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PM Modi Lays Foundation for Manila's Century Old Khalsa Diwan Gurudwara Redevelopment

10,000 square meter facility will feature dedicated

PHILIPINES: Prime Minister Narendra Modi left for the Philippines yesterday to participate in the ASEAN&India Summit.

Upon his arrival in the capital, Manila, he was given an enthusiastic welcome. The 49th Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)—which comprises 11 member states and is currently chaired by the Philippines—along with related summits, is presently underway.

Prime Minister Modi arrived in Manila yesterday at the invitation of the Philippine President to take part in these proceedings. He was warmly welcomed at the airport by members of the Indian diaspora and government officials. Later in the evening, Prime Minister Modi attended a special dinner hosted by President Marcos and joined the ASEAN leaders for a group photograph.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation stone for the ambitious modernization and redevelopment of Manila's historic Gurudwara Khalsa Diwan, a significant Sikh place of worship with a legacy spanning over a century. This initiative underscores the deep cultural and spiritual ties between India and the Philippines.

The Gurudwara, established in 1901 and formally registered in 1924, holds the distinction of being the oldest Gurudwara in the Philippines.

It has consistently served as a vital hub for spiritual, cultural, and philanthropic activities for the Sikh and wider Indian communities in Manila, acting as a crucial bridge with Philippine society, as highlighted by the Ministry of External Affairs.

The redevelopment project envisions a modern five&storey complex, replacing the existing structure while meticulously preserving its religious and cultural essence.

The proposed 10,000 square meter facility will feature dedicated spaces for parking, community events, religious worship, and the traditional Langar kitchen, catering to the growing needs of the community.

With an estimated cost of approximately 305 million Philippine pesos (around USD 5 million), the project will be primarily funded by contributions from the Sikh and Indian communities, with substantial support from Manjinder James Kumar, head of the KDG Committee.

A 15&20 member committee comprising Sikh and Sindhi representatives will oversee its execution, aiming for completion within two years.

PM Modi's presence at the ceremony, alongside Senator Francis Joseph Escudero and Manila City Mayor Francisco Isko Moreno, emphasized the project's importance.



His visit to the Philippines also included participation in the 23rd ASEAN&India Summit and the 21st East Asia Summit, further strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation.



The Defence Headquarters Training Institute (DHTI), Ministry of Defence has launched its first Global Leadership Programme in Defence Governance and Public Administration for Emerging Leaders for officers of the Ministry of Defence, Fiji. The first phase of the four-week programme, being held in Suva from November 16 to 27, 2026, was inaugurated by Fiji's Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs Mr Pio Tikoduadua.

PM Modi to Attend Key Summits in Manila, Focus on Indo-Pacific and Act East Policy

PHILIPINES: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to participate in the Quad leaders' meeting, the 23rd ASEAN&India Summit, and the 21st East Asia Summit during his visit to the Philippines. This marks the first in&person Quad gathering at the leaders' level since September 2024 in Delaware, and notably, the first since Donald Trump's return to the White House.

Discussions are expected to strengthen India's strategic partnership with Southeast Asia, advance its Act East Policy, and articulate its vision for the Indo&Pacific region.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal highlighted the warm welcome Modi received, including a performance of 'The Maharadia Lawana Ramayan', a Filipino adaptation of the Indian epic.

During his visit, PM Modi laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of the historic Khalsa Diwan Gurudwara in Manila. Established in 1901, it's the oldest Sikh place of worship in the Philippines.



The new complex, estimated at 305 million Philippine pesos (around USD 5 million), will include facilities for community activities and worship, reflecting a strong cultural tie.

Modi's engagements also included witnessing 'Sita: The Ramayana Revisited', a theatrical presentation emphasizing the shared cultural heritage between India and the Philippines. These regional meetings offer India a chance to boost economic and strategic engagement, enhance maritime security, and discuss the evolving geopolitical landscape of the Indo&Pacific.

Bangladesh Garment Workers Demand Wage Hike, Protests Escalate in Dhaka

BANGALADESH: Garment workers in Bangladesh are intensifying their protests, demanding a significant increase in the minimum monthly wage to 30,000 Taka. The unrest has spread across the country's vital textile industry, leading to factory closures and sporadic incidents.

In Dhaka's Mirpur area, workers attempted to block roads to highlight their demands, but police intervened to maintain order and prevent traffic disruption. Similar scenes unfolded in Savar's Hemayetpur, where a group of workers briefly gathered before dispersing peacefully at the request of authorities.

The ongoing strikes underscore deep&seated concerns over wages and working conditions that workers have repeatedly voiced.

Industrial police reported that approximately 40 factories in the Savar and Ashulia industrial areas remained closed on Monday. Among these, 27 factories were shut under Section 13(1) of the Bangladesh Labour Act, while nine were declared closed indefinitely. The remaining factories observed general holidays, indicating the widespread impact of the labor dispute.



Mohammad Mominul Islam Bhuiyan, SP of Ashulia Industrial Police&1, noted instances where workers refused to resume work after lunch breaks, leading management to declare holidays. While some factories saw workers stage sit&ins, other industrial areas maintained normal operations, highlighting the varied response across the sector.

Separately, security has been heightened in Gopalganj, the hometown of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) deployed 10 platoons and armored personnel carriers, utilizing body&worn cameras and drones to monitor the situation.

This deployment follows renewed political activity ahead of Hasina's anticipated return to Bangladesh in December, coinciding with a 2025 death sentence issued by Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal&1 for crimes during the July 2024 uprising.



Glimpses of the Special Handloom & Handicraft Exhibition-cum-Sale at the 45th India International Trade Fair (IITF) – 2026 organised by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi.

