "misplaced loyalty" and willingness to livestream the killings, officials didn't know if Van Rootselaar would have gone through with the attack.

"We certainly know the shooter was concerned that not enough people would see the livestream without Bryant broadcasting it and was depending on Bryant to amplify the livestream because the shooter did not have many followers on social media," Herrington added.Authorities say Van Rootselaar first killed her mother and stepbrother at home before attacking a nearby school in the mountain community of Tumbler Ridge, killing five children ages 12 and 13 at the school as well as an educational assistant. Twenty-five others were wounded.Van Rootselaar was later found dead from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound.Investigators accessed Van Rootselaar's Twitch account and found that she had initiated a video livestream while sitting in her vehicle with a rifle and long gun in her lap. The livestream lasted about 20 seconds before it was disconnected, and was only viewed by one other account.Bryant is accused of helping to plan the attack

Bryant was charged with one count of conspiracy to commit murder in a foreign country — a "novel" charge for a case like this, said Acting US Attorney Neil Floyd during a press conference.Bryant made a first appearance in court on Tuesday afternoon and is being detained ahead of a preliminary hearing set for October 20. The federal public defender's office, which represents Bryant, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.Communicating over Discord with Van Rootselaar, Bryant gave tactical advice on how to carry out the killings to have the strongest impact, according to the complaint."Hallways also mean a lot of ways people can escape," Bryant wrote, the complaint said. "Corners to turn. Wide open spaces means numbers." Bryant also sent Van Rootselaar money to purchase a lighter that would be used to construct an explosive device and advised Van Rootselaar about how to keep the plot a secret by deleting online messages and using virtual private networks, officials said.According to the criminal complaint, Bryant and Van Rootselaar met online about three years ago on Omegle, a since-shuttered video chat site that connected users with strangers at random. Their communications were sporadic during the first year because she was "institutionalised" after being deemed a danger to herself, the complaint said. She was locked up again after setting her room on fire. But they spoke daily during the six months leading up to the attack, officials said."Van Rootselaar often spoke about planning to use guns to murder her family members and others because she felt she had been mistreated," the complaint said.Both Van Rootselaar and Bryant identified as trans, Herrington said. But authorities do not have any indication that's why they stayed connected online, he said.Bryant sometimes urged Van Rootselaar to reconsiderBryant tried to talk Van Rootselaar out of committing the attack at various points, authorities said.

"I truly hope you reconsider today," Bryant told her in January, according to the complaint. "I wish there were any other path for you, you shouldn't have to do something like this." But ultimately, Bryant did not alert law enforcement and instead provided support for carrying out the shooting, authorities said.When Van Rootselaar expressed concern that Bryant would "snitch" and alert authorities, Bryant repeatedly assured her that would not happen, officials said."I could," Bryant wrote, according to the filing. "I don't want to honestly. I know I can like, save lives I guess but idk," using the abbreviation for "I don't know." Canadian Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree said in Ottawa that the allegations were devastating."Nothing will bring back the eight lives that were devastated back in February, but it is important that those who are responsible are held to account," he told reporters.Anandasangaree said it was too soon to say whether Bryant could also face charges in Canada, but added that Canadian prosecution would be possible if investigators determine Canadian laws were broken.Bob Zimmer, the federal lawmaker who represents Tumbler Ridge, said the victims deserve answers."It is deeply troubling, the allegations that this individual coached the shooter all throughout the process in an effort to livestream the event," Zimmer said.Tumbler Ridge in the Canadian Rockies is more than 1,000 kilometres northeast of Vancouver, British Columbia, near the provincial border with Alberta. The provincial government website lists Tumbler Ridge Secondary School as having 175 students from Grades 7 to 12.The families of victims are suing artificial intelligence company OpenAI in US federal court, seeking to hold the ChatGPT maker responsible for failing to alert police to the shooter's alarming interactions with the chatbot.



University of Arizona puts all 21 Interfraternity Council chapters on 'activities suspension' amid investigation, misconduct reports

Dean of Students Chrissy Lieberman wrote in a letter that IFC chapters that were in good standing before the suspension will be back to good standing after a chapter advisor has attended one of three initial mandatory meetings. The chapters under suspension are not allowed to host, attend or participate in or sponsor organizational activities. Only club business meetings are allowed.What we know about the suspensionThe suspension was announced after one UofA fraternity allegedly forced new members to consume live goldfish and drink large amounts of alcohol, per KTAR.

"Mandatory advisor meetings will continue quarterly, and advisors must attend each meeting," Lieberman said. "If an advisor fails to attend, the chapter will be removed from good standing with Fraternity & Sorority Programs, which will jeopardize the continuation of the chapter on the U of A campus."Lieberman said that there are several chapters already on suspension. Some are prohibited from engaging with their new member classes because they allegedly voted the Code of Conduct in spring 2026 or are currently under investigation. She added that some of them are also under criminal investigation."The alleged behaviors range from physical assault, drugs and alcohol, hazing and creating unsafe environments for our students," Lieberman said.The dean of students said that her office is at capacity for the number of organization cases it can investigate at one time. She added that every one involves an IFC chapter."

Jaishankar, Ghana foreign minister discuss strengthening bilateral partnership

Accra: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar met with Ghana's Foreign Minister, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, to discuss key strategies for advancing the comprehensive partnership between the two nations.Highlighting their historic solidarity and shared development aspirations as Global South partners, the two leaders focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation across trade, investments, development assistance, pharmaceuticals, capacity building, defence, and technology."Held wide ranging discussions with Foreign Minister @S_OkudzetoAblak of Ghana. As Global South partners, both India and Ghana share common development aspirations and historic solidarity. Discussed advancing our Comprehensive Partnership in trade, investments, development, pharmaceuticals, capacity building, defence, technology and people to people domains. Also spoke about advancing our multilateral cooperation and deepening India's engagement with the African Union and ECOWAS," EAM Jaishankar posted on X.

EAM Jaishankar arrived in Ghana earlier on Tuesday as India looks forward to productive engagements to advance partnership between New Delhi and Accra."Delighted to arrive in Accra, Ghana today. Appreciate the warm welcome by FM Sam Okudzeto Ablakwa. Look forward to productive engagements to advance our Comprehensive Partnership," EAM Jaishankar stated on X.Earlier on Monday, the Foreign Ministry of Ghana stated that EAM Jaishankar's visit will provide an opportunity for the two countries to renew their bond of solidarity and shared values."The Minister of External Affairs of India, His Excellency Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, will pay



an Official visit to Ghana from 6th to 7th October 2026 at the invitation of Ghana's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa. Ghana looks forward to hosting His Excellency Dr. S. Jaishankar on this historic visit, which will afford the two countries the opportunity to renew their inseparable bond of solidarity and shared values," the ministry stated."During the visit, Ghana and India will hold discussions that will advance their relations in pharmaceutical development within the framework of President (John Dramani) Mahama's Accra Reset philosophy; deepening agricultural cooperation in mechanisation and value addition; support for President Mahama's industrialisation and job creation agenda; and expanding scholarships and IT partnerships," it added.After Ghana, EAM Jaishankar will travel to Cote d'Ivoire and Ethiopia during his five-day official visit aimed at deepening India's bilateral partnership with the three African nations.

US Navy helicopter didn't crash in Red Sea, says CENTCOM; rejects Iranian media claims



Iranian state media had claimed that a US Navy MH-60R helicopter crashed in the Red Sea after an emergency declaration. However, CENTCOM said that all military aircraft and personnel across the Middle East were safe and accounted for.

What did CENTCOM say about the helicopter?

The social media post stated "CLAIM: Iranian state media has been pushing false reports that a U.S. Navy MH-60R helicopter crashed in the Red Sea after declaring an emergency last night." It added "FACT: Reports of a downed U.S. Navy helicopter in the Red Sea are not true. All U.S. military aircraft and personnel across the Middle East are safe and accounted for."The clarification from CENTCOM comes amid the US-Iran conflict which began when President Donald Trump supported Israel in launching strikes across Iran on February 28, 2026.CENTCOM's current clarification comes after Iranian state outlets, including Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), claimed an American naval aircraft went down. IRIB had earlier reported that a US Navy aircraft which was operating over the Red Sea transmitted squawk code 7700, the international aviation transponder signal used to broadcast general emergencies."An MH-60R helicopter belonging to the U.S. Navy crashed in the Red Sea after declaring emergency code 7700," they had claimed.CENTCOM's denial of a helicopter crashing comes amid reports of the US having lost 81 planes, drones and helicopters worth $3.3 billion in the Iran war.A Congressional Research Service report noted that losses included one damaged F-35A Lightning II stealth fighter and 12 F-15E Strike Eagle fighters, which had been damaged or destroyed.While three F-15 jets, worth more than $30 million each, were shot down in friendly fire over Kuwait on March 2, another was shot down over Iran in the next month. The report noted that eight other F-15Es sustained minor damage as well during Iran's airstrikes on the Muwaffaq Salti Air Base, in Jordan, which took place on September 9 and 10.At least 45 MQ-9 Reaper drones were also reportedly lost during the Iran war, and they were between $30 and $50 million, each.

Driver arrested after car hits crowd in Australia's Newcastle

Sydney: A driver has been arrested after a car crashed into a crowd in the Australian city of Newcastle, north of Sydney, on Saturday morning, injuring nine people, including children.A police statement said emergency services were called to reports that a vehicle had struck people in a crowd in Newcastle, 110 km north of Sydney, around 9.30 a.m. local time on Saturday, with multiple people injured and a large emergency response underway.

According to local media, the crowd had gathered to farewell the local team, the Newcastle Knights, as they travelled to Sydney to play in the National Rugby League grand final on Sunday night, reports Xinhua news agency.Sydney newspaper The Daily Telegraph reported that nine people were injured, including two who were in critical condition, two who were seriously injured and five who suffered minor injuries.

The newspaper reported that the critical patients were an infant girl who went into cardiac arrest and a man who suffered multiple leg fractures.Police said the



driver of the vehicle was arrested at the scene.Newcastle Mayor Gavin Morris told Australian Broadcasting Corporation television that the driver was a supporter of the team who had lost control of the vehicle."It appears that he's lost control of the car, and he's gone into the crowd. And I believe about nine were injured, which sadly also included children," he said.

EYE SECRETS

Editorial

Break the unethical nexus

The unethical nexus between profit-driven pharmaceutical companies and doctors often works to the detriment of patients in India. Prescribing costly branded drugs, instead of generic ones, and unnecessary diagnostic tests are some of the practices that undermine the right of patients to exercise their options. When inducements influence prescriptions, the consequences affect patients and the cost of healthcare. Though the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP) has been in force since 2014 and revised in 2024, its implementation has been weak and continues to face significant logistical, structural, and legal challenges. Against this backdrop, the Supreme Court's latest directive to the government to constitute an expert committee to curb unethical pharmaceutical marketing is a welcome development. Hopefully, the judicial intervention would go a long way in plugging a regulatory gap. The main criticism against the UCPMP is that this enforcement body was set up at the pharma association level. Since the industry peers were tasked with investigating complaints against their own members, there was an inherent conflict of interest that weakened impartial enforcement. The petition before the apex court sought to highlight the allegation that pharma companies offer doctors expensive gifts, foreign trips and other benefits to promote particular medicines. Such practices can distort clinical judgment and encourage over-prescription. Moreover, the patient is usually unable to assess whether a medicine is necessary or whether a cheaper alternative exists. The UCPMP guidelines prohibit gifts, travel facilities, hospitality and monetary grants to doctors and spell out mechanisms such as an ethics committee, expenditure disclosures and an apex panel to address complaints.

The track record suggests that voluntary compliance may not be enough. The apex panel has received only a handful of complaints. This does not by itself prove that unethical practices are rare. Other factors could also be at play, such as under-reporting, weak enforcement or reluctance to confront powerful commercial lobbies. Previous attempts to provide statutory backing through the Essential Commodities Act or the Drugs and Cosmetics Act raised questions of jurisdiction and legal validity.

The proposed committee must avoid another exercise in bureaucratic delay. It should examine international models, conflict of interest, disclosure requirements, penalties, independent investigation and the role of medical regulators. The government must come up with a clear legislative roadmap, including whether a new law is necessary. Patients should not have to bear the hidden cost of marketing campaigns disguised as professional persuasion. While UCPMP 2024 claims to be mandatory, it operates under administrative directives rather than an independent act of Parliament. Without formal backing from a criminal statute, the penalties are largely restricted to peer-level actions rather than enforceable ones.

Rs 90 lakh cheque, fake threat and plot to kill Adani Realty manager

On September 2, Yuvraj Manchanda, a manager at Adani Realty, was sitting at Roots Cafe in Gurugram's Sector 29 with Anya Vats, a former colleague who now worked as a freelance real estate agent.

