



MAHANAGAR METRO

VOICE OF THE CITY, PULSE OF THE NATION

In a first after India-EU FTA, PM Modi to begin 4-nation Europe tour next month

PM Modi will be visiting Norway, followed by visits to Sweden, the Netherlands, and Italy, sources said. According to them, the Prime Minister's itinerary will include attending the India-Nordic Summit in Norway.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to embark on a four-nation Europe tour next month, sources said on Tuesday. The official trip is likely to take place from May 15-20, they added.

PM Modi will be visiting Norway, followed by visits to Sweden, the Netherlands, and Italy, the sources said. According to them, the Prime Minister's itinerary will include attending the India-Nordic Summit in Norway.

The news about the visit comes amid mounting global uncertainties due to the ongoing war between Iran and its proxies, and the joint front of Israel and the US. The conflict has severely impacted fuel shipments passing through the Strait of Hormuz, the pre-war maritime traffic through which accounted for nearly 20 per cent of global crude supplies. This has sparked a severe energy crisis in most parts of the world.

INDIA-EU FTA

Of the four countries that PM Modi will be visiting, all except Norway are members of the European Union (EU). The upcoming trip will be his first

visit to Europe since India and the EU announced a landmark bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in January this year. Announcement about the conclusion of negotiations for the India-EU FTA were jointly made by the two sides, following



years of sustained dialogue and cooperation between the two sides. Talks between India and the EU about the trade pact had first begun in 2007. However, the negotiations were paused in 2013 due to differences over the deal's scope. The talks resumed nearly a decade later, in June 2022. The EU is one of India's largest trading partners,

with bilateral trade in goods and services growing steadily over the years. In 2024-25, India's bilateral trade in goods with the EU stood at Rs 11.5 lakh crore (USD 136.54 billion) with exports worth Rs 6.4 lakh crore (USD 75.85 billion) and imports amounting to Rs 5.1 lakh crore (USD 60.68 billion).

Bilateral trade between the two sides in services reached Rs 7.2 lakh crore (USD 83.10 billion) in 2024. Dubbed the 'mother of all deals,' the India-EU FTA will allow 93 per cent of Indian exports to enter the 27-nation bloc duty-free. In return, luxury cars and wines produced within the EU's territory will face lower import costs.

At the time of the announcement, the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry had said, "Beyond a conventional trade deal, it represents a comprehensive partnership with strategic dimensions and is one of the most consequential FTA. India has secured unprecedented market access for more than 99% of Indian exports by trade value to the EU that also bolsters the 'Make in India' initiative."

Ex-bar dancer turns drug queen, Rs 6 crore narcotics seized from Mumbai house



Mumbai.(Agency)

What began as action based on a tip-off from an earlier raid led to the recovery of drugs worth Rs 6 crore from an upscale house in a posh housing society in Mumbai's Kalyan, catching police by surprise. Police have arrested a woman in the case, who earlier worked in a dance bar and later turned into a kingpin.

Following this operation, a wider drug network active in Mumbai and surrounding areas has also been exposed. Significantly, the quantity and quality of the seized drugs, and the scale of the operation, have led police to suspect an international link. Speaking about the operation, after the Nesco drug party case earlier this month that led to two MBA students dying out of ecstasy overdoses, Mumbai Police had launched a strict campaign against narcotics. Under this drive, this major success was achieved. Acting on information, police raided a house in a posh society in Titwala and recovered around 5,000 ecstasy pills. A woman named A Paul has been arrested in the case and is believed to be a key part of this network.

The programme, aimed at building six advanced AIP-equipped submarines in partnership with

ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, is seen as critical to modernising the Indian Navy's ageing fleet and countering China and Pakistan's growing maritime presence.

Rajnath Singh in Germany, focus on Rs 90,000-crore submarine deal

New Delhi.(Agency)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is on a three-day official visit to Germany beginning April 21, aimed at strengthening defence industrial collaboration, enhancing military-to-military engagements, and exploring cooperation in emerging domains.

The visit assumes significance as it is his first to Germany since taking office in 2019. The last visit by an Indian defence minister to the country was by Nirmala Sitharaman in February 2019. Germany's Defence Minister Boris Pistorius had visited India in June 2023, when both sides held extensive discussions on expanding

defence ties. Singh is expected to meet his German counterpart and other senior officials to further deepen the strategic partnership. The visit also comes at a time when India and Germany are in advanced negotiations to finalise a next-generation submarine deal under Project 75I, estimated to be worth around Rs 90,000 crore.