It is unacceptable for the DMK to speak in a manner that disparages singers: Minister Ramesh

CHENNAI: In an interview in Chennai, Minister Ramesh addressed the incident where singers chanted praises for the Chief Minister. He noted that the singers have provided an explanation and assured that they would be more careful in the future.

The Chief Minister and we do not desire to be the subjects of such adulation; the Chief Minister himself would not approve of it either. A former minister has spoken in a manner that seems to deliberately blow this issue out of proportion.

He has lumped all singers together, disparagingly referring to them as "street performers" (therukoothu artists) appearing at a spiritual event.

This is strongly condemnable. One must first learn how to show proper respect toward singers and artists.

The DMK's mindset is that of a feudal landlord (*pannaiyar*).

How can it be justified to label singers as "street performers"? It is entirely unacceptable for the DMK to speak in a way that



demeans singers, Minister Ramesh stated.

Uttarakhand: Bus plunges into a gorge – 8 dead

DEHRADUN: Eight people have died after a bus plunged into a gorge in Uttarakhand.

The bus was traveling from Haridwar to Karnaprayag early this morning, carrying more than 35 passengers. While passing through the Kular Bazaar area in the Tehri Garhwal district—along the Rishikesh&Badrinath National Highway—the driver lost control, causing the bus to fall into the gorge. Eight passengers lost their lives in this tragic accident, and 26 others sustained serious injuries.



Upon receiving information, rescue teams rushed to the scene, recovered the injured, and transported them to a nearby hospital. An investigation into the cause of the accident is currently underway.

Today horoscope

You will recover items that were pledged or mortgaged at the bank. You will gain respect and esteem through your spouse's side of the family. Your enthusiasm and personal appearance will improve. In business, you will adopt new strategies to generate profits.

You will enhance the basic amenities and comforts of your household. You will fulfill a long-standing prayer or vow. You will receive greater support from your neighbors. You may replace old items or possessions. Be careful not to speak harshly or dismissively to anyone.

You will find joy in reminiscing about pleasant events from the past. Misunderstandings between you and your spouse will fade, giving way to greater harmony. Expenses related to vehicles will decrease. You will be able to curb unnecessary travel, running around, and wasteful spending.

Practice compromise within your family. While you may experience some running around or physical exertion, it will also bring gains. Old issues may resurface. You might encounter fleeting fears or worries. Exercise caution in your professional and business dealings.

Family members will listen to and follow your advice. A long-pending legal matter will take a favorable turn. Others will benefit because of you. You will take the lead in organizing events at a friend's home.

You will purchase modern electronic or electrical appliances. You will receive help whenever you ask for it. You will pay heed to the words of your family members. Neighbors will extend a hand of friendship. You will provide assistance to those who come to you seeking help.

Your home will become lively with the arrival of relatives and friends from out of town. An influx of money will lead to increased savings. Together with your family, you will fulfill long-standing vows or prayers. Old, complicated issues will be resolved.

You will feel energized by a new friendship. You will replace old items in your household. Your interest in spiritual matters will grow. Property-related disputes that had been dragging on will be settled amicably. Unnecessary running around will decrease.

Hidden talents within you will emerge. You will benefit through your siblings. Marriage-related discussions will conclude smoothly. You will receive good news from your spouse's side of the family. Your children will bring you increased respect and status.

Do not make any promises or commitments to others. Even if sudden expenses arise, you will be able to manage them. Pay attention to your parents' health. Curb unnecessary anger. You will develop an interest in spiritual matters.

By speaking tactfully, you will be able to accomplish even difficult tasks. Your children will act responsibly. You will visit sacred places you have long wished to see. You will reconnect with childhood friends.

Your standing among your maternal relatives will rise. Your home will become lively with auspicious events and the arrival of guests. Buying or selling property will prove profitable. In business, you will be able to recover long-pending dues.

Recommendation to include Thanjavur Big Temple in the list of World Wonders

Parliamentary Standing Committee Chairperson's statement



THANJAVUR: The Thanjavur Big Temple (Brihadeeswarar Temple) will be recommended for inclusion in the list of World Wonders, stated Sanjay Kumar Jha, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture.

A delegation of Members of Parliament (MPs), led by Sanjay Kumar Jha—who serves as the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture—visited the Thanjavur Big Temple yesterday.

The temple administration extended a welcome to the delegation. Following their visit to the sanctum, the members examined the ancient paintings, inscriptions, and sculptures housed within the temple.

They also inquired about the temple's architecture and the historical details contained in the inscriptions. Speaking to reporters afterward, the committee chairperson, Sanjay Kumar Jha, remarked: "The Thanjavur Big Temple is a wonder of India. It is as grand as the Taj Mahal—in fact, even more remarkable. It is a World Heritage site, and we will recommend that it be declared a 'World Wonder.'"

On this occasion, MPs S. Kalyanasundaram, K.E. Prakash, Anurag Sharma, Babu Singh Kushwaha, Kesharin Devsinh Jhala, and Sudha Murty, along with Thanjavur MLA R. Vijay Saravanan, were present. Earlier, the group visited the Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam to observe its architectural grandeur and cultural magnificence.

Madurai MP's Opulence: Judge's Criticism

MADURAI: During the hearing of a contempt of court case regarding the procurement of books, Justice G.R. Swaminathan remarked: "Madurai MP Su. Venkatesan has posted on the social media platform 'X,' seemingly instructing me on how I should perform my judicial duties—all based on a lighthearted, humorous comment I made at a book launch event last week."

"A few days ago, when I arrived at the railway station, I saw someone step out of a high&end, luxury car, dressed in opulent attire. Initially, I wondered who it might be, only to realize it was MP Venkatesan.