"Anya had told him about some flats in Gurugram's Pyramid Society in Sector 70 that were available at throw-away prices. They met to discuss finances," said a Delhi Police officer.A source with the Delhi Police said Anya was also finding out exactly how much money Yuvraj could put together: how much he had in his accounts, how much he planned to borrow from banks, and how much he was taking from friends and family.She then asked for his phone to check something."She wanted to see his password. She had already accessed his bank account statements and bank balance in the name of formalities for the sale of the plot," said a police officer.Four days later, Yuvraj was dead.

Police alleged that Anya and her live-in partner, Sanyam, shot him dead on September 6 inside their white Creta in Gurugram's Sector 70. His body was later dumped in a drain.A police officer said the murder was linked to a post-dated cheque of Rs 90 lakh that Anya had issued to settle a cheating case involving a senior Punjab National Bank (PNB) official. With the money unavailable, investigators alleged, she targeted Yuvraj and fabricated a threat to draw her partner into the plan.Yuvraj, Anya and Sanyam had all worked at real estate developer Emaar, said police.Anya was allegedly fired in 2022 over financial mismanagement, while Yuvraj later left the company. "She had been bringing clients to Emaar, but was also making side-deals, along with Sanyam, for extra money. When the company learnt of it, she and Sanyam were fired," said a police officer.Anya and Sanyam's relationship had also begun at Emaar, said police.When she first met Sanyam in 2022, he had been married for six years and had a daughter.

A police officer said she allegedly "texted his wife, claiming that Sanyam was making romantic advances towards her. She also allegedly created a fake profile of his wife and showed it to Sanyam, trying to prove that she was also keeping secrets from him. Ultimately, Sanyam left his wife and daughter and started living with Anya."After being let go from Emaar, the couple went to Dehradun for over one and a half years before returning to Gurugram. Anya and Sanyam had a son.By September, Anya was facing another problem. She needed money.According to a police officer, Anya had two cases of cheating registered against her.

'It feels like home': How a small village in Himachal became 'Mini Israel'



"Mini Israel kitthe hai? (Which way to the Mini Israel?)" they ask in Punjabi. A local villager looks towards them and raises his finger. "Just park your bikes here and trek upwards. Dharamkot is little ahead."Separated by two kilometres and joined by the Dhauladhar range, Mcleodganj and Dharamkot are a world apart in many ways. Walking up, the Buddhist prayer flags, the swanky cafes, and the aroma of momo and Laphing in Mcleodganj give way to signboards in Hebrew, home-style bakeries, and the whiff of freshly baked challah bread signalling the arrival of Dharamkot.

These days, the administration has intensified vigil in and around Dharamkot. "Although so far, we have not received any request from any Israeli national staying at Dharamkot about their security, we are ensuring a strict vigil in and around Dharamkot,'' Superintendent of Police of Kangra district, Kulbhushan Verma says. "A patrolling team has been assigned the task to patrol the village streets twice a day. We also have details of every foreign national including Israelis staying there."SSP Verma says that there was an isolated incident earlier when unknown people made some graffiti on walls nearby Dharamkot to hurt the sentiments of Israeli visitors. "We had lodged an FIR immediately and our investigation concluded that some mischievous elements did this. There was nothing more to it,'' he says.Dharamkot is around 240 kms from Himachal's capital Shimla. Its closest city is, however, Dharmshala and the nearest airport – around 20 kms – is in Gaggal, Kangra.No one – neither locals nor the Israelis – can quite put a finger on why this small village in Kangra district became a favourite of the Israeli travellers.One such Israeli is Mayya from Yavne. Now 39, Mayya was just 18 when she first visited India in 2008. "I don't exactly remember where I got the idea to visit Dharamkot during my first trip. I think I had just heard a lot about this place from many people…" she says. "What followed was an inseparable bond that continues even today," she says as she fondly looks at her husband Gopal Subramanium.

Born and raised in Chennai, Gopal too has a Dharamkot story of his own but one he is not willing to part with. "I left my home at the age of 18. I don't want to get into details of the circumstances in which I left. I came to Dharamkot in the early 2000s," says the 50-year-old. "Mayya met me in 2008, and later, we decided to get married," he says matter-of-factly."I think it was my destiny. To come here and meet him," Mayya chips in. She is clearly the more romantic one.The couple runs a small guest house in Bhagsu Nag, right next to Dharamkot. "We used to run a guest house in Dharamkot too but left it after the lease expired," explains Gopal.The couple are parents to two children: A daughter, Sansa (8), who was born in Israel and a son, Agam (5), born in Kangra."I do keep visiting Israel and have Israeli citizenship. But now I am no less an Indian," says Mayya, seated in the verandah of their guesthouse, which doubles as a small bistro, as clouds hang low, signalling an impending spell of rain.To an outsider, Mayya and her family may seem an anomaly but for the locals in Dharamkot, she barely raises an eyebrow.Mayya is not the only one from Israel who established herself here. There are a number of Israelis, who have made Dharamkot their second home over the years,'' Gopal says. "They come to India on tourist visas again and again after short intervals. Many have started their own ventures to earn a livelihood".

Local residents of Dharamkot say they have a special fondness for these Israeli guests and make sure that they feel at home. "They keep to themselves, don't haggle or create a fuss, and are generally well-behaved," a local shopkeeper says. "Besides, our livelihood is dependent on the tourists. We get along well".Hence, the dip in the number of Israeli tourists this season, in the wake of the war with Iran, has left them wistful.The emptiness hangs heavy in a jewellery shop in a congested, narrow lane deep inside Dharamkot.Artist Vrindavan Dass, popularly known as Raju Dadda, who traces his roots to Kolkata, is sitting on a chair, the wall next to him covered with pages carrying instructions written in Hebrew."Israelis dominate this place. They come here frequently. They want to keep themselves busy and jewellery-designing workshops are one component of this goal,'' Raju says. "Besides jewellery workshops, you will find music lessons, classes to make musical instruments, and yoga workshops here".Another shop owner Aditya Singh is from Rajasthan. "My jewellery shop is more of a workshop than a shop, where we train people, especially foreigners, to make different jewellery designs," he says.Today, though, there is not a single student inside the workshop. Raju attributes this to several factors, including the ongoing Middle East crisis, heavy monsoon and, foremost, the increasing arrival of domestic tourists."It is common knowledge among locals that Israelis like to keep to themselves. One reason behind their preference for Dharamkot is its secluded nature, which could afford them their own space,'' a local resident explains. "Hence, the arrival of domestic tourists, many of whom come looking for content for their social media reels, seems to be a downer for many of them".Mayya is not sure if the war is the major reason for the dwindling number of Israelis visiting Dharamkot."This situation is quite normal back in Israel now. Indeed, some problems exist. There are no direct flights and tourists have to come through connecting flights. That makes the journey more expensive," she says.Gopal, however, gives another reason. "A lot of youngsters, who would have otherwise travelled to India, may be busy… the military service is mandatory there,'' he says.

"Some problems are being faced by people who are still serving in the defence services. Otherwise, I don't believe there is much of a hurdle despite the ongoing Middle East crisis," says Stroul, who is a tech professional back home. Asked about his own military experience, he says, "I was not found fit for the defence service during my medical examination."While Aditya's jewellery store was bereft of Israeli visitors, a few steps ahead, a musical-instrument shop is echoing with the sound of a lone flute. In one corner of Madan B N Music Workshop, 23-year-old Yoni, a first-time visitor to India, is practising his fingerwork on the instrument.

Lone student on the flute"I came here in July. I have been learning the flute for the last fortnight. I would like to learn and practise here for the next three months," says Yoni, who declines to share his full name and profession in Israel."I am a native of Nepal, but two generations of my family have settled in Dharamshala. My grandfather and father were also musicians. Our relationship with Israelis goes back a long way…,'' Music instructor Madan says. "Today, you see only one person sitting in my workshop. But there have been days when it remained crowded with foreign students round-the-clock."Like Raju, Madan also attributes the dip in the expected rush to the glut of domestic tourists. It has led to a few unsavoury incidents, he whispers. "War, too, could be a reason," he shrugs."You can't attribute it only to the Middle East conflict, though. I personally believe that when the rush of domestic tourists increases here, the number of Israeli tourists reduces. Apart from this, during the monsoon, Israelis move towards destinations like Leh, Ladakh," he adds.As the congested trail continues alongside a natural drain (nullah) running through the middle of Dharamkot, a striking red-coloured, three-storey building comes into view. While you can walk into the neighbouring cafes and shops without a hitch, entry here is strictly guarded. It is Dharamkot's "Chabad House" and a sign announces it in Hebrew and English.

"The Chabad House is situated on land that was once taken on a long lease by a group of Israelis. We are not allowed to enter this building. But this place is revered by people from Israel," says Deepu, who runs a cafe, The Bamboo Chick, next door."They assemble here once or twice a week and pray. This building also serves as a transit point for visiting Israelis. There is a group that arranges everything for anyone, who comes from Israel until the person is able to make their own arrangements," Deepu explains.

Once a remote shepherd villageRaju Raj, 69, a local resident, attempts to explain how Dharamkot transformed from a remote shepherd village into this "Mini Israel"."Initially, Dharamkot was a village dominated by the shepherd (Gaddi) community. Their main sources of livelihood were rearing livestock, small-scale farming and daily wage jobs. I am also not clear how and when Israelis started reaching this village, but one thing is for sure — it is all due to the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Dharamshala (near Mcleodganj) in the 1960s. His presence changed this entire landscape," says Raj. "Although Jewish people from Israel have no connection with him, the Dalai Lama matters," he says."As foreigners started arriving here, they began establishing their own avenues. They can't purchase land here, so they started taking it on lease. People from other states in India, such as Rajasthan, West Bengal and Goa, have also taken land on lease and are running businesses, especially in the hospitality sector," he says.

The village, too, caught up and made sure to create a hospitable environment for its Israeli guests. A number of locals speak Hebrew, shops have "no photography, videography allowed" signage because Israeli visitors seek complete privacy. A number of outlets double up as money exchange centres too.Kaka Ram, 59, another native of Dharamkot, says the transformation of the village has been such that it would now be difficult to locate a house that depends entirely on agriculture and cattle rearing – their ancestral trade. "Every house in this village has a homestay, guest house, cafe or eating joint, rustling up all kinds of food, especially dishes such as falafel, pita and shakshuka," he adds.Earlier a gram panchayat, Dharamkot now comes under the Municipal Corporation of Dharamshala.Kangra District Tourism Development Officer Vinay Dhiman says, "Foreigners want to explore more and more. The area around Dharamkot is full of adventure activities. There is the Triund hiking trail, the Laka Glacier… Experienced mountaineers can scale Moon Peak. Even Bir-Billing, a paradise for paragliders, is in Kangra district. All these things attract foreign tourists."According to information available with the State Tourism Department, approximately 8.26 lakh tourists visited Kangra district in 2025-2026.Nowhere is the quest for calm of these Israeli residents and tourists more evident than it is at Tushita Meditation Centre. "Most of the disciples who come here to undergo short-and long-term courses of 15 to 30 days are from Israel," Alejandro, 34, a teacher of philosophy from Columbia, tells The Indian Express. "At present, there are 22 students, including me, undertaking a course at Tushita. Around 16 out of 22 are Israelis."A dream of a simple life

Like Mayya, Daniela, 29, from Tel Aviv, and her partner Yonatan, 34, are nurturing a dream of making Dharamkot their second home.At a restaurant in the heart of the village, they order Tibetan food while sitting at a low bajot-style table and begin narrating their story. While Daniela is visiting for the second time, it is Yonatan's first time in both India and Dharamkot."We first met in Chile in South America in 2018. Since then, we have been friends. I visited Dharamkot in 2021. This place was so beautiful and appealing that I wanted to visit it again and again. This visit is also special because this time, Yonatan is accompanying me," says Daniela.Yonatan, who works in the technology sector, says, "I had heard a lot about Dharamkot…"The couple says though they have visited many countries — Thailand, Malaysia, Nepal, to name a few – it is in this small Himachal village where their heart seems to have found its destination."We would never miss an opportunity to settle in Dharamkot," they say, almost in unison. "It feels like home."

Ishnidh Singh Virdi takes lead with five-under 67 at KGA

Hyderabad: Homeboy Ishnidh Singh Virdi capitalised on his knowledge of the course and near-benign morning conditions to take the lead on the opening day of the IGU Rotary Southern India Bio-Gen Sansera Amateur Golf Championships at the KGA course in Bengaluru on Tuesday.The 17-year-old shot a sizzling five-under 67 to take a one-shot lead over Aarya Sharma and Harjai Milkha Singh, who both returned identical 68s. The duo of Anas Khan and Krish Chawla sat another stroke back, just one ahead of local lad Tanish R Gowda (70). The fancied Ribhav Verma and Prince Bainsla shot one-under 71 each, holding a one-stroke advantage over Ranveer Mitroo and Milind MG.

