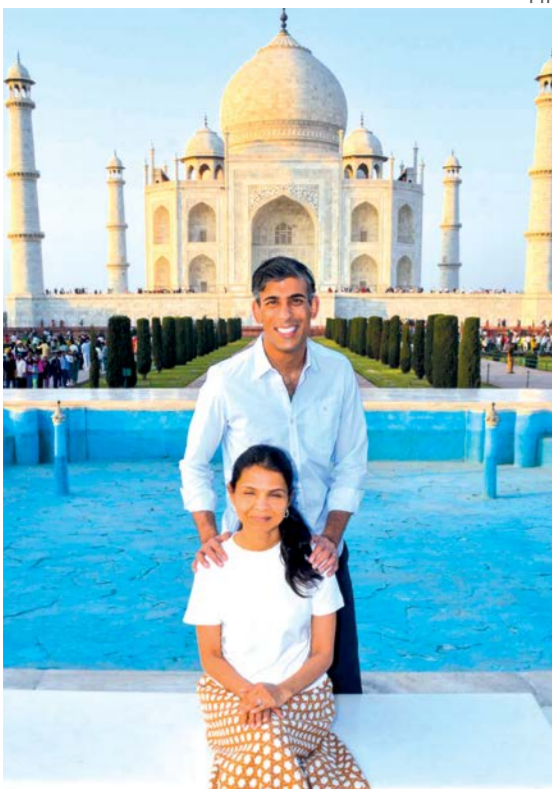


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Former British prime minister Rishi Sunak with wife Akshata Murty at the Taj Mahal, in Agra

Fireman injured during operation to control blaze at Freemasons' Hall in Mumbai

MUMBAI: A 25-year-old fireman was injured during efforts to douse the fire that erupted at Freemasons' Hall in south Mumbai on Saturday afternoon, an official said. Pankaj Parshuram Bhoir sustained injuries to his right hand while trying to put out the flames at the three-storey heritage structure opposite Sterling Cinema. He is in a stable condition, the official said. He said the fire started at 2.20 pm and is confined to an office on the second floor of the building, which has been enveloped by smoke. "Three fire engines, a water tanker and a jumbo tanker have been pressed into service. It is a level one (minor) fire," the official said. In another incident, a fire broke out in a textile godown at an industrial estate in Kurla around 1.20 pm. It was doused soon after, an official said.

Bengal: BSF seizes gold worth Rs 3 crore, arrests 1

KOLKATA: The BSF has seized gold biscuits worth Rs 3 crore and arrested one person along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, an official statement said on Saturday. Acting on a tip-off, Border Security Force (BSF) personnel intercepted a motorcyclist near the Bithari border outpost and seized 25 gold biscuits hidden in a cavity under the fuel tank of the two-wheeler on Friday, it said. During interrogation, the accused, a resident of Padamvila village in the district, claimed that a Bangladeshi smuggler had handed over the consignment to him on the Indian side of the border and asked him to drop it off at a designated spot near Bithari market, promising Rs 1,500 for the job, the statement added.

Man held in online part-time job scam in Delhi

NEW DELHI: A man was arrested for allegedly duping people in an online part-time job scam, police said on Saturday. The accused was identified as Raj Kumar (31), a resident of Sirsa in Haryana. The matter came to light when police received a complaint that Kumar had duped a man of Rs 3.30 lakh assuring higher returns on investment, police said. The complainant told the police that he got in touch with the accused through social media where he offered him a part-time job of liking and sharing videos and promised him commissions in return, police said. Later, the accused convinced the complainant to make the investment. Once they received the money, they shut down all communication and deleted social media groups.

Bus hits four of family riding on bike, three dead in UP

LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP): Four people of a family riding on a motorcycle were hit by a speeding bus in Khaiya village here on Saturday, killing three of them while they were being rushed to a hospital, police said. Dhaurahra Circle Officer PP Singh said all the four were riding on a motorcycle when near Khaiya village, a speeding bus hit the motorcycle from behind. Awadhesh (42), his wife Mina (40) and mother Gita (53) died while they were being taken to a district hospital, he said, adding that Awadhesh's 11-year-old son Rohit has survived and referred to Lucknow for treatment. A case has been registered in the matter, he said.

Andhra woman, kin kill son over indecent behaviour; chop body into pieces

CUMBUM (ANDHRA PRADESH): A 57-year-old woman in Prakasam district, frustrated with her son's misconduct, allegedly killed him and with the assistance of relatives dismembered his body into five pieces, police said on Saturday. Prakasam Superintendent of Police, A R Damodar said K Lakshmi Devi (57) allegedly murdered her son, K Shyam Prasad (35), a cleaner, on February 13. Devi's relatives allegedly helped her in killing Prasad. "Unable to bear her son's perverted and indecent behaviour, she (Lakshmi Devi) killed him," Damodar told PTI, adding that Prasad had also behaved indecently with his aunts and other relatives in Bengaluru, Khammam, and Hyderabad. Prasad, who was unmarried, had also allegedly attempted to rape his maternal aunts in Hyderabad and Narasaraopeta, police said.