He proceeded to the First Class AC compartment, while I traveled in an ordinary class carriage." "A leader of a Communist party living with such ostentation! He arrived in a high&end vehicle, much like an executive of a corporate firm. I am not sure if one can afford such a lifestyle solely from the royalties earned from books." This is what the judge said.

In a post shared on the social media platform 'X' the day before yesterday, Su. Venkatesan noted that Justice G. R. Swaminathan had remarked—in the context of bookshelves containing works by Periyar—that "to cleanse oneself of sins, one should place the books of the





'Maha Periyavar' (the Great Elder/Sage) on those shelves.

Corruption has taken place in the procurement of books for libraries, and this must be punished according to the law—that is the duty of judges. Suggesting that such acts are 'sins' and that one must seek 'merit' (punniyam) to absolve oneself of them is the domain of astrologers. Su. Venkatesan wrote, "Ambedkar, revered for his wisdom in law, and Periyar, respected for his wisdom in rationalism—these are the true 'Maha Periyavars' (Great Elders)." It is worth noting that this post also included a video of a speech delivered by Justice G. R. Swaminathan at a book launch event held in Chennai.

Information Centers for Sabarimala Ayyappa Devotees

Arranged by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department

CHENNAI: To assist Ayyappa devotees from Tamil Nadu undertaking the Sabarimala pilgrimage, the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department has set up 24&hour information centers at the Commissioner's office in Chennai, at Kaliyakkavilai (on the state border), and at Sabarimala in the state of Kerala.

These centers will remain operational until January 20, 2027. The information center at the HR&CE Commissioner's office in Chennai can be reached via the toll& free number 1800 425 1757, while the center at Kaliyakkavilai can be contacted at 9894433179, 8760668834, or 9486270443 for any necessary information.

Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, P.K. Sekar Babu (referred to as Ramesh in the source text), has stated that devotees from Tamil Nadu may make use of these services.

Elon Musk to Join Trump on Asia Tour; Iran on Agenda for Trilateral Talks with Xi, Putin

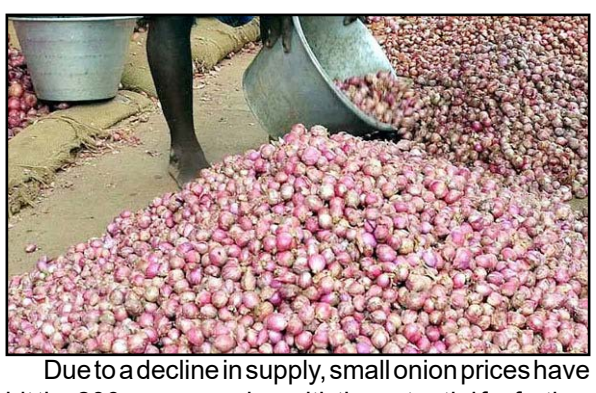


IRAN: Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk is set to accompany US President Donald Trump on his significant Asia tour. This trip includes a crucial trilateral meeting in Shenzhen, China, where discussions on Iran are expected to feature prominently between Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

According to CBS News, a senior White House official confirmed Musk's presence with the presidential delegation. However, Musk will not be part of the main trilateral meeting scheduled for Thursday, which will take place on the sidelines of the Asia&Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. A senior US official, speaking anonymously, indicated that Trump intends to raise the issue of Iran with both Xi and Putin, emphasizing its importance in the discussions.

The meeting, a first for the three leaders, aims to primarily address nuclear non&proliferation. While the ongoing conflicts in Iran and Ukraine remain broader geopolitical concerns, the focus will be on reducing nuclear weapons. Trump, before departing for Asia, described denuclearization as a "tough subject" and confirmed that developments concerning Iran and Ukraine would also be discussed.

Trump's itinerary includes a visit to the Philippines for the ASEAN Summit, discussions with leaders from India, Japan, and Australia under the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), and a state visit in the Philippines before heading to Shenzhen. In China, he will participate in the APEC summit, hold bilateral talks with Xi, and then join the trilateral meeting. The possibility of meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un also remains, though unconfirmed. Senior administration officials, including Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, are also part of the delegation. While US&China trade tensions persist, White House officials stated that these issues are not expected to dominate the discussions during this visit.



Due to a decline in supply, small onion prices have hit the 200-rupee mark—with the potential for further price increases.

US VP Vance: Trump to Avoid 'Forever War' in Iran, Focus on Nuclear Program

WASHINGTON: US Vice President JD Vance has affirmed that President Donald Trump will not allow the conflict with Iran to escalate into a 'forever war'.

Vance, during an interview with Fox News, made it clear that a prolonged American commitment, even for two years, is off the table, while defending the President's decision to target Iran's nuclear program.

He expressed confidence that President Trump would bring the conflict to a successful resolution, though specific withdrawal timelines were not provided. Vance emphasized, "He is not going to let this become a forever war. We told the American people we would do no more forever wars."

He further stated, "We are not going to allow this to become a 10& or 15&year commitment, or frankly, even a two&year commitment." This stance highlights a clear departure from past prolonged engagements.

These developments come ahead of a high&level summit in Shenzhen, where President Trump is scheduled to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

China's Foreign Ministry confirmed the meeting, indicating discussions would focus on global peace and strategic stability. While specific agenda items like Iran and nuclear arms control were not confirmed, diplomatic efforts are ongoing,

with China's special envoy for the Middle East recently visiting Iran, Oman, and Saudi Arabia to de&escalate regional tensions.



More than 500 sanitation workers in Zone 5 of the Tambaram Municipal Corporation have gone on strike to protest against the introduction of a new procedure for carrying out sanitation work.

November 17 EDITORIAL – NEW INDIA FLASH *2026*

Keep Politics Out of Temples; Bring Integrity to Administration

People enter a temple carrying their burdens and seeking reassurance. They come for worship, peace and spiritual strength. When political praise intrudes into that sacred space, it disturbs devotion and weakens confidence in those entrusted with its care.