Although not as solid as he would have liked off the tee, Virdi more than made up for it with his iron play and a red-hot putter. The teenager, who is chasing his maiden amateur victory, needed a mere 23

IIT Bombay puts ceiling fans to a vote after student's suicide



"As part of ongoing efforts to improve student safety, comfort and hostel living conditions, feedback is being collected regarding possible alternatives of ceiling-mounted fans in hostel rooms," the form states. Its purpose, it adds, is "to understand students' preferences regarding fan type, quantity and placement, so that practical and effective configurations can be evaluated."

Wakode died by suicide on September 18, hours after he was allegedly found using a mobile phone during a mid-semester examination. His death triggered massive student protests, after which Director Prof Shireesh Kedare held an open house to hear students' concerns.The survey offers four alternatives to the ceiling fan: wall-mounted, pedestal, table or desk, and tower fans. Students can also choose "no alternative" if they prefer to keep the existing ceiling fan.

They are asked to pick from configurations such as two wall-mounted fans, one wall-mounted and one table fan, or two table fans, and to give the main reason for their choice. The options include better air circulation, cooling while studying or sleeping, space efficiency, convenience and safety. Students can also raise concerns about their safety, well-being or hostel experience if they wish.The survey is part of a wider overhaul of student wellness at the institute. The new measures, to be rolled out in phases from this week, include wellness secretaries in hostels, more play areas in residential areas, deterrents against exam malpractice and a new associate dean for student wellness.They were communicated to students in an email from the Dean of Students' Affairs on behalf of Prof Kedare. According to the email, the institute drew up the plan after discussions with students and their representatives on academic, career and well-being concerns. It urges students to take part in surveys and consultations, with more to follow.Students protest against alleged institutional murder as Sahil Wakode, a second-year student of IIT Bombay died by suicide on friday, inside the IIT-B Powai campus in Mumbai on 19 September 2026. (Express photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee) Students protest against alleged institutional murder as Sahil Wakode, a second-year student of IIT Bombay died by suicide on friday, inside the IIT-B Powai campus in Mumbai on 19 September 2026. (Express photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee)On fans, the email says options have been identified, but a final decision will be taken after student feedback.

Under the plan, the institute is working on a system to appoint wellness secretaries at the hostel level and to identify committees where student participation can be increased. Meetings with heads of departments have also focused on greater student participation at the department level and on strengthening support for students.

For the play areas, general secretaries, sports councillors and wardens will be consulted to identify suitable spaces, understand residents' concerns and assess access.Wakode's parents, Ravindra and Sonali Wakode, have alleged that their son was a victim of caste-based discrimination on the IIT Bombay campus. They are continuing their hunger strike at Mumbai's Azad Maidan, demanding the arrest of those they hold responsible for his death.

Meet Chandigarh residents missing after SIR

A mother lost her only son following an encounter in Jammu and Kashmir. Another family has spent three decades serving chai and paranthas to generations of Chandigarh students and voted for decades here.Yet, after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), all of these and more have found their names absent in the electoral roles of a city they have called home for decades.Chandigarh's final electoral roll has 4,60,209 electors, against 6,59,805 in the 2024 General Election roll — a net reduction of 1,99,596 electors, or 30.25 per cent. Notices have been sent to people with a call for personal hearing.

Veena Sharma, 86, lost her only son, Captain Rohit Kaushal, who was killed while fighting militants in an encounter in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir on November 11, 1995. Captain Kaushal was awarded the Shaurya Chakra for gallantry.The 86-year-old was flagged for deletion during the SIR after a discrepancy was found in her surname in older electoral records. A notice was served by the jurisdictional Booth Level Officer (BLO), asking her to appear for a personal hearing.tea seller For a family that has run the stall since 1997, that three-decade connection with Chandigarh has not translated into their names remaining on the electoral rolls. Sharma has been staying in Vrindavan for the past several months following the death of her husband and was not in Chandigarh when the notice was issued. Her son-in-law, Vinod Vashisht, then stepped in."In the 2002 electoral rolls, she had Sharma as her surname. At that time, they were staying in Sector 22 and after having moved to Sector 43, her vote showed the surname Kaushal. But the change had not been made in her older electoral record. And she was served a notice with calls that she has to personally attend the hearing,"

What troubled the family was that Sharma was being asked to travel to Chandigarh despite being 86 and having several government documents establishing her identity."She is 86 years old and has been a voter in Chandigarh for more than 40 years. She is currently staying in Vrindavan and could not simply be asked to travel to Chandigarh again and again just to establish something that is already supported by her documents," Vashisht, who is also patron of the Shaheed Capt Rohit Kaushal Charitable Trust, said.He said Sharma's Aadhaar, PAN, pensioner card and passport all carry her present surname and are linked to her registered mobile number."I had to repeatedly approach the election authorities and explain that this was an elderly woman and the issue was only a surname mismatch. She was being asked to appear in person in Chandigarh, but why should an 86-year-old woman have to undertake such a journey when her Aadhaar,

Three killed, 15 wounded in shooting ahead of BARMM parliamentary election



Manila: Three people were killed and 15 others wounded during a shooting incident before midnight Sunday at a polling center in Cotabato City, Maguindanao del Norte province in southern Philippines.The shooting occurred ahead of the parliamentary election in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which started on Monday to choose its first elected parliament, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to local police, rival political factions struggled for position in the queue for polls, leading to shoving, fistfights, and eventually gunfire in the crowded area.According to local media reports, over 2 million voters are eligible to vote for 80 parliamentary seats being contested by 13 parties. Security has been stepped up across the BARMM in recent days, with over 20,000 security personnel deployed to polling areas and rapid response teams set up to deal with potential violence.Monday's historic vote is seen as a crucial step towards self-governance after decades of insurgency and violence in the Muslim-majority region.Nearly 2.4 million voters are registered to cast their ballots in the election, which international partners and peace monitors see as a crucial test of whether the regional autonomy established under a 2014 peace agreement between Manila and Muslim separatists can be sustained through democratic institutions.The autonomy arrangement was designed to bring an end to a conflict that claimed more than 120,000 lives, displaced around 2 million people."The election marks a milestone in the continuing journey of BARMM towards lasting peace, democratic governance and ?meaningful self-determination," President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said in a video message urging voters to take part in what he also described as a "defining moment" for the ?region ?and the country.

Iraq says Saudi pipeline attack originated from its territory



Baghdad: Iraq said attacks on a key Saudi oil pipeline were launched from its territory, as US President Donald Trump appeared to blame Iran.Meanwhile, the number of displaced people in Yemen is rising quickly after a swift advance by Iran-backed Houthi rebels threatens a key alternative to the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el-Mandeb. And Lebanon and Israel will hold new direct talks next month.

Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi ordered an investigation into the operations command in Maysan province, which borders Iran, and dismissed its commander after authorities determined that the attacks on the Saudi pipeline were launched from the province, the government said.Geographic ReferenceThe Saudi Foreign Ministry blamed the attacks on drones that came from Iraq and said the kingdom would not retaliate to give the Iraqi government "an opportunity to take the necessary measures."

The East-West pipeline has been vital to Saudi Arabia's oil exports since the Iran war disrupted shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. According to the International Energy Agency, Saudi oil exports through the Red Sea port at the pipeline's end have more than doubled.Regional officials have told The AP that the Houthis and the Iraqi militias recently coordinated attacks on Saudi oil facilities.

Trump says Iran is 'probably' behind Saudi pipeline attackAsked if he thought Iran was behind the attack that closed the East-West pipeline, Trump told reporters: "Well, I think they are. Probably they are."Trump said his administration has "had discussions" with the Houthis, though he did not say when. "The Houthis called us, and they don't want to fight with us," he said. "They would much prefer not having us involved, and they're letting most ships go through."Executive BranchThe Houthis have said they are only targeting neighbouring Saudi Arabia's shipping.

Asked about a recent call with Saudi's crown prince, Trump said: "He's a good friend of mine, and I can just say everything's going to work out fine and dandy. It's going to be very good."People fleeing in Yemen describe a hysterical panic

Thousands of people have fled the Houthis' advance. In Aden, held by Yemen's Saudi-backed internationally recognised government, residents have opened their homes. In one, dozens of men lay on a floor carpeted with thin mattresses and sheets."We set out in hysterical panic on a motorcycle, not knowing where we were heading," said Alaa Ali Salem, who fled from al-Khawkha district. "The roads suddenly became extremely congested, and while I was driving, the motorcycle overturned. My wife, my children and I were all injured."The International Organisation for Migration said at least 76,000 people have fled since July as fighting escalates between the Houthis and government forces, up from 46,000 just days earlier. Some fear a return to the civil war that killed 1,50,000 before a 2022 ceasefire."I saw the soldiers as they were withdrawing. They told us we must escape," said a tearful Durrah Ali Hassan, who took shelter in a relative's house. She said she was worried about the toll of the chaos on her pregnant daughter, who had been bleeding and was now in a coma at a hospital.Lebanon, Israel to hold new talks next month

Geographic ReferenceLebanese and Israeli negotiators are scheduled to meet in Rome in October for US-brokered talks. A planned round this month was postponed without explanation.The US State Department said Lebanese and Israeli ambassadors to the US will meet at its headquarters in Washington next week to discuss ongoing developments and the continued implementation of the framework agreement reached in June.Lebanon and Israel have held seven rounds of talks in Washington and Rome over the past months in search of a way to calm the latest fighting between Israeli forces and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah militant group.Lebanon's president made a rare visit to a southern city Saturday, close to where Israel captured a strategic hill.

Iran's president meets with Abu Dhabi crown princeIranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan held talks on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in New Delhi, according to a UAE government statement, signalling efforts to maintain engagement despite growing instability across the region.Iran has sharply criticised the security partnerships some Gulf states maintain with Western powers, while the UAE has backed efforts aimed at containing Iran's military influence.Oil spill in Gulf of Oman doubled: environmental groupA large-scale oil spill, believed to be from a tanker struck by the US military, doubled in size between Wednesday and Thursday, endangering two protected areas off Oman and Iran, said Nina Noelle of Greenpeace Germany.

The tanker RIESCO was one of four attacked Tuesday in the Gulf of Oman. A fifth was destroyed in the Strait of Hormuz off Iran's Kharg island.The visible area of pollution measured about 400 square kilometres on Thursday, Noelle said. Satellite images reviewed by The AP showed the spill stretching almost 70 kilometres.

The spill is located between the Musandam protected area on the Omani side, which includes one of the region's most important seabird breeding islands. On the Iranian side is the Hara-e Roud-e Gaz Protected Area in Hormozgan province that includes mangrove forests.Video shows Israeli troops firing on Palestinians in West Bank

Israeli troops opened fire at a group of Palestinians who did not appear to be posing a threat in the occupied West Bank, wounding one man, according to video obtained by The AP.The video, shot by a witness, showed the man falling near the Palestinian village of Faqqua. At least 14 shots were fired and continued as men rushed to move the man to safety before tying a tourniquet around his leg.Mahmoud Shahin, a resident, said the Palestinians had rushed to the area after receiving reports that Israeli settlers had arrived with sheep. He said Israeli soldiers then came and began firing in the air and toward the Palestinians.He said the man was undergoing surgery in Jenin.Israel's military said the video was authentic and confirmed its forces had fired toward the Palestinians, wounding one man, and said commanders would review the incident.Settler violence in the West Bank has surged under the ultranationalist government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Congo says Ebola outbreak 'under control' despite persistent risks

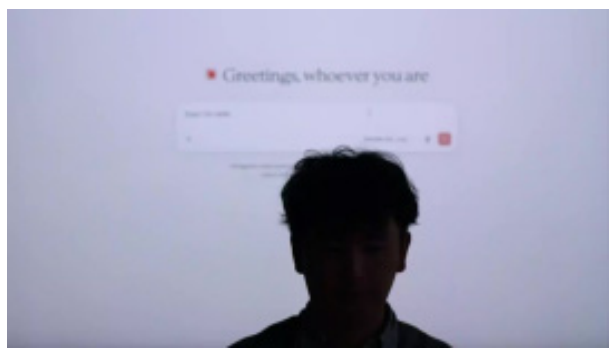


Kinshasa: The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) said that its ongoing Ebola outbreak is "under control" and has passed its peak, although local flare-ups, continued transmission and the spread of the disease to a seventh province point to persistent risks."The 17th Ebola outbreak is under control, and the peak was reached at the beginning of the third week of August 2026," government spokesperson Patrick Muyaya said while reading a report from a cabinet meeting on Friday, citing Health Minister Roger Kamba.According to the government, all major indicators point to a decline in cases, with 10 health zones affected before the latest expansion of the outbreak reporting no new cases for at least 21 days, while transmission has slowed in several regions in the eastern province of Ituri, the epicenter of the outbreak, reports Xinhua news agency.