Ajit Pawar urges people to avoid undercooked chicken amid GBS scare

PUNE: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday urged people to avoid consuming undercooked chicken as a precautionary measure amid the recent emergence of Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) cases. Speaking to reporters in Pune, which has reported the most cases in the state, Pawar addressed concerns linking the outbreak to poultry consumption, clarifying that there is no need for culling chickens. "Recently, a GBS outbreak was reported in the Khadakwasda dam area (in Pune). While some linked it to water contamination, others speculated it was caused by chicken consumption. After a detailed review, it has been concluded that there is no need to cull poultry," Pawar said.

Deportees from US: Families say they took loans, sold properties to send them abroad

PTI, CHANDIGARH: The family members of a second batch of illegal Indian immigrants being deported from the US are in a state of shock, with many of them saying that they raised money by pledging farm land and cattle to send them abroad for a bright future.

A plane carrying 119 illegal immigrants from the United States will land at the Amritsar airport on Saturday, the second such batch of Indians to be deported by the Donald Trump administration as part of its promised crackdown on illegal migration.

The plane is expected to land at the airport late in the evening, official sources said. Of the 119 deportees, 100 are from Punjab and Haryana.

While 67 are from Punjab, 33 are from Haryana, eight from Gujarat, three from Uttar Pradesh, two each from Goa, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and one each is from Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

PUNJAB POLICE ARRESTS FRAUDULENT TRAVEL AGENT FROM PATIALA

PTI, CHANDIGARH: Amidst the ongoing crackdown on fraudulent immigration consultants, the Punjab Police's NRI affairs wing on Saturday arrested a travel agent from Patiala. Police said the accused has been identified as Anil Batra, who allegedly facilitated the illegal immigration process for one of the recent US deportees. The action was taken based on an FIR registered by one of the victims. A US military aircraft carrying 104 Indian deportees landed at the Amritsar airport on February 5. A second US flight carrying 119 illegal Indian immigrants is slated to land in Amritsar tonight. In total, 10 FIRs have been registered against travel agents who allegedly deceived people with false promises of facilitating their entry into the United States. Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav formed a four-member Special Investigation Team, headed by Additional DGP (NRI Affairs) Praveen Sinha, to probe the complaints of victims.

formed her that Daljit (38) had reached the US, but she had not heard from him directly, she said. The last time she spoke to her husband was about a month ago, when he told her that he was on the way to the US.

She said her husband had asked her to transfer the power of attorney for four-five acres of their family land in the name of some villager at the behest of the agent or else, he would be stranded. She accordingly trans-

NAPA ASKS GOVT TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST TRAVEL AGENTS FACILITATING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

PTI, JALANDHAR: The North American Punjabi Association has expressed serious concern over human trafficking, saying the government must take immediate action to prevent youths from taking illegal and dangerous routes to reach foreign shores. The reaction came after many Indians deported from America last week alleged that they were taken to the US borders through treacherous 'dunki' routes by unscrupulous travel agents without their prior knowledge and after charging huge sums. Satnam Singh Chahal, the Executive Director of the North American Punjabi Association (NAPA) on Saturday alleged that despite repeated warnings and several tragic incidents, the government has failed to implement effective measures to curb illegal migration.

ferred the land to the name of the said person.

She said the deal to send her husband to the US was struck for Rs 40-45 lakh. She said she was unaware of her husband's deportation until she learned about it through media reports.

Kaur, who lives with her father-in-law, two sons and a daughter, requested the

government to help her reclaim the family land and take strict action against fraudulent travel agents.

Sohajvir Singh (21), hailing from Gajewas village in Patiala's Samana, is also among the deportees.

His mother was in tears when she came to know about the deportation of her son.

REGAL BEASTS



A pair of Asiatic lions inside their enclosure, at Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

J&K: Cop among 3 govt employees sacked for terror links

PTI, JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday dismissed three government employees including a jailed policeman for their alleged terror links, officials said.

The sacked employees have been identified as police constable Firdous Ahmad Bhat, teacher in school education department Mohammad Ashraf Bhat and orderly in forest department Nisar Ahmad Khan who was earlier arrested in connection with the killing of a National Conference minister in 2000, they said.

The officials said the LG invoked Article 311 (2) (c) of the Constitution to terminate the services of the three employees after investigation by law enforcement and intelligence agencies clearly established their terror links.