Protecting temples, safeguarding their properties and helping devotees worship without hardship are fundamental responsibilities of temple administration. Religious service and public welfare must remain at its centre. Political influence, personal preferences and the pursuit of revenue must never overshadow those duties. The allegations surrounding the commentary at Tiruchendur's Soorasamharam festival raise these concerns. H. Adiseshan, State Treasurer of the Hindu Temple Protection Movement, has alleged that devotional chants were extended to political leaders and that religious narration included inappropriate political comparisons.

These allegations require a fair examination of the complete recordings. Those concerned must have an opportunity to explain their position. An accusation alone cannot establish wrongdoing. Equally, criticism from devotees should not be dismissed without inquiry. The administration must establish what happened and make its findings public. Festival commentary is a responsibility that demands knowledge of a temple's history, religious traditions and the significance of its ceremonies. Commentators should be selected for their understanding, restraint and ability to communicate those traditions respectfully. Fame or political connections should not determine their suitability.

Political leaders may attend temple festivals and receive appropriate courtesies. However, a celebration centred on the deity must not become a platform for praising those in power. The dispute over a mandapam at Madurai's Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple also highlights the need for administrative clarity. The petitioner seeks access to a space he says devotees previously used for meditation. The temple administration maintains that it is a worship area rather than an exclusive meditation hall, while stating that devotees who wish to meditate are permitted to do so.

The Madurai Bench of the High Court has allowed time for documents supporting the petitioner's position to be submitted. The matter should therefore not be presented as though its central question has already been finally decided.

Advocate Adhi Saivan S. Sankaran has offered his views on the hundred&pillared hall, its association with Nataraja worship and its use. Such questions should be examined through historical documents, temple records and consultation with people knowledgeable about the relevant traditions. A temporary permission or signboard should not, by itself, settle the permanent purpose of a temple space.

Worship and meditation can enrich the same spiritual experience. Administrative difficulties arise when access and permitted activities are left unclear. Permissions, conditions and responsibilities must be recorded transparently. Good administration prevents today's uncertainty from becoming tomorrow's litigation. Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay should ensure timely investigations, clear standards for festival commentary, transparent appointments and proper maintenance of temple property records. Where wrongdoing is proven, position and influence must not shield those responsible. The question, "Will the Chief Minister crack the whip?" requires more than a forceful announcement. It calls for corrective action and procedures that prevent the same failures from recurring.

Governments and officials change. Temple traditions and public trust pass from one generation to another. Every administration holds them in its care for only a time, but its decisions can leave lasting consequences.

Let devotion guide temple life, and integrity guide temple administration. Protecting both is a true measure of responsible government.



Launch of Sonia Gandhi's Autobiography

Tamil Nadu CM Vijay and 7 Other State Chief Ministers Attend

NEW DELHI: The autobiography of senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was released in Delhi yesterday. The event was attended by Chief Ministers from seven states—including Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay—as well as leaders from various political parties. The autobiography, titled "Belonging: A Journey of Love" and authored by senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, was released on the 10th of this month.

The official launch ceremony took place yesterday at the ITC Maurya hotel in Delhi. The event saw the participation of several prominent leaders, including Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay, Karnataka Chief Minister Shivakumar, Kerala Chief Minister Satheesan, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. Also present were Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav and Trinamool Congress General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee.

Seated in the front row were Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay was seated next to Rahul Gandhi. Former Punjab Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Amarinder Singh also attended the event. Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi jointly unveiled the autobiography.

Speaking at the event, Sonia Gandhi remarked: "I used to tremble with fear in the presence of my mother&in&law, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. My husband, Rajiv Gandhi, and his younger brother, Sanjay Gandhi, shared a very close bond with her—they would affectionately call her 'Mummy'." However, I was not keen on calling Indira Gandhi "Mummy." I remained firm that I would use that term only for my own mother—the woman who gave birth to me.

Yet, as I grew closer to Indira Gandhi over time, I began calling her "Mummy" without even realizing it. In the early days, Indira Gandhi—much like my own father—was prone to fits of anger; however, that temper vanished after the birth of Rahul and Priyanka.

I am not someone who easily mingles with others; I have always preferred solitude. I had no desire to write an autobiography, but because many people made negative criticisms about my family—and because Rahul, Priyanka, and my friend Manjulika Dubey urged me to do so—I eventually decided to write it. During the early stages of my political career, I faced harsh criticism; people disparaged me, claiming I did not belong to this land and knew nothing. But the victory in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections changed everything, Sonia remarked.

Farmers in Tamil Nadu Struggle as They Remain Unable to Obtain New Loans!



NAGERKOVIL: Farmers are facing significant hardship as they are unable to secure new loans, largely because the promised waiver of agricultural loans through cooperative credit societies has yet to be implemented properly. During the election campaign, Chief Minister Vijay had promised a full waiver of agricultural crop loans for farmers in Tamil Nadu.

Upon assuming office, the TVK (Tamizhaga Vettri Kazhagam) government announced a waiver for agricultural loans of up to ₹50,000. This was later extended to include crop loans of up to ₹75,000. However, as this has not yet been put into effect, farmers across various districts have submitted applications to their local agricultural cooperative credit societies, seeking loans for the current year. Cooperative society officials, citing the absence of an official government order authorizing new loans, have merely collected the applications without processing them.

Consequently, farmers who still have outstanding debts are left with no way to obtain fresh credit. With the second season of paddy cultivation now underway across Tamil Nadu, farmers are struggling; they lack the funds required for cultivation expenses and are also unable to access the chemical fertilizers—which are typically provided as part of the loan amount (constituting 10% of the total loan). Across the state, more than 200,000 farmers have yet to receive loans, leaving them unable to proceed with their agricultural activities.