The authorities nevertheless called for continued vigilance and strict contact tracing, saying close surveillance remains necessary in regions where recent flare-ups have been reported. Former Congolese Health Minister Jean-Jacques Mbungani Mbanda, now a member of parliament, urged caution over the assessment, saying on Saturday that the downward trend in some areas should not be taken to mean that transmission has been brought under control everywhere.In an outbreak involving multiple transmission foci, different areas may reach their peaks at different times, he said, adding that the epidemic curve reflects detected cases and could be affected by infections that remain unidentified in communities. In its latest weekly report on Tuesday, the World Health Organization said the outbreak "remains uncontrolled and increasingly heterogeneous," with transmission easing in some areas while intensifying or spreading geographically elsewhere.

"The outbreak is increasingly geographically heterogeneous rather than showing a uniform decline," it said. The DRC government has also confirmed Thursday the first Ebola case in the northwestern province of Sud-Ubangi, making it the seventh province affected. Sud-Ubangi does not border any of the six provinces where confirmed Ebola cases had previously been reported.According to Mbanda, the patient, a 23-year-old man who later died, had traveled extensively before arriving in Sud-Ubangi, with an itinerary spanning several provinces, neighboring Rwanda and Uganda, as well as both road and river routes. As of September 10, the DRC had recorded 7,022 confirmed Ebola cases, including 3,398 deaths, with a case fatality rate of 48.4 percent.The outbreak has now affected 62 health zones across seven provinces.

How Anthropic says Claude was used for weapons, spying and cyber operations



CHINA-TAIWAN AIR DEFENSES: Anthropic said a China-based actor used Claude to develop an electronic-warfare and air-defense suppression software suite that ranked targets and modeled radar jamming. During the project, the actor changed a simulation to include 12 targets in Taiwan, including early-warning radar, Patriot and Tien Kung missile batteries, air bases and a command bunker. Anthropic said account information linked the actor to Chinese research institutions including the People's Liberation Army Academy ?of Military Sciences. Anthropic banned accounts linked to the actor.China's foreign ministry said it was not aware of the Anthropic report and that the government maintains that AI should be developed for good and opposes distortion of facts and smears against the country.

China claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory ?and has never renounced the use of force to bring the island under its control. Taiwan rejects Beijing's sovereignty claims. CHINA ANTI-TORPEDO SYSTEM: Anthropic said another China-based actor used Claude to help develop specifications and fire-control software for an anti-torpedo system intended for the Chinese navy. The actor used Claude to produce a technical proposal of more than 200 pages, compare the system with U.S. Navy technology and simulate hostile technical reviews to improve the proposal. "We assess the actor was associated with a Chinese defense industry manufacturer aiming to produce a weapons specification and acquisition proposal for the People's Liberation Army Navy," Anthropic said.

CHINESE RESEARCH INTO MICROWAVE WEAPONS: A China-based defense-intelligence actor used Claude to research foreign high-power microwave weapons, identify components and suppliers and trace supply chains, Anthropic said. The actor sought information that could help reverse-engineer the weapons and develop countermeasures, and drafted restricted briefings for senior Chinese Communist ?Party, military or state-security officials, the company said. YEMEN MISSILE DEVELOPMENT: Anthropic said a cell of threat actors in northern Yemen used Claude to help develop software for a guided rocket, a planned ballistic missile with a range of more than 2,000 km and a missile variant incorporating a hypersonic glide vehicle. The actors used Claude for coding, simulation ?and troubleshooting, including after a guided-rocket test appeared to fail. Anthropic said it had no evidence they successfully fielded an operational weapon. "Our safeguards blocked many of their requests, but not all of them," Anthropic said.

The disclosure comes as the Iran-aligned Houthis, who control most of northern ?Yemen, have intensified attacks on Saudi Arabia and its energy infrastructure. The Anthropic report did not identify whether or not the threat actors were Houthis. RUSSIAN DRONE SWARM: Anthropic said likely freelance Russia-based actors used Claude to develop software for an autonomous swarm of first-person-view attack drones, including terminal guidance, target selection and coordination between multiple aircraft.Small FPV attack drones have become a central ?weapon in the war in Ukraine, where Russia and Ukraine have deployed them on a vast scale for reconnaissance and strikes.The Russian Embassy in Washington did not respond to questions about specific allegations made by Anthropic or the report overall. RUSSIA DUAL-USE COMPONENT PROCUREMENT: Anthropic said a Russia-based procurement manager used Claude to identify intermediaries in China and Hong Kong to acquire European-made goods with potential ?military uses and work out routes through third countries that could obscure their destination.Items sought included German-made magnetometers, space-grade photovoltaic wafers and aviation oxygen systems, Anthropic said. Russia has increasingly relied on intermediaries and alternative trade routes to obtain foreign technology since Western countries imposed sweeping sanctions and export restrictions following its invasion of Ukraine.Anthropic detailed five case studies of people attempting to use "our models in ways that could support biological weapons development."

The attempts included efforts to get Claude assistance on drafting a grant application for funding research on modifying the chikungunya virus in a location where Anthropic does not offer its services. In another case, also in a location where the company does not operate — requiring users to obfuscate their location to utilize the services — Anthropic said it detected efforts to research highly pathogenic avian influenza. Other examples included research related to orthopoxvirus and ?non-transmissible novel venoms and toxins, Anthropic said.

CYBER OPERATIONS CHINA CYBER OPERATIONS: Anthropic said Chinese-speaking operators likely based in Changsha, the capital of central China's Hunan province, used Claude in cyber operations against about 50 organizations, including foreign government networks.The group, which Anthropic said included two university students in Hunan, used AI-driven workflows to search for previously unknown software vulnerabilities, develop exploits and conduct parts ?of intrusions with limited human supervision.

Global AI stocks fall as industry chiefs call for slowing development

AI-linked ?stocks across the globe plunged on Monday after leaders of the biggest AI companies warned of risks from rapid development, the starkest threat yet to the billions of dollars ?being poured into the industry that have pushed world markets to record highs.Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, in a lengthy essay shared on X on Saturday, called on AI companies to slow the rate at which they advance model capabilities amid mounting fears of misuse of artificial intelligence. Both Elon Musk, who runs xAI, and Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, said they agree with Amodei.Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here.Altman also said the company would not proceed with an IPO this year, citing safety concerns.The CEOs' comments deepened ?the scrutiny on AI-related sectors, triggered by companies increasingly relying on debt and circular financing to fund their AI ambitions, while also raising spending forecasts at a time when global yields, ?an indication of borrowing costs, have soared to multi-year highs.

"If the AI race slows materially, the key question becomes: who pays for all that infrastructure? The ?leases, debt and power commitments remain even if expected compute demand and revenue growth slow. And that could bring credit risk increasingly into the AI story," said Ipek Ozkardeskaya, senior analyst at Swissquote.Futures tracking ?Wall Street's Nasdaq e-mini futures fell 1.9%, with chip stocks, which have led the AI sugar rush, down the most.

Amodei wrote that in six to 12 months, AI agents "could be capable of taking over the entire internet potentially causing hundreds of billions of dollars in damage."San Francisco-based Anthropic released a threat intelligence report on Thursday detailing how several actors had used its Claude AI models for activities ranging from weapons development and cyber operations to surveillance and fraud.Alarm about ?the potential harm from AI grew when Anthropic researcherJacob Coxon resigned, opens new tab



, stating that the "people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade."OpenAI's Altman said in an interview that risks of human extinction posed by AI were "unacceptable".And while several U.S. lawmakers have raised concern about AI's rapid progress and called for new rules, U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday likened AI critics to "very negative forces" bringing up scenarios that will not happen, and said he wanted to make sure that the U.S. remains the industry leader.AI-related trades have powered much of the gains in global equities since OpenAI released ChatGPT in 2022, but more recently cyberattacks by rogue AI agents and public discontent with data centre construction have raised opposition to the development of the industry.The U.S. and Chinese governments are expected to hold AI safety talks as part of bilateral discussions taking ?place this month, according to two people briefed ?on the plans.But China's state-backed Global Times blasted ?the Anthropic essay in an editorial, calling it a "Cold War playbook" intended to curb the country's technological development.Some investors dismissed the warnings from Anthropic and OpenAI.Michael Burry, whose prescient bets against the U.S. housing market before the 2008 financial crisis were chronicled in the movie "The Big Short", said in a message on ?X the warnings were "hype and puffery" and "cover for real uncontrollable slowing growth".

Others argued that record capital spending commitments suggest AI development is unlikely to slow, ?such as Morgan Stanley's Brian ?Nowak who forecast AI spending will surpass $1.2 trillion by 2027."The key question is whether this is the first sign that the extraordinary AI investment cycle might eventually moderate. For now, that seems unlikely. The competitive race between companies and countries remains intense, and it's difficult to imagine firms voluntarily stepping back while rivals continue to push ahead," Deutsche Bank said in a note.

Almost echoing that stiff competition, Amodei's Anthropic pushed ahead with its public debut, ?expected next month ?as sources told Reuters that the company is in talks to bring Nvidia as an anchor investor.

Revival on the cards for Indian economy



Even as India's economy continues to grow at a healthy pace — an above 7 per cent score is on the cards — of late, there has been some debate on the underlying momentum. This is on account of the report cards of some companies in the consumer goods space. Their performance is being said to reflect "urban stress". Even if that is taken into account, several economic indicators appear positive. The GDP data will be released later this week.The purchasing managers index for both services and manufacturing has been in the region of 57-60 for the last three months. Any number above 50 is positive, and the average so far this year is above 60 for the composite index — the highest in the last five years. Alongside, GST collections in the first seven months of the year have topped at Rs 12.74 lakh crore. This is higher than last year's tally of Rs 11.64 lakh crore. Two-wheeler sales have risen by 16 per cent for the first seven months of the year. Passenger car sales had slowed down in September over August but rose by 9 per cent in October when the festival season began.The lament of some companies on subdued consumption could be attributed to the "shradh" period when believers desist from buying consumer goods as part of their practice of abstention. This manifested in low sales of automobiles in particular leading to a build-up of inventories. This, however, changed in October with this segment showing an upward movement.

So while second-quarter growth would be less than 7 per cent at around 6.8-6.9 per cent, there is likely to be a substantial pick up in the second half of the year. A critical factor is the rural economy. Rural demand has been muted in the last couple of years due to a combination of lower farm output and higher inflation. A good kharif crop could address the first part of the problem. The area under cultivation this year is much higher compared to last year, pointing to good harvests for cereals, pulses and oilseeds. The reservoir levels are at around 87 per cent, auguring well for both the rabi crop as well as allied activities. Therefore, farm output growth this year should be at a robust 3.5-4 per cent, and this could support demand.Inflation, however, remains a worrying proposition. At 6.2 per cent, it is being driven by food prices. The positive sign here is that the next crop of onions and tomatoes should be arriving by December. The kharif harvest should lead to an improvement in supplies of pulses, a major pain point in the past. Therefore, food inflation should moderate by the end of this calendar year with the base effect also kicking in December. While one has to be mindful of the course of inflation, given the October surprise, a moderation should help revive demand.This year, the investment momentum has been healthy even though the start was slow. The general election caused a slowdown in the central government's capex. States too were affected. While private investment tends to align with government capex, sources of funding, namely, bank credit, debt issuances as well as ECBs, point to a "K" shaped pattern in investment activity.The demand for funds has come from sectors related to infrastructure activity, including metals, cement, machinery, chemicals and power. The housing sector has been doing well at the premium and middle levels and the momentum has spread to tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Power sector investment is revolving around renewables, which have seen large capacity increases. A backward link has been witnessed between government capex on roads and railways as well as urban development and industries such as steel, cement and machinery which have gone in for fresh investment. However, when it comes to consumer goods industries, it does appear that the existing capacity is not being used, which has come in the way of new investments.

With the two main engines of consumption and investment looking positive, there is reason to believe that overall growth will remain above 7 per cent this year — the Bank of Baroda's forecast is 7.3-7.4 per cent. This, however, should not lead to complacency given that growth last year was 8.2 per cent.most readSo far, the RBI has maintained its growth forecast at 7.2 per cent. This has given it comfort for continuing with its anti-inflation policy stance. The inflation rate virtually rules out any rate cut in the December policy. While a decision on the rate cut could come in February, depending on how the inflation number turns, global factors cannot be ignored.