Security personnel during a search operation near LoC forest area, in Akhnoor sector in Jammu

Over 70 government employees have been fired by the LG in the Union Territory for their terror links in the past few years.

The termination of the three government employees comes close on the heels of two back-to-back security review meetings by the LG in the twin capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu, directing the security agencies to intensify anti-terror operations to neutralise terrorists and terror ecosystem.

The officials said the dismissed policeman, who was arrested in May last year, was initially appointed as Special Police Officer (SPO) in 2005 and subsequently promoted as con-

stable in 2011.

Currently, lodged in Kot Bhalwal Jail, Bhat was posted at a sensitive position of Electronic Surveillance Unit in the J-K Police but started working for terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

However, he got exposed when two terrorists -- Waaseem Shah and Adnan Beigh -- were arrested in Anantnag with a pistol and a hand grenade as they were planning to attack non-local civilians and tourists, the officials said.

During the interrogation, Bhat revealed his sinister design and led to the recovery of a sizable quantity of arms including pistols, ammunition and explosives from his residential quarter in Police Housing Colony in Srinagar and a newly constructed house in Mattan, Anantnag.

UN climate chief calls India 'solar superpower', urges it to submit stronger climate action plan

PTI, NEW DELHI: UN climate chief Simon Stiell has called India a "solar superpower" and urged it to develop an ambitious climate plan covering its entire economy, saying that an even stronger embrace of the global clean energy boom will supercharge its economic rise.

Stiell, who is in India to attend the ET Global Business Summit, lauded India's efforts to mitigate climate change, saying that while some governments only talk, "India delivers."

"India is already a solar superpower, one of only

four countries to have installed more than 100 gigawatts of solar... Energy access is on the rise with villages across the country electrified by 2018, well ahead of schedule," he said. "Now there is a real opportunity to take the next step and unleash even bigger benefits for India's 1.4 billion people and economy. India is already headed firmly in this direction, but an even stronger embrace of the global clean energy boom will supercharge India's economic rise," he said.

Stiell said India has an

opportunity that only a few countries have: "To realise ambitious plans to deploy hundreds more gigawatts of renewable energy capacity. To lead a new wave of green industrialization, developing, scaling, and exporting vital technologies." He said the world's fifth-largest economy is well-positioned to reap the benefits of ambitious, economy-wide climate plans. "Key among them is Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi's leadership in prioritizing LiFEunleashing the power of institutions, communities, and individuals to pro-

tect the environment and promote a circular economy." The UN climate chief added that India's leaders have a rare opportunity to deepen whole-of-economy industrial strategies that would make the fast-developing South Asian nation a "dominant force in clean energy and industry".

Countries are required to submit their next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), or climate plans, for the 2031-2035 period this year.

With most countries, including India, missing the February 10 deadline, Stiell

earlier this month urged them to submit their plans by September at the latest.

An official source in the Union Environment Ministry told PTI that India has not yet finalised its new NDCs.

India's new NDCs will have targets achievable with the means available. Mitigating climate change requires financial and technological support, along with other enablers. Developed countries are unwilling to provide this support. Why should countries that did not cause climate change continue to suffer?"

the source said.

The collective aim of these climate plans is to limit global temperature rise since the start of the industrial revolution to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the key goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Developed countries, historically responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, were required to deliver a new and ambitious financial package to support climate action in the developing world at the UN climate conference in Azerbaijan last year.



Rahul Gandhi calls for clear tech vision, not empty words

PTI, NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said while India has the talent, it needs a strong production base, and not empty words, to build industrial prowess in new technology to give its youth jobs.

In a post on X, Gandhi highlighted how China has started producing drones which are revolutionising warfare across the world, saying India needs to develop a strategy to become competitive in this area.

"Drones have revolutionised warfare, combining batteries, motors and optics to manoeuvre and communicate on the battlefield in unprecedented ways. But drones are not just one technology -- they are bottom-up innovations produced by a strong industrial system.

“Drones have revolutionised warfare, combining batteries, motors and optics to manoeuvre and communicate on the battlefield in unprecedented ways. But drones are not just one technology - they are bottom-up innovations produced by a strong industrial system – Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

heard saying that drones have completely transformed the way wars are fought.

"But drones are not just a technology they are a grassroots and small-scale innovation being produced by a robust industrial system.

"Drones have diminished the importance of tanks, artillery and even aircraft carriers, bringing air power to the platoon level and reshaping intelligence and precision on the battlefield. But this revolution is not just limited to warfare -- it is also about industry, AI and next-generation technology," he said.

"Unfortunately, PM Modi has failed to understand this. While he is busy giving speeches on AI by simply reading from a 'teleprompter', our competitors are mastering new technologies. India needs a strong production base, not empty speeches," Gandhi said.