Addressing the situation, an official from an agricultural cooperative society stated, "We, as officials, are facing a great deal of confusion regarding the issuance of crop loans." "Because a loan waiver is in the pipeline, farmers are naturally reluctant to repay their existing debts." "The government order specifying the ₹75,000 waiver limit reached the districts only last week.

We are currently in the process of calculating the outstanding loan amounts and the specific waiver eligibility for each farmer. Once the loan waivers are processed, we require government authorization to issue new agricultural loans for the current year. Only then will we be able to take steps to disburse these loans."

Vins Antro, head of the Agricultural Irrigation Association in Kanyakumari district, stated, "Agricultural cooperative societies are currently facing major irregularities regarding both loan waivers and the disbursement of new loans this year.

This situation will cause significant hardship to farmers—especially in the Delta districts, which possess larger tracts of agricultural land compared to districts like Kanyakumari, where the total area under cultivation is smaller.

Therefore, the crop loan waivers must be implemented properly, and fresh loans for the current year should be issued to the farmers immediately."

Those Involved in Irregularities in Book Procurement Deserve to be Arrested: Madurai Bench of the High Court

MADURAI: The Madurai Bench of the High Court has stated that "those involved in irregularities regarding the procurement of books for libraries under the Directorate of Public Libraries deserve to be arrested." A petition was filed by Ramasubbu from Krishnapuram, Tirunelveli district: Previously, an individual named Krishnan had filed a case seeking a directive to ensure transparency in the procurement of books for public libraries by publishing relevant information on a website.

In an order issued on June 19, 2024, a division bench of the High Court directed that the procurement of books must be conducted transparently, in accordance with the Government Order (G.O.) issued by the School Education Department in 2024. The court mandated the maintenance of a dedicated website for procurement, where full details and cover images of the selected books must be uploaded. It further ordered that a one&month period be provided for the public and authors to submit their feedback or objections. The court also directed the Tamil Nadu government to form a committee to investigate the allegations raised by the petitioner and to take action against the officials involved. The government has failed to implement these directives. Between November 2025 and January 2026, procedures were initiated to select books for the E.V.R. Arivulagam (Knowledge Centre) in Coimbatore, as well as for regional libraries in Coimbatore, Trichy, Salem, Cuddalore, and Tirunelveli. In violation of the High Court's order, secret procurement orders were issued on February 14, 2026, in favor of certain questionable publishing houses (including 'Agal Vilakku' and 'Phoenix').

The committee for book procurement granted approval for this in March 2026. Government funds were disbursed to unverified publishing houses—'Agal Vilakku' and 'Phoenix'—for books released under the names of fictitious authors. An investigation by the CBI or the CBCID should be ordered into the book procurement process. Furthermore, action for contempt of court should be initiated against the officials who failed to comply with the court's 2024 directive. This was stated [in the petition]. A division bench comprising Justices G.R. Swaminathan and M.D. Sumathi had previously adjourned the hearing, granting time for the government to file a report on the follow&up actions taken, including the registration of a case.

The matter came up for hearing again yesterday. Rs. 1.74 crore to 'Agal Vilakku' Government side: Five officials have been suspended in connection with the book procurement irregularities. The Director of Public Libraries has been replaced. A case has been registered in accordance with the court's order, and the details of the FIR will be released today. The Directorate of Vigilance and Anti&Corruption (DVAC) is handling this case with the utmost seriousness. No one involved in these irregularities will escape punishment. Judges: Such cases are a major distraction.

What measures are you going to take to regulate the book procurement process to ensure that such irregularities do not recur? Government side: In Tamil Nadu, there are several specialized libraries, such as the Anna Centenary Library in Chennai, the E.V.R. Arivulagam in Coimbatore, and the Kalaignar Library in Madurai. These libraries house 80% English books and 20% Tamil books, intended for the benefit of research scholars.

It is shocking to discover that some of these books were generated using AI. A committee was formed in November 2025 for the procurement of books, and the books were dispatched in February 2026. The Judges asked: "How many days were allotted for the selection of these books?" The Government side replied: "We require time to respond. A Government Order (G.O.) was issued on February 27, planning for a procurement worth ₹30 crore; out of this, ₹20 crore has been disbursed up to the first week of September."

The Judges asked: "How much was paid to 'Agal vilakku' Publications?" The Government side replied: "A total of ₹1.74 crore over three years." The Judges remarked: "That is a massive sum!" The Government side requested more time. The Government side added: "And this was for the creation of 'fictitious' [fabricated] content. The Directorate of Vigilance and Anti&Corruption (DVAC) has conducted raids. 33,661 books from 'Agalvilakku' Publications and 39,241 books from 'Phoenix' Publications were procured." The Judges stated: "Everyone involved in this malpractice deserves to be arrested. How many books were procured from 'Sigma' Publications?"

The Government side replied: "That has not been investigated yet. We need time to provide detailed, data&backed responses to all the questions raised by the Court." The Judges asked: "If the Court offers suggestions regarding this case, is the Government prepared to follow them?" The Government side responded: "The Government is prepared to consider any guidelines provided by the Court to ensure that such incidents do not recur."

This was the nature of the discussion. Granting the Government side time to respond, the Judges adjourned the hearing to November 20.

US Officials Report Iran's 'Dirty Bomb' Plot Targeting Trump Administration

USA: Fresh intelligence reports indicate that Iran is reportedly developing strategies for a potential 'dirty bomb' or chemical weapon attack in Washington, D.

C., specifically targeting high&ranking officials within the Trump administration. Multiple US officials, speaking to CNN, confirmed these developments.