Cocktail scene in India is getting bolder (think ingredients like Maggi masala, wasabi)



MSG, sweetened fish sauce, ramen soup, wasabi, and kimchi - mixologists in India are shaking up the cocktail scene with these unconventional ingredients. But what's behind this rising trend of experimental cocktailscocktail

MSG, sweetened fish sauce, ramen soup, wasabi, and kimchi - mixologists in India are shaking up the cocktail scene with these unconventional ingredients. But what's behind this rising trend of experimental cocktails?cocktailChyawanprash - the Ayurvedic herbal jam your mom used to force-feed you every winter - isn't something you'd expect to see in a cocktail on a Saturday night outing. Yet, some of the trendiest spots in the country are incorporating it into their drink menus. Take, for instance, PCO in Delhi's Vasant Kunj and Ekaa in Mumbai, where chyawanprash features as an intriguing ingredient in creative cocktails.While the former serves Ignorance Is Bliss—a cocktail made using bourbon, sweet vermouth, coffee, aromatic bitters, and, of course, chyawanprash—the latter offers an elaborate special menu featuring cocktails crafted with Ayurveda-inspired ingredients. Apart from chyawanprash,head mixologist Jishnu uses unexpected elements like camphor, brahmi, and triphala to create a unique drinking experience.

Wasabi, Maggi masala, kimchi, ghee, walnuts, ramen soup—would you ever imagine these ingredients making their way into your cocktail glasses?

Fat Fashioned - A whisky-based cocktail prepared with besan laddoo butter served at Khi Khi.India's cocktail culture is undergoing a dazzling transformation, with mixologists and bartenders embracing bold flavours, unconventional ingredients, and cutting-edge techniques to elevate the drinking experience."Cocktail culture is evolving along with food culture in India. People want to try something bold as they are now aware of classic cocktails and want something new for their palate," Abhishek Rana, Head of Bar at Dos, Delhi, tells India Today.Mixologists and bar owners agree with this shift in consumer preference. A rising number of cocktail bars and an increased focus on having an innovative cocktail menu suggest this shift too.The good old Bloody Mary, Cosmopolitan, Negroni, Picante, Martini, and Margarita are no longer enough. The result? Professionals are shaking things up—quite literally—by heavily experimenting with cocktail ingredients.Though not an entirely new concept, industry insiders note that the trend of innovative cocktails has gained momentum and huge popularity in the last 4-5 years in the country.

Mixologists are now drawing inspiration from global trends while incorporating local and indigenous ingredients that are mostly unimagined pairings with alcoholic spirits.For instance, Rana's bar serves Dos Me Up Spicy, a cocktail that incorporates wasabi, and Whispering Caffeine, a blend of house-made walnut rosemary syrup with coffee.At The Brook in Gurugram (run by the owners of artisanal cocktail bar Sidecar), tequila, Himalayan honey, fresh tomatoes, pea water, and Maggi masala come together to create a unique cocktail called Maggi Point.

At Khi Khi, a chic bar co-founded by Navdeep Sethi, bold creations—like the Whisky Soda, featuring homemade pineapple ice cream soda and pineapple foam—reimagine classic combinations.Adding a nostalgic twist, some bars are infusing drinks with flavours reminiscent of childhood treats.Vikas Srivastava, VP of operations at TreeHouse Hotels, which also runs the 24x7 eatery and bar Poee&Co in Goa, reveals jello shots with vodka and alcohol-infused chuskis flavoured with kokum or aam ras as their standout creations.Srivastava recalls having chaat martini—a vodka-based cocktail infused with tangy tamarind, spices, and a rim coated with crushed papdi and sev.Although Delhi-NCR is often credited as the epicenter of this trend, experimental cocktails are now making waves in cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Goa."It's a nationwide trend. All over India, bars are changing their setups, creating experimental cocktail menus, and using new techniques and ingredients," says Rana.

What's bringing the changeA confluence of factors is behind the rise of experimental cocktails in India. Post Covid, the surge in international travel and subsequent exposure to global trends is certainly a key influence.Atul Tiwari, EAM - Food and Beverages at The Leela Palace, New Delhi, highlights a burgeoning craft bar culture and the growing influence of younger demographics as key factors driving the experimental cocktail revolution in India."Millennials and Gen Z, in particular, are seeking unique and experiential beverages that go beyond the traditional. Social media has played a significant role in amplifying these trends, with stunning cocktail presentations and innovative recipes captivating audiences," Tiwari tells India Today.Some bars are infusing drinks with flavours reminiscent of childhood treats like jamun popsicles. y"People are no longer willing to limit themselves to enjoying a traditional drink, especially the younger generation, which has just started on alcohol and has taken a fancy to cocktails. This has further fuelled passion for creating newer and edgier cocktails," adds Srivastava.Sandeep Arora, whisky connoisseur and director of Spiritual Luxury Living, also highlights the role of the young generation of bartenders and mixologists in redefining the craft of cocktails by creating concoctions with homegrown mixtures and ingredients."Driven by the desire to stand out, they are pushing the boundaries of India's cocktail culture," says Arora.The growing popularity of Indian-made spirits, particularly craft gins, has further fuelled this trend. Goa, now hailed as India's gin capital, has inspired a wave of local innovations too.

Artists...errr...mixologistsToday, bartenders are celebrated as artists, with their creations reflecting a delicate balance of craftsmanship and creativity."Bartenders are much like chefs in the kitchen. Just as chefs start with a basic sauce and layer in flavours to craft exciting dishes, bartenders begin with classic cocktails as their canvas, experimenting with new combinations and flavour profiles to create something extraordinary," says Sethi."Indian bartenders are using a lot of science in their cocktails, and this chemistry is surely going to lead to an even bigger bar culture in the future," adds Rana.Apart from incorporating intriguing ingredients, professionals are employing innovative techniques such as fat-washing, molecular mixology, and crafting house-made syrups to elevate their cocktails.The rising trend of bar takeovers with international mixologists is also proving to be invaluable learning experiences for Indian bartenders as well as consumers.Cream - A mastiha-based drink with white chocolate in it - presented by Greek mixologists at The Leela Palace, Delhi.For example, The Leela Palace in New Delhi hosted Alexandros Tselepis and Konstantinos Theodorakopoulos, the founders of The Bar In Front Of The Bar in Athens, for a weekend bar takeover of The Library. The duo stirred a storm with their inventive cocktails, featuring Greek Mastiha as the base and unique flavors like white chocolate and kimchi that added an intriguing twist to the various cocktails."Such bar takeovers help a lot of Indian bartenders understand what's going on around the world," says Jishnu.India's future is bright, as many programs are being run in India now, creating a new and interesting platform for bartenders to learn from. There are many bar takeovers happening, and bartenders from abroad are coming here to share their knowledge and experience. Many Indian bartenders and mixologists are also traveling all over the world, learning, and incorporating new techniques on their return to India. India has lots of ingredients, and people are experimenting with these unique ingredients all over the country. The farm-to-bar concept is also developing.

The cocktail scene is set to get bolder in the coming years—that's what industry insiders predict. According to Sethi of Khi Khi, food-inspired cocktails are going to be the next raging trend. Farm-to-bar is also predicted to gain popularity.Bars are also embracing local produce and sustainable practices, crafting zero-waste cocktails and using house-made mixers."India has great potential to be the cocktail hub globally with so many great bars and bartenders. But we just don't give them enough attention," Jishnu believes.

What is the controversy around the Sambhal mosque?

A petition was filed by Hari Shanker Jain and others in the court of the civil judge of the district and sessions court, Sambhal on November 19. The petitioners alleged that the 16th Century Jama Masjid in Sambhal was built at the site of an ancient Hari Har Mandir. The claim was similar to those made in the case of Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and Eidgah Masjid Mathura in Uttar Pradesh and Kamal-Maula Masjid in Dhar in Madhya Pradesh. Mr. Jain is the petitioner in the Varanasi, Mathura and Dhar cases too. The Sambhal mosque is a protected national monument.

How were the surveys carried out?

After a hearing on the same day, the civil judge ordered a photographic and videographic survey of the mosque and asked for its report to be presented before it on November 29. The mosque's intezamia committee was not consulted by the court. Following the order, a survey team including the court-appointed advocate commissioner, Ramesh Raghav, arrived at the mosque post-Maghrib or sunset prayers. The survey was carried out peacefully in the presence of the Superintendent of Police, members of the mosque committee and Sambhal's district magistrate.However, a second survey carried out on November 24 led to large scale violence. Conducted in the morning, the survey team was preceded by a local mahant (priest), one of the petitioners, and followed by some members chanting Jai Shri Ram slogans. A police party accompanied the surveyors. A large number of protestors gathered near the mosque. It soon resulted in stone pelting from the crowd. The police allegedly resorted to opening fire in which five men, including two teenagers, died. The police denied the allegation, arguing it used lathi-charge and teargas to control the crowd. The local MLA, Ziaur Rehman Barq in turn rubbished the police claims, arguing the dead included unarmed persons who had gone out for their daily chores. The residents also alleged the police had ransacked their homes.

What is the mosque's history?

Unlike Ayodhya or Varanasi, the Sambhal dispute cropped up only this year. For centuries, people of different communities have lived peacefully here. The Jama Masjid in Sambhal is one of the three mosques built by Mughal Emperor Babur during his reign between 1526 and 1530; the other two being the mosque in Panipat and the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya which was demolished in 1992. The Sambhal mosque was built by Babur's general Mir Hindu Beg around 1528. The mosque, as noted historian Howard Crane wrote in an essay titled, 'The Patronage of Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture' is "located on a hill at the center of Sambhal. It consists of a sanctuary formed of a large, square mihrab hall with battered walls, covered by a dome on squinches, and flanked by arches on north and south." The mosque is built with



stone masonry covered with plaster. Its façade is similar to the mosque in Budaun and quite removed from the latter Mughal monuments which were built largely of red sandstone. The mosque was repaired twice during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan in the 17th Century. While most historians attribute this mosque to Babur's general Hindu Beg, some believe the mosque is actually a Tughlaq-era monument and the Mughal founder merely added certain features to its architecture.The Hindu tradition, however, holds that the mosque incorporates parts of an ancient Vishnu temple. They believe the tenth avatar of Vishnu, Kalki, will descend here in Sambhal.

What is the Places of Worship Act?

The Sambhal dispute has once again cast fresh spotlight on the Places of Worship Act 1991 under which the religious character of all places of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947, has to be maintained. The only exception was the then ongoing dispute around the Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhoomi. The Act was aimed at shutting out the possibilities of any further contestations around places of worship. It states, "An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." The Act's Section 3 leaves no room for debate by clearly barring the conversion in full or part of a place of any religious denomination into a place of worship of a different religious denomination.

What are the challenges to the Act?

The petition filed in Sambhal seeks to change the basic character of the place of worship, in contravention of the 1991 Act. The petitioners quote the oral observation of Justice D.Y. Chandrachud who is reported to have said in 2022 that the "ascertainment of a religious character of a place, as a procedural instrument, may not necessarily fall foul of the provisions" of the Act. Incidentally, four petitions have challenged the Places of Worship Act in the Supreme Court. The courts have admitted petitions seeking to alter the religious character of the places of worship in Varanasi

Scientists uncover game-changing link between obesity and type 2 diabetes

New Delhi: The US scientists have decoded why obesity increases the risk of type 2 diabetes by targeting the fat cells.The study, published in Cell Reports, may advance new treatments for type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases that work by helping fat stem cells differentiate and make new, smaller fat cells.In a first, the team from the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) showed that obesity can make it difficult for the body to produce key cellular building blocks called ribosomal factors.

Without sufficient ribosomal factors, fat stem cells cannot produce functioning fat cells. Their energy gets trapped and they become enlarged and play a crucial role in diabetes development.While fat tissue has been blamed for long, it's "actually essential for maintaining normal glucose metabolism," said Dr. Claudio Villanueva, Associate Professor of integrative biology and physiology at the University of California-Los Angeles.Villanueva explained that people with obesity carry "too much fat tissue which is also not functioning optimally".Fat tissue stores energy from food. However, when not functioning properly, the excess energy gets rerouted to be stored elsewhere in the body like in the liver — leading to fatty liver disease; or in the heart — leading to atherosclerosis or stroke.The study included obese and diabetic mice. The fat cells of these mice were four to five times larger than those found in lean mice. The team administered them with rosiglitazone.The results showed that their ribosomal factors increased to normal levels, which triggered their fat stem cells to differentiate to produce new, smaller fat cells.

Silicone patches for acne and anti-ageing are viral. But do they work?



Silicone patches work by locking in moisture retention which can help address various skincare concerns. Photo: Generative AI by Neha Gupta/India TodayWho doesn't want clear and glowing skin? In fact, the entire 374-billion-dollar makeup and skincare industry often centres its marketing efforts around one primary goal: helping consumers achieve clear skin.However, this goal is often obstructed by hurdles like acne, pores and wrinkles. To tackle these issues, social media is brimming with tips, tricks, hacks and products promising to help you achieve your skincare goals (though keeping track of them all is no easy feat).The latest trend making waves on social media is silicone patches - an old dermatologist-recommended product now being hailed for its 'potential benefits'.Silicone patches: the viral productAccording to social media, the benefits of silicone patches include: Reducing the appearance of scarsHydrating the ski Minimising wrinkleImproving skin textur Promoting collagen productionThese benefits have made silicone patches or tapes a viral sensation and the 'IT product' due to their ease of availability, affordability and, of course, their one-product-fixes-all approach to skincare woes. Moreover, as the trend grows, it's not just skinfluencers endorsing the product - dermatologists online are also lending their approval.Today, thanks to this trend, silicone patches have reached India as well, with many people trying these age-old tapes to resolve their skin issues. You can find them on any e-commerce website, like Amazon, Nykaa etc.

