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Thanks for the memories, Leo Messi

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN
@ Bengaluru

AS a sports journalist, you never wish for some sentences to actually be written. One of those sentences will finally have to be written. Lionel Messi has announced his international retirement. The greatest footballer of the 21st century—

perhaps of all time—will no longer wear the famous Argentina jersey, a jersey he wore with pride for over 20 years. There will be no Messi, L on team sheets in the next Argentina game. There will be no Messi, L in the next Copa America. There will be no Messi, L at the next World Cup, a World Cup Argentina will be one of

the co-hosts of. In an emotional post across his socials, the 39-year-old wrote: “It was a decision that hurt—and still hurts deep down—but I understand that the time has come.”

Of course this day was bound to come. No athlete has ever managed to defy the laws of Father Time. But this one will hurt everybody whose lives he

touched. Football will continue to be played by millions and watched by billions.

The World Cup will go on without Messi, L. Argentina may find another superstar within the next 20 years (they found Messi 20 years after Diego Maradona). But for people of a certain age, Leo will always be numero uno.



I swear I always gave everything, not just in the last few years when we won everything but before that too.
Lionel Messi

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END OF ERA

Here's a quick glance at Messi's career stats with Argentina...

207 Matches **125** Goals **68** Assists

MAJOR TITLES

FIFA World Cup: 2022

Copa America: 2021, 2024

Ballon d'Or: 8 times (2009-12, 2015, 2019, 2021, 2023)



BUILDING FOR RESILIENCE, INNOVATION,
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BRICS SUMMIT

12 - 13 September 2026

New Delhi, India

People-Centric
Approach
Spirit of
Humanity First



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Move from endless war to end of war: Modi to Putin

Both closely coordinating positions at big multilateral forums: Putin

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Monday urged Russian President Vladimir Putin to move from an “endless war to end of war”, stressing that every day of conflict “pushes humanity back” while calling for all outstanding issues to be resolved peacefully.

Meeting Putin on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, Modi said India supports every effort aimed at peace. “Every day spent in the war pushes humanity back. And every step taken towards peace fills humanity with new hope and enthusiasm,” Modi told Putin. “We will have to move from endless war to end of war, which is very important for the well-being of humanity. As soon as possible, all issues will be resolved peacefully,” he said. Framing India's position as a message of peace, Modi added: “This is the call of humanity. This is the message of India. This is the message of the land of Gandhi and the land of Buddha.”

His remarks came as the two leaders reviewed bilateral ties and discussed the Ukraine con-



PM Narendra Modi and Vladimir Putin chat in a car in Bishkek on Monday | AP/PTI

Economic ties

Prime Minister Modi said the two sides had made progress in expanding economic ties since Putin's previous visit to India, recalling the success of the bilateral business forum. He said the two countries were working to expand economic cooperation

flict, with Modi noting that the issue has featured prominently in their previous meetings.

“We have always discussed Ukraine. Last time, when we

met, you told me about all the topics in detail. As you know, India supports all efforts for peace and will continue to do so,” Modi said. He also pointed to the upcoming BRICS summit that India will host, saying Putin would have an opportunity to discuss issues related to peace and global cooperation.

“Today, you will have the opportunity to discuss all these issues. After a few days, India is organising the BRICS summit,” Modi said, adding that Putin's visit would strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation within BRICS.

Putin highlighted the expanding scope of India-Russia relations, pointing to growth in trade, tourism, education, multilateral cooperation and sharp rise in the number of Indian students studying in Russia.

“We also have active mutual tourist flows, which have seen 16% growth,” Putin said. India and Russia, he added, were also closely coordinating their positions at major multilateral forums, including the UN, BRICS, the G20 and the SCO. “Today, we have a good chance to compare our notes and outline future cooperation when it comes to the development of Russian-Indian relations.”

TN gets ₹33k-cr power push, coal plant

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

CHIEF Minister C Joseph Vijay on Monday unveiled a massive ₹33,066-crore Transmission Improvement Scheme to radically upgrade the state's power infrastructure. Making the announcement under Rule 110 in the Assembly, the CM laid out plans to construct 196 new substations and lay 15,000 km of power lines across the state.

The CM also said that five ageing 210-MW power units at the Thoothukudi Thermal Sta-

Electronics, semiconductor park to come up in Kanchi

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu government has announced the setting up of a semiconductor and electronics manufacturing park at Maduranthagam, Kancheepuram, a multi-modal logistics hub in Tiruchy and a digital finance centre (fintech hub) in Coimbatore | P6

tion will be replaced by a new 1,600-MW supercritical thermal plant. The new plant with two units of 800 MW each would be set up under public-private partnership at the same

complex at an estimated cost of ₹20,800 crore, Vijay said.

The existing Thoothukudi Thermal Power Station has five coal-based generating units, with a combined installed capacity of 1,050 MW. The units were commissioned in phases from 1979 and have been serving the state for several decades.

The CM said that TN was a leading state in renewable

energy and was focusing on wind and solar power as well as battery energy storage. However, renewable sources were not available continuously and uniformly throughout the day.

Though battery storage technology was being developed to store surplus renewable power for use during periods of high demand, the existing infrastructure may not be sufficient to meet the state's round-the-clock electricity requirement, he said. P9



India rejects Court of Arbitration's 'illegal' Indus Waters Treaty award

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA on Monday rejected the Court of Arbitration award on the Indus Waters Treaty asserting that the tribunal was “illegally constituted” and hence its pronouncements would have no bearing on India's sovereign decisions.

The External Affairs Ministry (MEA) said the arbitration body was established by the World Bank in “patent breach” of the terms of the 1960 treaty.