While the intelligence suggests no immediate threat, Iranian actors are said to be meticulously mapping out plans for future contingencies. These detailed plots reportedly identify specific locations and targets, prompting US authorities to initiate contingency preparations. One official noted, "Whether they actually have the personnel in place to execute is a matter of debate."

US intelligence has also intercepted Iranian claims about bomb&making materials allegedly hidden within the United States. While officials are divided on the exact validity of these claims, there's a general consensus that Iran could plausibly have nuclear or chemical substances stashed in the US, capable of being combined with conventional explosives to create a 'dirty bomb.' An official highlighted the nature of such a weapon: "Any weapon like that is a weapon of terror, not a weapon of precision... They can make people really sick and certain areas uninhabitable."



Amid these rising tensions, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio held discussions with Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani. Secretary Rubio condemned Iran's attacks on Bahrain and reaffirmed the US commitment to the security of Bahrain and its Gulf partners.

Separately, US Vice President JD Vance assured that the conflict with Iran would not escalate into a prolonged war, emphasizing that the US does not intend a long&term military presence in the region. He acknowledged Iran's nuclear program as a threat but ruled out an extended engagement, stating that Washington would not be involved for years. Vance expressed confidence that President Donald Trump would successfully resolve the conflict, reiterating the administration's stance against a prolonged war.

Two members of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, which targeted Bollywood actors, have been arrested; Amitabh Bachchan posts, "I have been saved"

NEW DELHI: Two members of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, who had plotted to kill Bollywood actors—including Amitabh Bachchan—in Mumbai, have been arrested. Following this, Amitabh Bachchan expressed his gratitude, noting that he had been "saved" from them. International criminal Lawrence Bishnoi is currently incarcerated in a Gujarat prison. There are allegations that he continues to operate his gang from within the jail.

The gang has been extorting money from Bollywood celebrities and business figures through threats. On October 18, a shooting incident occurred involving actor Tiger Shroff; he managed to escape the attack, which was linked to the Bishnoi gang.



Seven individuals have been arrested in connection with this case so far.

In this context, two members of the Bishnoi gang had reportedly planned to target a Delhi&based businessman as well as Amitabh Bachchan. These individuals, who hail from Punjab, were arrested in Delhi and Mumbai.

They have been identified as Vikas Kumar (alias 'Vicky') from Jalandhar and Deepak Singh (alias 'Deep') from Tarn Taran, Punjab.

According to police sources, they had plotted to shoot Amitabh Bachchan, allegedly in response to comments he is said to have made regarding the 1984 anti-&Sikh riots. On the night of November 15, Amitabh posted a brief message—"I have been saved"—without providing any further explanation.

This is believed to be a reference to these arrests. Last month, he had received three threats via email. Meanwhile, an individual named Goldy Dhillon has issued death threats against Amitabh Bachchan and his son, Abhishek Bachchan, on Facebook. He wrote, "Even a bulletproof enclosure will not save Amitabh. Even if these two are caught, our operations will not be hindered."

Madurai jewelry store robber Nishanth remanded to judicial custody until Dec. 1

MADURAI: A judicial magistrate has ordered that Nishanth, the perpetrator behind a jewelry store robbery in Madurai, be remanded to judicial custody until December 1. Nishanth, the prime suspect in the Madurai jewelry heist, was arrested near Dharmapuri yesterday (November 16). Upon being brought to Madurai, he was taken to a secret location, where a special team led by Deputy Commissioner of Police Inigo Divyan subjected him to intensive interrogation.



Investigators questioned him extensively regarding the robbery, the whereabouts of the stolen jewelry, and the identities of any accomplices or individuals who may have orchestrated the crime. Following this, he was taken to the S.S. Colony police station for further questioning. This morning, police presented him before Judge Lakshmi Priya of the Madurai District 5th Judicial Magistrate Court. The police also produced the recovered jewelry and the bags used by the accused before the judge. Subsequently, the magistrate ordered Nishanth to be remanded to judicial custody until December 1. Following the order, the police escorted him to prison.

Case Filed Against Deputy Speaker in Madurai High Court; Hearing Today





MADURAI: Karthikkumar (45), a resident of Thuraiyur in Trichy district, released a video on social media alleging that he was assaulted by the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Ravi Shankar, when he approached him regarding a drinking water issue.

This incident has caused a major stir. Karthikkumar further alleged that after he lodged a complaint with the Mannachanallur police—who failed to take any action—the police coerced him into recording a video. Meanwhile, Karthikkumar received a summons to appear for an inquiry at the Trichy District Superintendent of Police's office; however, the inquiry was postponed as the investigating officer was unavailable. Lawyer Pon Murugesan stated, "The police are deliberately harassing my client. According to Supreme Court guidelines, an FIR should be registered before issuing a summons for an inquiry in such cases.

The police have failed to follow this procedure." "Consequently, we have filed a case in the Madurai High Court, seeking a directive to register an FIR against the Deputy Speaker, as well as against the Mannachanallur police inspector for failing to take appropriate action. The case is set to be heard today. Our legal battle will continue until we obtain justice," he added.



The Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Shri Vivek Aggarwal addressing the media on the launch of an AI-powered semantic search and knowledge discovery platform with a conversational assistant on the Ministry's primary digital platform at Kartavya Bhawan, in New Delhi.

I entered the Mudumalai forest area only after obtaining proper permission – Minister Vanni Arasu

CHENNAI: Minister Vanni Arasu has stated that he entered the Mudumalai forest area only after obtaining the necessary, formal permission. Speaking to reporters in Chennai, Minister Vanni Arasu said: "For over 15 years, I have visited almost every forest.