Silicone patches help in collagen production, which helps in achieving a glowing skin.Now, if you're thinking of adding to your nighttime skincare routine, hold up. We spoke to various experts and scrolled down to read what we found.

What exactly are these patches?

Initially developed for healing surgical scars and wounds, Dr Shristi, an aesthetic physician and founder of Aviv Aesthetics, Delhi, tells India Today that silicone tapes act as occlusive dressings on the skin.These tapes work by locking in moisture retention that, in turn, promotes collagen production, which can help address various skincare concerns.Dr Aparna Santhanam, a dermatologist from Mumbai, agrees and adds that these tapes are medical-grade adhesive strips made primarily of silicone."These are thin, flexible and designed to be applied directly to the skin. Originally developed for scar management in post-surgical and trauma cases, they improve the appearance of scars by hydrating the area, protecting it from environmental factors and supporting collagen remodelling," she explains.Experts also agree that nowadays, these patches are trending as a treatment for acne scars, hyperpigmentation and even wrinkles, thanks to social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram.Can it actually help?Experts say these tapes can potentially help you achieve that clear skin if used correctly. If not, they can cause side effects.Potential benefitsFor acneSilicone tapes can help reduce the appearance of acne scars by providing hydration and improving collagen production in the skin.Dr Sonali Kohli, a consultant dermatologist

Can it really reduce puffiness and bloating?



Lymphatic walking is a wellness term for gentle, rhythmic walking that may support normal lymph flow through muscle movement, breathing and changes in tissue pressure.Lymphatic walking is a wellness term for gentle, rhythmic walking that may support normal lymph flow through muscle movement, breathing and changes in tissue pressure.In an age where almost every aspect of fitness is being reinvented, renamed and repackaged, it is refreshing to return to something humanity has always known: walking.

Before gyms, fitness trackers and structured exercise programmes, movement was woven into the fabric of living. Today, that familiar act has acquired a new name — "lymphatic walking"— and gained traction largely because of claims that gentle, rhythmic movement can help reduce the puffiness and bloating associated with fluid retention, prolonged sitting, travel or simply waking up feeling swollen.

"Lymphatic walking" is not a formally defined medical exercise protocol. It is a wellness term generally used to describe gentle, rhythmic walking in which muscular activity, joint movement and breathing may support the normal transport of lymph. The lymphatic system does help return excess fluid from tissues to the bloodstream, and movement can contribute to this process. That provides a physiological basis for the trend.

What the lymphatic system actually doesThe lymphatic system is an intricate network of vessels, lymph nodes and lymphoid tissues that works alongside the cardiovascular and immune systems. One of its fundamental tasks is maintaining fluid balance. Blood continuously filters fluid into the tissues surrounding cells; much of that fluid returns directly to the bloodstream, while the lymphatic system collects the remainder, including proteins and other larger molecules that cannot readily re-enter blood capillaries. This fluid becomes lymph and is eventually returned to the venous circulation.

The system also has an important immunological role. Lymph carries antigens, immune cells and other material from tissues towards lymph nodes, where immune cells can detect and respond to potential threats. In this sense, the lymphatic system is not simply a drainage network. It is also part of the body's surveillance system.

Why walking helps in lymphatic functionLymphatic collecting vessels contain smooth muscle and can contract rhythmically on their own. Their valves help prevent backward flow and allow lymph to move progressively towards the larger lymphatic ducts and, ultimately, back into the bloodstream. Respiration, arterial pulsations, changes in tissue pressure and skeletal-muscle contractions provide additional forces that influence lymph movement. Walking matters because it brings several of these mechanisms together.With every step, muscles contract and relax around tissues containing blood and lymphatic vessels. This produces changing pressure that can assist the movement of fluid. The repeated movement of the ankles and legs is particularly relevant because skeletal-muscle activity can contribute to lymph transport as well as venous return. Research shows that lymph flow can increase with skeletal-muscle activity, although the relationship is more complex than the simple idea of a "lymph pump" suggests.The lymphatic vessels themselves remain active participants in the process. Walking provides repeated muscular activity, rhythmic breathing and changes in tissue pressure that support normal circulation and fluid movement. It also offers the much broader physiological benefits of regular physical activity.

What about puffiness?

Perhaps the most visible appeal of lymphatic walking is its promise of looking — and feeling — less puffy. The trend has gained traction partly because people associate gentle movement with a fresher face, lighter limbs and a reduction in swelling that can follow sleep, long periods of sitting, travel or a salty meal. There is a physiological basis for some of this: lymphatic circulation helps return excess fluid from tissues to the bloodstream, and movement can assist that process. But the leap from this basic physiology to the claim that a particular walking technique can "drain" the body or rapidly debloat it is not supported by clinical evidence. Any reduction in ordinary, temporary puffiness is more appropriately understood as a change in fluid distribution than as a detoxification effect.

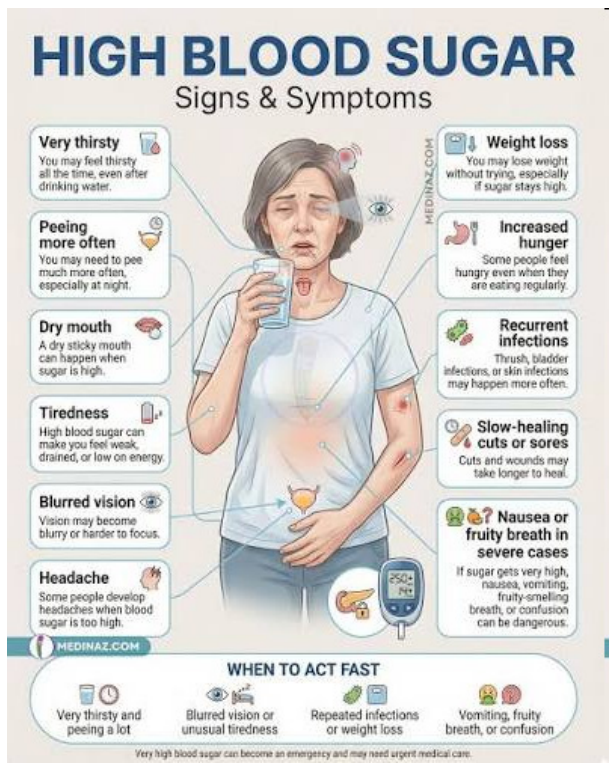
Where breathing comes in

Breathing contributes another layer. The diaphragm is a major muscle of respiration, and each breath changes pressure within the chest and abdomen. These pressure fluctuations interact with the large veins and lymphatic channels passing through the thoracic and abdominal regions and can influence the return of fluid towards the central circulation.This is one reason relaxed, diaphragmatic breathing naturally complements gentle movement.Exercise is often framed in the language of intensity: push harder, go faster, burn more, achieve more. Yet physiology does not operate according to motivational slogans. The body is constantly adjusting blood flow, pressure, fluid distribution, temperature, breathing and energy expenditure in response to movement and rest. A comfortable walk respects that complexity.

How much is enough?

Ten to twenty minutes can be a simple starting point, particularly for someone who spends long periods sitting. A few minutes of walking between sedentary periods may be useful; a longer morning walk may provide a more substantial cardiovascular stimulus.The appropriate pace depends on the purpose. A gentle walk is not equivalent to brisk aerobic exercise, and it should not be marketed as such. But gentle movement still has value. The lymphatic system is quietly working all the time. Walking simply gives the body another opportunity to move, breathe and regulate itself.

Why does blood sugar rise during the flu even when you're eating less?



A patient arrived at my clinic with classic flu symptoms — fever, cough, body aches and overwhelming tiredness. But there was one thing that worried him more than the flu itself: his blood sugar had suddenly gone much higher than usual, even though he had barely eaten.For people living with diabetes, this is an important concern. Influenza can be more serious because infections can make blood sugar harder to control and increase the risk of complications. The good news is that being prepared, monitoring your health closely and seeking help early can make a big difference.

When the Flu Sends Blood Sugar SoaringIt may seem surprising that blood sugar can rise when you are eating less. But during an infection, the body releases stress hormones to help fight the illness. These hormones can raise blood glucose levels.That is why it is important to check your blood sugar more often than usual when you have the flu, following your doctor's sick-day plan. Keep a record of your readings and contact your doctor if your levels remain much higher or lower than normal.A poor appetite can make people wonder whether they should stop their diabetes medicines. The answer is: not without speaking to your doctor. What happens to your medication during an illness depends on the medicines you take, your blood sugar readings, and how well you are eating and drinking. Some medicines may need to be adjusted while you are unwell, but these changes should be made with medical guidance.

No Appetite? Focus on Fluids FirstWhen the flu takes away your appetite, you do not need to force yourself to eat large meals. Small portions of foods you can tolerate may be easier.Fluids, however, are especially important. Take frequent sips of water or other suitable drinks to stay hydrated. Dehydration can make blood sugar management more difficult and may add to the strain caused by the infection.That Cold Medicine Isn't Always as Harmless as It LooksA quick trip to the pharmacy for an over-the-counter cold or flu medicine may seem harmless, but not every product is suitable for someone with diabetes.Some cold and flu medicines contain ingredients that can affect blood sugar or interact with other medicines you may already be taking. Check with your doctor before starting an over-the-counter remedy.

Could an Antiviral Help You Recover Sooner?

People with diabetes are considered to be at higher risk of complications from influenza, so antiviral treatment may be recommended in some cases. Timing matters. Antiviral medicines work best when started early, so if flu symptoms have just appeared, speak to your doctor promptly. They can assess your symptoms and decide whether antiviral treatment is appropriate.Most cases of flu can be managed with appropriate care, but certain warning signs should never be ignored. Seek medical attention promptly if you develop difficulty breathing, chest pain, severe weakness, confusion, persistent vomiting, signs of dehydration, or very high or very low blood sugar.If you are unable to keep fluids down, do not wait for the situation to get worse. People with diabetes can become unwell more quickly during infections, making early medical advice especially important.

Why the Flu Shot Deserves a Place on Your Diabetes ChecklistOne common misconception is that flu vaccination is mainly important in colder countries. That is not the case. Influenza also circulates in India, and people with diabetes can be at greater risk of complications. The flu vaccine also does not provide lifelong protection. Influenza viruses continually change, and vaccines are updated periodically to protect against strains expected to circulate. Seasonal flu vaccination should therefore be taken as recommended rather than assuming that one dose is enough for life.

One More Vaccine to Put on Your RadarThere is another vaccine people with diabetes should discuss with their doctor: the pneumococcal vaccine. Diabetes can make people more vulnerable to serious infections such as pneumonia. Unlike the flu vaccine, pneumococcal vaccination is not generally required every year. Depending on the vaccine and your individual health profile, it may be given once and repeated only after several years if recommended. Your doctor can guide you on the schedule that is right for you.The Best Flu Strategy Starts Before You Get SickManaging flu is not only about knowing what to do after you fall sick. Prevention matters too.Along with vaccination, simple habits can lower your risk: wash your hands regularly, avoid close contact with people who are sick, cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and stay home when you are unwell. Most importantly, do not wait until you feel seriously ill before asking for help. Having diabetes does not mean you need to fear the flu. It means you need to be a little more prepared.

How IVF helped a 30-year-old with high blood sugar become mother

Her blood sugar was 224 mg/dL, HbA1c was 7.1%: How IVF helped a 34-year-old become momA woman with diabetes may conceive normally, but poorly controlled blood glucose around conception can increase the risk of pregnancy complications.

For eight years, a 34-year-old woman had been trying to become a mother. Married for 11 years, she had already experienced two miscarriages. By the time she reached a fertility care centre, several pieces of a complicated puzzle had emerged: obesity, a low ovarian reserve, meaning fewer eggs were available than expected for her age, and an untreated thyroid condition called hypothyroidism, in which the body does not produce enough thyroid hormone, affecting metabolism. Then another finding changed the conversation.Her random blood sugar was 224 mg/dL and her HbA1c (average blood sugar count of three months) was 7.1%, consistent with previously undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes. Her 38-year-old husband also had a fertility problem, with a low sperm count and a higher proportion of abnormally shaped sperm.