India, the MEA said, has never recognised the legal existence of the tribunal and has consistently refused to participate in its proceedings. “This



so-called Court of Arbitration has no jurisdiction whatsoever to pronounce on India's sovereign decisions,” MEA said.

“Its pronouncements, now or in the future, will have no effect on India's actions in connection with the projects being undertaken by India... India's decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance remains in force,” it added.

The MEA statement came after the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration said the Indus Waters Treaty remained fully in force and that India must continue to meet its obligations under the agreement, including restrictions governing the design and operation of hydroelectric projects on the western rivers.

“India must observe its obligations under the Treaty, including those relating to the design and operation of its hydro-electric projects on the Western Rivers,” the arbitration court said, rejecting the position that India could suspend the treaty.

AAVIN MILK

Procurement price hiked by another ₹3/L

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

AFTER dairy farmers expressed unhappiness over the ₹3 per litre hike in procurement price for Aavin milk announced by the government on August 19, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Monday offered an additional ₹3 hike, raising the total increase in procurement price in two weeks to ₹6 for each litre of milk.

With this combined hike, the procurement price will go up from ₹38 to ₹44 a litre for cow milk, and ₹47 to ₹53 for buffalo milk. The retail price of Aavin milk, however, will remain unchanged. The decision is expected to benefit 3.16 lakh milk producers associated with 8,800 milk cooperative societies across the state.

Announcing the decision under Rule 110 in the Assembly, Vijay said the government had hiked the procurement price of cow milk from ₹38 to ₹41 a litre on August 19 despite Aavin's financial constraints. P9

◀ INSIDE ▶
SECOND PAY HIKE FOR TASMAT STAFF, SALARY DOUBLED IN 2 MONTHS | P8

TN crypto scam: Man ends life, 40K complaints filed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Dindigul

DGP Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal transferred six FQL MLM-cum-cryptocurrency fraud cases to the Economic Offences Wing as the total number of complaints received by the police touched 40,000 on Monday. According to conservative estimates, investors may have lost at least ₹400 crore in the scam. Authorities have arrested 17 suspects and frozen 13 linked bank accounts so far. Tragically, a bakery worker, K Raja (25) of Kasampatti in Dindigul, allegedly died by suicide after losing ₹15 lakh in the scam. **FULL REPORT ON: P9**

Woman killed, body cut into 7 pieces, dumped in water tanks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Salem

THE mortal remains of an unidentified woman, dismembered into seven pieces and packed in three plastic sacks, were recovered from the roof and water tanks of two houses at Arisipalayam in Salem district on Monday. Investigation is under way to ascertain the identity of the woman, who is suspected to be aged around 35 to 40 years.

According to sources, the incident came to light when Ramesh of Gunabalan Ramasamy Street, a priest and resident of one of the houses, returned home on Monday after spending two days in Kumbakonam with his family. As his family members opened a house tap for domestic purposes, they smelt a foul odour emanating from the water and decided to inspect the two rooftop tanks.

During the inspection, Ramesh found a plastic sack, containing a human leg, inside one of the tanks. Alarmed, he searched the other tank and found a similar sack with human remains. Startled by the discovery, he alerted A Pallapatti police, who rushed to the spot. P9

Modi takes a dig at ‘doomsayers’ as Q1 GDP grows 7.8% despite Iran war

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

INDIA'S economy grew 7.8% in the first quarter (Q1) of FY27, beating the 7% growth forecast by most analysts amid geopolitical tensions and supply-chain disruptions.

Government data showed the real (inflation-adjusted) GDP, measured at constant 2022-23 prices, stood at ₹81.36 lakh crore in Q1 compared with ₹75.46 lakh crore a year ago. At current prices, nominal GDP rose 10.3% to ₹88.27 lakh crore from ₹80 lakh crore.

The real GDP growth in Q1 was lower than the 8.6% re-

Growth indicators

Several high-frequency indicators pointed to robust economic activity in Q1. Commercial vehicle sales grew 18.3% and 3-wheeler sales 29.7%. Household vehicle registrations grew 15.9%, passenger transport 13.9% and goods transport vehicles 20.1%

corded in Q4 of FY26.

The robust numbers gave Prime Minister Narendra Modi an opportunity to hit out at critics. “Doomsayers were doomed and India bloomed... yet again!” he wrote on X.

SC declines order on plea seeking bar on Sept 5 CJP protest

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

REFUSING to ban the protest march called by the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) on September 5, the Supreme Court on Monday said it presumes that everybody will behave in a peaceful and lawful manner.

A bench comprising

CJI Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana heard an application by retired Delhi Police officer, Rajendra Singh, seeking the court's direction that large-scale demonstrations are not held in sensitive areas of the Capital without prior permission.

The applicant argued that with inter-

Request to quash 13 FIRs in July 20 protest case

At the fag end of the day's proceedings, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said, “We want to move an IA (interlocutory application). It's regarding that protest for quashing of FIRs... We are invoking Article 142 (of the Constitution).” Given the public interest and peculiar facts of the case, the application sought the quashing of 13 FIRs while filing a new FIR, but said it should not be treated as a precedent

national dignitaries coming to Delhi on September 12-13, the protest march should be postponed till September 15. He referred to the AI Summit inci-

dent and asked, “People stripped and danced... Is the demand of CJP urgent? Can't they wait till BRICS summit come to an end?” However, the

CJI said, “We will at least, as of now, presume everybody will behave in a peaceful manner.” The court will hear the matter on September 10.

In a related development in the same case, the Supreme Court agreed to hear on Tuesday a plea filed by the Delhi Police seeking quashing of 13 FIRs against students who participated in July 20 protests.



RACING AGAINST TIME

Soldiers inside a tunnel as part of rescue operations after floods in Rasuwa district. While 279 hydropower workers have been rescued, 639 are still missing | AP | P13