I love not only people but also animals, forests, and the ocean. It is impossible to suggest that I would cause harm to any animal. I entered the Mudumalai forest area only after securing proper permission; there has been no violation of any rules. Those who are unable to criticize me on political grounds are raising such allegations. I have been visiting forests long before I became a Minister.

For instance, I have even visited Vathal Malai in Dharmapuri—a place that is not easily accessible to others. I care deeply for both people and animals.

I never stay at home during Diwali; instead, I always head to the forests. In the past, it was through my efforts that the 'Tamil Nadu Trekking' initiative was established. The tribal communities in the areas I visited requested permanent employment, and I conveyed this request to the former Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin." This is what he stated.

India Emphasizes Big Cat Conservation for Climate Action at COP31

TURKIYE: Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav highlighted the crucial role of big cat conservation in mitigating climate change and strengthening ecosystem resilience.



This was discussed at a high&level ministerial event, 'Big Cats: Drivers of Climate Change Mitigation,' held during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP31).

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) co&organized the event. Ministers and delegates from big cat range countries like Nepal, Venezuela, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka, along with representatives from international bodies, participated.

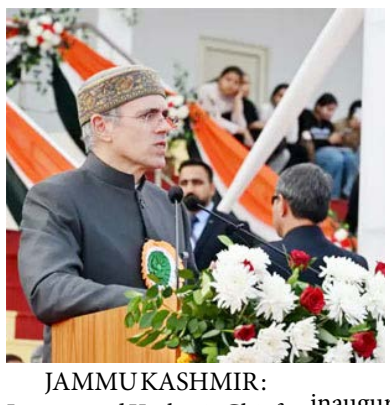
Discussions focused on how protecting big cats and their habitats directly contributes to climate mitigation and sustainable development. Protecting the world's seven major big cat species helps preserve carbon&rich ecosystems and boosts climate resilience, aligning with global climate goals.

SP Yadav, Director General of IBCA, presented on the status of big cats. India's conservation efforts, especially the successful reintroduction of cheetahs, were praised. Minister Yadav emphasized IBCA's role, envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in global big cat protection, sharing India's proven conservation frameworks, and fostering international collaboration.

India's tiger conservation success demonstrates how political will, strong institutions, financial commitment, and community involvement can lead to ecological security and climate resilience. Big cat conservation protects carbon&dense landscapes like forests and wetlands, which store carbon and mitigate emissions. These animals act as 'umbrella species,' benefiting entire ecosystems and local communities. India's 58 tiger reserves, covering 85,000 sq km, safeguard vast forest ecosystems and vital carbon stocks, supporting over 600 rivers.

Project Tiger, backed by strong legislation, has led to India's wild tiger population reaching 3,682 in 2022, over 70% of the global total, and generates significant employment.

J-K CM to inaugurate, lay foundation stones for projects worth over Rs 30 crore across Jammu, Samba and Kathua



JAMMU KASHMIR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah will on Tuesday inaugurate and lay foundation stones for development projects worth over Rs 30 crore across Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts, reaffirming the government's commitment to equitable development across the Union Territory.

Following the inauguration and foundation&laying ceremonies, the Chief Minister will visit the Bari Brahmana Industrial Estate, where he will interact with industry stakeholders to discuss industrial growth, investment opportunities and employment generation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Sharing the programme on X, the Office of the Chief Minister said, "The Chief Minister will today lay foundation stones and inaugurate development projects worth over ₹30 crore across Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts, reaffirming the Government's commitment to equitable development across all regions of J&K.

Later, the Chief Minister will visit Bari Brahmana Industrial Estate, where he will interact with industry stakeholders to discuss industrial growth, investment opportunities and employment generation in Jammu and Kashmir. The visit comes as the Jammu and Kashmir government reiterates its focus on equitable development across regions while engaging with stakeholders to promote industrial activity and investment.

The proposed interaction at Bari Brahmana Industrial Estate is expected to provide an opportunity for discussions on industrial expansion, investment and employment generation, as Jammu and Kashmir continues to strengthen its infrastructure and economic connectivity.

The development initiatives come amid a broader push to strengthen infrastructure and connectivity across Jammu and Kashmir, with investments in railway, road, tunnel, airport and multimodal logistics infrastructure aimed at improving accessibility and supporting economic growth.

Together, these infrastructure initiatives are aimed at improving access to markets, supporting tourism, facilitating the movement of agricultural produce and strengthening economic opportunities across the Union Territory.


New Delhi: Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit has stated that the indigenously manufactured Tejas Mark 1A fighter jets will soon be inducted into the Indian Air Force.

Trump, Putin, and Xi Jinping to Meet on Nov. 19 Key Discussions on Nuclear Arms Reduction

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Chinese President Xi Jinping are set to hold a trilateral meeting on November 19. It is expected that the three leaders will engage in significant discussions regarding the reduction of nuclear weapons. The Asia&Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum comprises 21 member nations, including the United States, China, Russia, Japan, Canada, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Australia.

A two&day summit of this organization begins tomorrow in Shenzhen, in China's Guangdong province, with leaders from the member nations scheduled to participate. As part of the summit, US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Chinese President Xi Jinping will hold a trilateral meeting on November 19. During this session, the three leaders are expected to hold key discussions on the reduction of nuclear weapons. It is estimated that the United States and Russia each possess 5,000 nuclear warheads, while China is believed to have approximately 600.

In 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear&Test&Ban Treaty (CTBT) was signed, with 191 nations—including the United States and Russia—becoming signatories. Due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russia has frequently threatened to withdraw from this treaty.

A new nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and Russia was signed in 2010; however, this agreement expired last February, amid the conflict in Ukraine. There are now concerns that a renewed nuclear arms race could emerge between the United States and Russia. Currently, conflicts are unfolding in various parts of the world—most notably the long&standing war between Russia and Ukraine, as well as the protracted tensions involving the United States and Iran.