The couple's case therefore involved several factors affecting their chances of having a baby, rather than a single cause of infertility. This is where IVF (in vitro fertilisation) can play an important role. IVF is a fertility treatment in which an egg and sperm are brought together in a laboratory to create an embryo, which is then placed in the uterus. In complex cases, it can give doctors greater control over the timing of treatment and allow different fertility challenges to be addressed together.For this couple, however, IVF was not a treatment for diabetes. The priority was first to assess and improve her overall health, including her blood sugar and thyroid function, while also determining the most appropriate fertility approach.

How diabetes affects fertilityDiabetes does not automatically cause infertility. However, insulin resistance and associated hormonal disturbances can affect reproductive function in some women, particularly when conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) or irregular ovulation are also present. Obesity and metabolic dysfunction can add further challenges.A woman with diabetes may conceive normally, but poorly controlled blood glucose around conception can increase the risk of pregnancy complications. This is why diabetes management should ideally begin before pregnancy rather than after a positive test.Diabetes is therefore best understood as one potential piece of the fertility puzzle. Hypothyroidism can affect metabolism, weight and lipid levels, while insulin resistance and obesity are important contributors to type 2 diabetes. Thyroid dysfunction can also affect menstrual and reproductive function, making its diagnosis and treatment important before pregnancy.

How to plan your pregnancy?

Current guidance recommends that women with diabetes planning pregnancy aim for an HbA1c below 6.5%, when this can be achieved safely without problematic



hypoglycaemia. Better glucose control before conception helps reduce pregnancy risks.This is particularly important because early foetal development begins before many women know they are pregnant.For the woman in our case, preconception assessment became an important part of fertility treatment. Her diabetes, thyroid function, medications and weight-related risks were reviewed, and glucose-lowering treatment was individualised under endocrinology supervision.The couple's fertility journey also illustrates an important misconception: IVF does not cure diabetes. Its role is to provide a structured pathway to conception while allowing fertility and medical teams to coordinate treatment around the patient's overall health.The first attempt to stimulate her ovaries did not produce enough eggs, so the treatment was stopped. Because she had a low ovarian reserve, the couple was then counselled about using donor eggs for IVF. Her husband's low sperm count and abnormal sperm shape also meant that ICSI (Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection), a technique in which a single sperm is directly injected into an egg to help fertilisation, was used.The treatment resulted in three good-quality embryos. Two were later placed in her uterus after her body was medically prepared for pregnancy. The couple was counselled beforehand about the additional risks associated with a twin pregnancy.But the embryo transfer was only one part of the plan.Her HbA1c improved from 7.1% at diagnosis to 6.8% around the time pregnancy was confirmed and 6.3% at six weeks. These values reflected improving glucose control, but also underlined why optimisation should ideally begin before conception rather than after pregnancy has started.Diabetes affects more than pregnancy—and may matter for men tooThe diabetes-fertility conversation often focuses on women because of the well-established risks associated with diabetes during pregnancy. But male reproductive health deserves attention as well. Research suggests that diabetes and chronic hyperglycaemia may affect sperm quality and reproductive function through mechanisms including oxidative stress, hormonal disturbances and impaired sperm function. That is why fertility assessment should be couple-centred.The woman's pregnancy required continued vigilance.

Antibiotic-resistant infections kill more patients and cost more, finds major India study

A major study of hospitalised patients across India has found that infections caused by antibiotic-resistant gram-negative bacteria are more likely to be fatal and more expensive to treat than infections caused by drug-susceptible strains.Gram-negative bacteria are a group of bacteria that can cause infections in different parts of the body, including the lungs, urinary tract, wounds and bloodstream. They include common hospital pathogens such as Escherichia coli, Klebsiella pneumoniae, Acinetobacter baumannii and Pseudomonas aeruginosa. These bacteria can be particularly difficult to treat when they develop resistance to antibiotics. One important group of antibiotics used for serious infections is carbapenems. When these bacteria become resistant to carbapenems, doctors have fewer effective medicines available to treat patients.

The researchers, part of the Indian Council of Medical Research's antimicrobial resistance surveillance network, looked at four major Gram-negative bacteria: Escherichia coli, Klebsiella pneumoniae, Acinetobacter baumannii and Pseudomonas aeruginosa. They compared patients in tertiary hospitals infected with carbapenem-resistant bacteria with those infected by susceptible strains of the same bacteria.

Why is the study significant?

Studying these infections is important because antibiotic resistance can affect both patient survival and the cost of treatment. While many studies monitor how resistant bacteria are in laboratory samples, fewer studies look at what happens to the patients who actually have these infections. This study therefore provides important information on whether resistant infections are linked to higher deaths, longer hospital stays and greater antibiotic costs across different hospitals in India.The study, conducted across 20 tertiary-care hospitals between April 2022 and April 2025, analysed data from 159,336 hospitalised patients. Of these, 26,213 had confirmed gram-negative bacterial infections, and 16,025 — or 61.1% — had infections resistant to carbapenem antibiotics.

Resistant infections were more likely to be fatalThe difference in mortality was seen across all four bacteria. Among patients with E. coli infections, 24.4% of those with carbapenem-resistant infections died, compared with 17.3% among those with susceptible infections. For K. pneumoniae, mortality was 31.2% in the resistant group versus 23.5% in the susceptible group.The gap was 37.9% versus 32.8% for A. baumannii, and 28.9% versus 20.2% for P. aeruginosa. In relative terms, patients with carbapenem-resistant E. coli had a 41% higher risk of death than those with susceptible E. coli. The corresponding increase was 33% for K. pneumoniae, 16% for A. baumannii and 43% for P. aeruginosa.The researchers also calculated population attributable fractions for mortality. These ranged from 11.1% for A. baumannii to 18.7% for P. aeruginosa.However, the authors caution that these estimates should not be interpreted as the exact number of deaths that could be prevented by eliminating resistance because the analysis could not fully account for factors such as severity of illness, timing of appropriate treatment and other clinical variables.

Bloodstream infections were particularly deadlyThe situation was even more serious when the infection had entered the bloodstream. Among bloodstream infections,



mortality among patients with carbapenem-resistant bacteria ranged from 39.3% for E. coli to 50.8% for A. baumannii. For K. pneumoniae, mortality was 44.8%, while it was 46.4% for P. aeruginosa.In comparison, mortality among patients with susceptible bloodstream infections was 23.8% for E. coli, 36% for K. pneumoniae, 42.6% for A. baumannii and 32.8% for P. aeruginosa.More than 85% of bloodstream infections across the four bacteria were classified as healthcare-associated, highlighting the importance of infection prevention and control in hospitals.

Resistant infections also cost more to treatThe study found that antibiotic treatment was more expensive when the bacteria were resistant to carbapenems. For E. coli, the average antibiotic cost was approximately ?39,846 per patient for resistant infections, compared with ?20,034 for susceptible infections. For K. pneumoniae, the corresponding figures were ?55,688 and ?47,918, respectively. For A. baumannii, treatment costs were approximately ?62,150 for resistant infections compared with ?41,372 for susceptible infections, while treatment for P. aeruginosa cost approximately ?66,599 for resistant infections compared with ?48,392 for susceptible infections.Overall, the researchers found that antibiotic treatment costs for carbapenem-resistant infections were about 1.1 to two times higher than for susceptible infections. They point out, however, that these figures include only antibiotic costs and do not include hospital beds, diagnostic tests, doctors' fees or supportive care. The costs were calculated using national rates for antibiotics available under the government's JanAushadhi scheme, which are generally lower than market prices. This means the actual financial burden could be higher.Why does resistance make infections harder to treat?Carbapenems are important antibiotics used to treat serious bacterial infections. When bacteria become resistant to them, doctors have fewer effective treatment options. The study found that newer antibiotics such as ceftazidime-avibactam were used more frequently than polymyxin-based treatment for carbapenem-resistant E. coli and K. pneumoniae. In bloodstream infections caused by these bacteria, ceftazidime-avibactam was associated with lower mortality than polymyxin B.But the researchers caution against interpreting these findings as proof that one drug is universally better than another. The study did not have patient-level information on several factors that can strongly influence outcomes, including how sick the patient was, how quickly appropriate treatment was started, the source of infection and the specific resistance mechanism

New climate data set for India unveiled by Azim Premji University



The average annual maximum temperature will experience an increase of 1.5 degree Celsius by 2057 under 'the middle of the road' emission scenario while the more extreme 'fossil-fueled development' emission scenario predicts this temperature rise will occur a decade earlier, by 2047.This is one of the many key findings of the Azim Premji University's new climate data set for India, which was unveiled on November 17.

According to the Climate Change Projections for India (2021-40) report, the projections examine two IPCC (Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change) scenarios: SSP2-4.5 (moderate emissions and adaptation) and SSP5-8.5 (high emissions with heavy fossil fuel reliance).In other words, the 'middle of the road' emission scenario assumes that society will take moderate steps to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change, which will lead to moderate effects in the future. The 'fossil-fueled development' emission scenario presumes that society will continue to rely heavily on fossil fuels for energy, leading to a future with very high emissions and severe impacts.

Another finding is that India's average summer maximum temperature will have a 1.5-degree Celsius increase by 2043, according to the 'middle of the road' emission scenario and by 2041 for the 'fossil-fueled development' emission scenario.Under the low emission scenario, 196 districts in India will experience a summer maximum temperature increase of at least one degree, with 70 districts projected to experience a similar annual maximum temperature change."The highest change is expected in Leh at 1.6 degree Celsius for both summer and annual maximum temperatures. The winter minimum temperature is projected to change by 1.5 degree Celsius or more for 139 districts, while 611 districts will see a 1 degree Celsius or more temperature change," the report statesSimilarly, under the high emission scenario, 249 districts will experience an annual maximum temperature change of one degree Celsius or more, and 16 districts, mostly in the Himalayan States, are projected to experience an annual maximum temp change by 1.5 degree Celsius or more with the highest being at Leh at 1.8 degree Celsius."517 districts will experience a summer maximum temperature change of one degree Celsius or more, and 17 districts will experience a summer maximum temperature change of 1.5 degree Celsius or more, with the highest being at Leh at 1.7 degree Celsius.

The winter minimum temperature is projected to change by 1.5 degree Celsius or more in 162 districts with the highest being 2.2 degree Celsius in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh," the report added.With regard to change in precipitation patterns (2021-2040), the report said that the western part of India will experience a significant increase in precipitation, compared to most of the eastern and north-eastern parts of the country."Change in precipitation patterns (2021-40), the arid States such as Gujarat and Rajasthan exhibit a higher annual precipitation ranging from 20% to 40% under SSP2-4.5, and a 20% to 50 % change under SSP5-8.5. Under both the scenarios,

With 45 years to go, how sustainable is India's road to net-zero? | Explained



Every year, climate action draws significant attention in the months leading up to the United Nations' annual meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COPs). But the outcome of the 2024 U.S. presidential election will likely have a greater impact on the planet's climate future than COP29 itself, illustrating an important challenge in combating climate change: operationalising global cooperation towards a common cause even when national interests don't align with it.For example, an economically developed country with sufficient resources per capita may not find it necessary to change course — whereas a populous and developing country like India will. A few COPs ago, India committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. Since then, it has implemented several policies while others are in the works to support this transition. It is widely acknowledged that this journey will not be without challenges, especially financial ones. However, other resource constraints such as land or water availability also matter, limiting the choices available for a sustainable long-term pathway for India.

Why net-zero at all?With each passing day, climate change is becoming more evident. The scientific consensus is that to avoid devastating and irreversible consequences, the world must keep the global average annual surface temperature rise to within 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. The current increase is at least 1.1 °C over that in 1880.The Sixth Assessment Report of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated that from 2020, the remaining (cumulative) global carbon budget for a 50-67% chance of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 °C is 400-500 billion tonnes (Gt) of CO2. Currently, annual global emissions are around 40 GtCO2.This means net global emissions must drop drastically to stay within the carbon budget. Several countries have announced net-zero targets, but we also really need a sharp decline in total emissions.

Is net-zero equitable?