Furthermore, friction persists between China and the United States regarding the issue of Taiwan. Given this backdrop, a potential three&way dialogue between the leaders of the United States, Russia, and China has taken on significant international importance. It is understood that, in addition to nuclear disarmament, the trilateral talks will include detailed discussions on the conflicts in Iran and Ukraine. Regarding this, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning stated yesterday, "The leaders of the three nations are set to hold significant consultations concerning global peace and stability.

The meeting will also address challenges that have emerged on the international stage. Furthermore, discussions will be held on resolving the differences that exist between the United States and China."

Allegations of mixing beach sand with river sand for sale Minister for Mines conducts inspection near Red Hills

15 sand yards sealed

SENKUNDRAM: The areas of Red Hills and the adjacent Puzhal Panchayat Union in Thiruvallur district are located on the outskirts of Chennai. New residential developments are continuously being constructed in these areas.

In this context, social activists and members of the public have alleged that sand yards operating in the Pudunagar and Aarun Ullasa Nagar areas—falling under the Pullilai Panchayat near Red Hills—are illegally sourcing beach sand from the coastal regions of Pulicat and Kattupalli. It is alleged that this beach sand is being mixed with low&quality river sand and sold.

Following this complaint, the Minister for Mineral Resources, D.K. Prabhu, conducted a surprise inspection yesterday of several sand yards operating in the Pudunagar and Aarun Ullasa Nagar areas, which fall under the Pullilai Panchayat.



The inspection revealed that beach sand had been extracted from the Kattupalli area without proper authorization and stockpiled in massive, mountain&like heaps; this sand was then being mixed with river sand and sold. Consequently, acting on the Minister's orders, officials sealed 15 sand yards involved in the sale of this adulterated sand. Furthermore, authorities are now taking the necessary legal action against those involved.

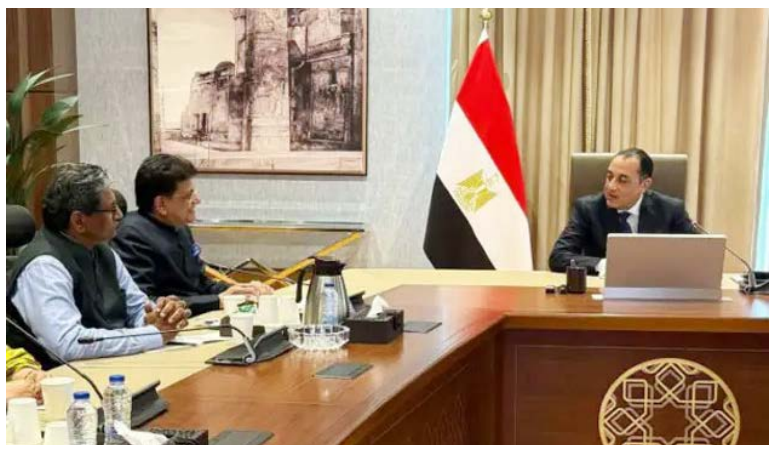
India- Egypt Strategic Partnership Poised for New Heights: Piyush Goyal

EDYPT: India and Egypt are set to elevate their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, with a strong focus on boosting trade, investment, and technological cooperation.

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, during his recent visit to Cairo, emphasized the expanding presence of Indian companies in Egypt and highlighted vast opportunities for collaboration across various sectors.

Goyal met with Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, conveying Prime Minister Narendra Modi's greetings and reaffirming India's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties.

He noted a growing interest among leading Egyptian businesses in deeper engagement with India, identifying automotive manufacturing, electric vehicles, auto components, fintech, digital payments, renewable energy, logistics, warehousing, and supply chain as key areas for partnership.



During discussions with Mohamed Ismail Mansour, Chairman of Infinity Energy, and Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Goyal reiterated that India's large, fast&growing market, robust manufacturing ecosystem, skilled workforce, and attractive investment environment present a 'golden opportunity' for Egyptian businesses. He underscored the potential for mutual growth and shared prosperity.

The India&Egypt Startup Forum, held concurrently, brought together entrepreneurs from both nations, representing ancient civilizations, to explore innovation and collaboration. Goyal highlighted India's vibrant startup ecosystem, encouraging young founders to co&create solutions for global challenges in digital payments, healthcare, agriculture, tourism, and emerging technologies.

First Open Prison Facility for Women Inmates in Maharashtra

MUMBAI: Plans are underway to establish the state's first open prison facility exclusively for women inmates in Maharashtra. Eligible inmates will be permitted to live with their children and family members, go to work, and gradually prepare for life outside of prison. Nashik and Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar have been selected as locations for this initiative.

A committee has been formed—following a directive from the Supreme Court—to identify eligible inmates and potential employment opportunities, with the goal of making these facilities operational by next year.

The committee is headed by Justice Bharati Dangre of the Bombay High Court. Other members include Radhika Rastogi, Additional Chief Secretary (Home Department), and Suhas Warke, Additional Director General of Prisons, who serves as the Member&Secretary.

Under this scheme, women inmates will be allowed to reside within the same premises alongside their children and family members. Arrangements will be made for children currently in care homes to stay here with their mothers and attend nearby schools.

Once the exact number of individuals is determined, employment opportunities for the women will be identified within the local area. According to the 'Prison Statistics India 2024' report, there are 103 open prisons in the country,

19 of which are located in Maharashtra. However, for women, such open prison facilities exist in only two locations: the Yerwada Women's Prison in Pune and Akola.

At the Sanganer Open Prison in Rajasthan, more than 400 inmates live with their families and engage in various occupations, including running grocery stores.

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