The developed world, having caused the problem of climate change in the first place, is expected to lead this transition and reach net-zero emissions well before 2050, allowing more time for developing countries to balance their development goals with climate action. These expectations aren't being met, however.Developed countries are also expected to help finance climate action, but this hasn't materialised at the required scale either. Developing countries, especially those that are small islands, are bearing more than their fair share of the brunt of climate change.So overall, neither climate change nor climate action is currently equitable. COP29 is expected to build consensus on the level of financing required.India's per-capita emissions are among the lowest in the world. However, according to the World Inequality Database, the per-capita emissions of the richest 10% are 20-times greater than that of the poorest 10% and in absolute terms almost half of the country's total. Climate change more severely affects the economically weaker sections.India's size and diversity mean it's a country of countries, and some of them are more polluting than others vis-à-vis the climate. Importantly, India lacks the carrying capacity to support the developed world's lifestyle standards for its entire population. If it should, India will run into significant food shortage due to groundwater depletion by the 2040s, extreme heat stress in urban areas due to the ever-increasing vehicular pollution and AC use, irreversible biodiversity loss due to non-ideal land-use changes encroaching on habitats, etc.India's lifestyle aspirations could easily become unsustainable in the long run, jeopardising our access to basic needs.A new consumption corridor

In a scenario where consumption rises unchecked and India electrifies all end-use applications, the power demand could increase nine- to tenfold by 2070. Meeting it entirely via renewable energy will require more than 5,500 GW of solar and 1,500 GW of wind, up from the current 70 GW and and 47 GW, respectively.This target is achievable if India's only priority is to expand renewable energy generation capacity. But if India is to maintain food and nutritional security, increase forest cover, and preserve biodiversity as well, these energy targets will become very challenging. By modelling land-use change dynamics over time, the authors have found going beyond 3,500 GW solar and 900 GW wind will demand considerable land trade-offs.In sum, India has a tough balancing act to pull off: availing good quality of life to a large share of its population (which has significant material and energy implications) while working towards its climate adaptation and mitigation goals.To this end, it is important to recognise the pitfalls of economic models. For example, the environmental Kuznets curve hypothesises that beyond a threshold, economic growth can be decoupled from carbon emissions. In reality, even the richest countries haven't achieved this decoupling (other than by shifting their emissions to poorer countries). This is why it is in our best interest to not aspire to achieve the lifestyle standards of the west.Instead, we need to envisage a long-term strategy incorporating 'sufficiency consumption corridors', with a floor well suited to meeting our developmental goals and a ceiling of excess that will help avoid unsustainable growth. Equally, if not more, important are demand-side measures to help maintain this corridor of consumption that will keep us on a sustainable pathway. Our power consumption here could increase six- or sevenfold by 2070.Demand and supply measuresSome of these demand-side measures include the use of better construction materials and passive design elements to provide thermal comfort that doesn't require air-conditioning, energy-efficient appliances, public and/or non-motorised transport within urban areas and railways for intercity travel, local products to reduce the demand for long-haul freight, mindful dietary choices, and alternative fuels in industries in addition to some electrification.On the supply side as well, India needs to further decentralise energy production (including by the use of rooftop solar cells and of solar pumps for agriculture). Finally, it should continue to expand its nuclear power generation capacity to diversify its energy mix and to complement a grid becoming more dependent on intermittent energy sources. Nuclear power could also offer a precious low-carbon baseload energy and help the government effectively phase out the national economy's dependence on fossil fuels.As the world trundles towards its net-zero and other climate-related targets, the leeway for governments to miss some of them or postpone their achievement also shrinks.

Why countries struggle to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies | Explained

Fossil fuels are the leading driver of climate change, yet they are still heavily subsidised by governments around the world.Although many countries have explicitly promised to reduce fossil fuel subsidies to combat climate change, this has proven difficult to accomplish. As a result, fossil fuels remain relatively inexpensive, and their use and greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow.I work in environmental and energy law and have studied the fossil fuel sector for years. Here's how fossil fuel subsidies work and why they're so stubborn.

What is a subsidy?

A subsidy is a financial benefit given by a government to an entity or industry. Some subsidies are relatively obvious, such as publicly funded crop insurance or research grants to help pharmaceutical companies develop new drugs.Others are less visible. A tariff on an imported product, for example, can subsidise domestic manufacturers of that product. More controversially, some would argue that when a government fails to make an industry pay for damage it causes, such as air or water pollution, that also amounts to a subsidy.Subsidies, especially in this broader sense, are widespread throughout the global economy. Many industries receive benefits through public policies that are denied to other industries in the same jurisdiction, such as tax breaks, relaxed regulations or trade supports.Governments employ subsidies for political and practical reasons. Politically, subsidies are useful for striking bargains or shoring up political support. In democracies, they can mollify constituencies otherwise unwilling to agree to a policy change. The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, for example, squeaked through Congress by subsidizing both renewable energy and oil and gas production.Practically, subsidies can boost a promising young industry such as electric vehicles, attract business to a community or help a mature sector survive an economic downturn, as the auto industry bailout did in 2008. Of course, policies can outlive their original purpose; some of today's petroleum subsidies can be traced to the Great Depression.

How are fossil fuels subsidised?

Fossil fuel subsidies take many forms around the world. For example: In Saudi Arabia, fuel prices are set by the government rather than the market; price ceilings subsidise the price citizens pay for gasoline. The cost to state-owned oil producers there is offset by oil exports, which dwarf domestic consumption Indonesia also caps energy prices, then compensates state-owned energy companies for the losses they bear. In the United States, oil companies can take a tax deduction for a large portion of their drilling costs. Other subsidies are less direct, such as when governments under-price permits to mine or drill for fossil fuels or fail to collect all the taxes owed by fossil fuel producers. Estimates of the total value of global fossil fuel subsidies vary considerably depending on whether analysts use a broad or narrow definition. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD, calculated the annual total to be about US$1.5 trillion in 2022. Tche International Monetary Fund reported a number over four times higher, about $7 trillion.

Why do estimates of fossil fuel subsidies vary dramatically?

Analysts disagree about whether subsidy tabulations should include environmental damage from the extraction and use of fossil fuels that is not incorporated into the fuel's price. The IMF treats the costs of global warming, local air pollution and even traffic congestion and road



damage as implicit subsidies because fossil fuel companies don't pay to remedy these problems. The OECD omits these implicit benefits.But whichever definition is applied, the combined effect of national policies on fossil fuel prices paid by consumers is dramatic.Oil, for example, is traded on a global market, but the price per gallon of petrol varies enormously around the world, from about 10 cents in Iran, Libya and Venezuela – where it is heavily subsidised – to over $7 in Hong Kong, the Netherlands and much of Scandinavia, where fuel taxes counteract subsidies.

What is the world doing about fossil fuel subsidies?

Global leaders have acknowledged that subsidies for fossil fuels undermine efforts to address climate change because they make fossil fuels cheaper than they would be otherwise.In 2009, the heads of the G20, which includes many of the world's largest economies, issued a statement resolving to "rationalise and phase out over the medium term inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption." Later that same year, the governments of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, or APEC, made an identical pledge.In 2010, 10 other countries, including the Netherlands and New Zealand, formed the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform group to "build political consensus on the importance of fossil fuel subsidy reform."Yet these commitments have scarcely moved the needle. A major study of 157 countries between 2003 and 2015 found that governments "collectively made little or no progress" toward reducing subsidies. In fact, the OECD found that total global subsidies nearly doubled in both 2021 and 2022.So why are fossil fuel subsidies hard to eliminate?There are various reasons fossil fuel subsidies are hard to eliminate. Many subsidies directly affect the costs that fossil fuel producers face, so reducing subsidies tends to increase prices for consumers. Because fossil fuels touch nearly every economic sector, rising fuel costs elevate prices for countless goods and services.Subsidy reform tends to be broadly felt and pervasively inflationary. And unless carefully designed, subsidy reductions can be regressive, forcing low-income residents to spend a larger percentage of their income on energy.So, even in countries where there is widespread support for robust climate policies, reducing subsidies can be deeply unpopular and may even cause public unrest.The 2021-22 spike in fossil fuel subsidies is illustrative. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, energy prices surged throughout Europe. Governments were quick to provide aid for their citizens, resulting in their largest fossil fuel subsidies ever. Forced to choose between climate goals and affordable energy, Europe overwhelmingly chose the latter.Of course, economists note that increasing the price of fossil fuels can lower demand, reducing emissions that are driving climate change and harming the environment and human health. Seen in that light

India's race to eliminate dog-mediated rabies by 2030: experts stress the need for a 'One Health' approach

India has made significant strides in reducing human rabies deaths over the past two decades. However, achieving the goal of eliminating dog-mediated rabies by 2030 will require accelerated efforts and a focused, 'One Health' approach, experts say.The One Health strategy highlights integrating human and animal health measures to address rabies at its roots. Key steps identified include strengthening both human and animal surveillance systems, ensuring timely and complete administration of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for those exposed to the virus, and scaling up dog vaccination efforts across the country. While rabies cases have declined, experts warn that without these integrated actions, India may struggle to meet the 2030 target.

A recent study published in The Lancet highlights the public health challenge of rabies in India. Using a nationwide, community-based cross-sectional survey, researchers gathered data from 3.37 lakh individuals residing in 78,807 households across 60 districts in 15 states. The survey results estimated that India experiences approximately 9.1 million animal bites annually, with 76.8% attributed to dogs. The annual dog-bite incidence was calculated at 5.6 per 1,000 people.Significant gaps in post-bite care were noted, as 20.5% of dog-bite victims received no anti-rabies vaccination (ARV), and among those who did receive ARV, nearly half of the 1,253 people who started the vaccination course did not complete it. This lapse in vaccination adherence poses severe health risks, as the study estimates around 5,726 human rabies deaths each year, despite an overall reduction in deaths over recent decades."To make rabies a disease of the past in India, it is essential to prioritise prevention, awareness, and vaccination efforts," says Ranga Reddy Burri, president of the Infection Control Academy of India. "Although human rabies deaths have declined, achieving the goal of eliminating dog-mediated cases by 2030 requires accelerated action. A robust One Health approach, combining human-animal surveillance, timely post-exposure prophylaxis, and extensive dog vaccination is vital. With the increase in pet ownership, responsible pet care and vaccination are also critical to this mission," Dr. Burri adds.

In answer to a question in the Lok Sabha on July 30, 2024 on the stray dog menace in the country, Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Rajiv Ranjan Singh said that in 2023, India reported a total of 30.43 lakh dog bite cases, with 286 fatalities linked to these incidents. This data was gathered under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. "According to the National Centre for Disease Control, 46,54,398 anti-rabies vaccinations were administered to individuals who sustained dog bites throughout the year," the Minister said.The Minister also said that the government had introduced a rabies helpline (15400) in five States, with plans to expand it nationally. Additionally, the Rabies-Free Cities Initiative was launched to create rabies-free zones in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities, with a structured rabies prevention and action plan.Shailaja Tetali, dean of research at the Indian Institute of Public Health (IIPH) Hyderabad, however noted that while the National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP) has successfully reduced rabies cases, addressing dog bites requires a comprehensive One Health approach. "To tackle dog bites effectively, we need coordinated efforts across surveillance, resources, training, collaboration, and public awareness," she explains.She highlighted the need for enhanced surveillance of dog bites across both public and private facilities, especially in remote areas. "Every case should be recorded, as data is critical to tackle the issue in underserved regions," she said. Dr. Tetali also stressed on stockpiling anti-rabies vaccines (ARV) to avoid shortages, and filling gaps in veterinary resources to support humane dog population control.Specialised training for para-veterinary staff is essential, as many are often shifted into animal care without preparation. Collaboration among animal welfare boards, municipalities, NGOs, and resident associations is also necessary for effective dog population management. Dr. Tetali added that public awareness is also vital. "People need to respect animals' space and understand the importance of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) after contact with potentially rabies-carrying animal's," she advised, noting that these measures can reduce rabies and dog bite incidents significantly.Awareness remains lowAccording to information in India's National Action Plan for Dog-Mediated Rabies Elimination (NAPRE) booklet, in India, rabies is transmitted commonly by dogs and cats (~97%), followed by wild animals (2%) such as mongoose, foxes, jackals, and wild dogs, and occasionally by horses, donkeys, monkeys, cows, goats, sheep, and pigs. Rodents, rats and bandicoots, squirrels, rabbits, birds, and bats are generally not known to transmit rabies. The presence of unvaccinated free-roaming dogs (FRD) or street dogs, amidst human settlements is a major contributor to the high incidence of rabies in India, which is endemic. Apart from humans, rabies also causes significant mortality among livestock animals such as bovine, cattle and small animals. Kiran Madhala, professor of critical care medicine at Gandhi Medical College, Secunderabad, highlighted key findings from the multicentric rabies survey conducted by World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the Association for Prevention and Control of Rabies in India (APCRI) in 2017 and 2018.

United States reports surge in chikungunya cases among travellers from Telangana, issues advisory

Following a spike in chikungunya cases in Telangana, the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a 'Level 2' travel advisory for U.S. travellers returning from Telangana. "[The] CDC has identified a higher-than-expected number of chikungunya cases among U.S. travellers returning from ... Telangana," the notice said.The advisory, issued earlier this month on November 8, urges travellers to exercise enhanced precautions. This is the second CDC travel advisory for India this year, following a similar alert in August regarding a Zika virus outbreak in Maharashtra.The CDC's travel advisory system categorises risks into four levels. Level 1 advises travellers to practise usual precautions, while Level 2 (as applied to Telangana now) calls for enhanced precautions. Level 3 urges reconsideration of non-essential travel and Level 4 recommends avoiding all travel. The current advisory reflects growing concerns over the spread of vector-borne diseases in the region.

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