Sources told India Today that while the visit may not directly advance negotiations on the submarine deal, it is likely to provide momentum as both countries look to strengthen long-term defence cooperation.

WHAT IS PROJECT 75I

Project-75 (India), or P-75I, is a key

programme aimed at significantly enhancing the Indian Navy's conventional submarine fleet. The project involves the



construction of six advanced diesel-electric attack submarines equipped with fuel cell-based Air Independent Propulsion

(AIP) systems, enabling greater stealth and endurance.

The submarines are proposed to be built in India under a strategic partnership between Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS). The project targets 45-60 per cent indigenisation, in line with the government's 'Make in India' initiative. First conceptualised nearly a decade ago, the project entered formal discussions in 2020. Sources said cost negotiations are now at an advanced stage, with MDL and TKMS close to finalising the contract. Once signed, it is expected to be one of the largest defence deals between India and Germany.

Blue drum horror returns, 11-year-old boy found murdered at home with throat slit

Bhopal.(Agency)

After three chilling murders last year and one this year involving the infamous blue drum, another case has surfaced. This time, from Madhya Pradesh's Satna.

The moment Asha and her daughter reached their house on Monday, they sensed something was eerily off -- the door was locked from outside, yet the cooler was running and the lights were on inside.

Expecting her 11-year-old son, who had just finished his Class 5 exams, to open the door, Asha grew anxious when there was no response. As the minutes passed, she and her daughter began searching frantically, hoping he might be nearby.

At first, Asha suspected that her husband, who has a short temper, might have taken the boy somewhere. But when no information about the child could be found and the unease continued to grow, a distraught Asha -- still locked out of her own house -- approached the police and filed a complaint. The police soon arrived at the spot, and the lock was broken in their presence. What awaited inside was a scene that left everyone horrified. Blood splatters marked the walls and a pillow.

Amid the chaos, a blue plastic drum placed in one corner of the room drew immediate attention, with blood visibly seeping from it. As the drum was opened, Asha's heart sank as her worst fears -- building over the past few tense hours -- came true. Inside lay the body of her child, his throat slit, stuffed into the drum and covered with clothes in an apparent attempt to conceal the crime.

Still grappling with the loss, Asha's suspicion turned towards a laundry shop owner, Mathura Rajak. Seeing

Digital Conspiracy: Investigating the Truth

'Mission Maha-Vinash': Alleged Plot to Target a Surat Jain Temple on April 23 Raises Alarm

Pawan Makan (Group Editor)

Surat: An alleged conspiracy targeting a Jain temple in Surat has triggered serious concern among the local community and authorities. According to inputs accessed by Mahanagar Metro, including a purportedly leaked audio clip circulating online, a group is suspected of planning to disrupt activities at the Shri Abhay Parshvanath Jainalay on April 23. Preliminary information suggests that individuals linked to the case may have attempted to mobilize a large number of people from outside Gujarat, reportedly from Madhya Pradesh, with the intention of creating unrest at the site. The claims, however, remain unverified and officials have not yet issued a formal confirmation regarding the scale or specifics of the alleged plan. Sources indicate that tensions escalated after earlier disputes related to alleged extortion attempts reportedly failed. Following this,

concerns have emerged that certain elements could resort to disruptive actions. Authorities are also examining the authenticity of the viral audio and the identities of those allegedly involved. Law enforcement agencies in Surat have been alerted, and security arrangements are expected to be tightened as a precautionary measure. Officials are likely to increase surveillance and monitor movement across state borders to prevent any potential disturbance. Community members have urged the administration to ensure safety and maintain law and order, emphasizing the need for swift and transparent action. At the same time, officials have appealed to the public to avoid spreading unverified information and to rely only on confirmed updates from authorities. The situation remains sensitive, and further developments are awaited as investigations continue.



Twin shutdowns, protests paralyse Manipur after child deaths, convoy attack

Manipur.(Agency)

The protests were triggered by the killing of two children in a Bishnupur blast and a separate militant attack on a civilian convoy in Ukhrul that left two dead. Demonstrations intensified in the valley, with three people killed in firing during a protest.

Large parts of Manipur came to a standstill on Monday as twin shutdowns called by different organisations in protest against recent killings disrupted daily life across both valley and hill districts, officials said.

Educational institutions, markets and public transport services remained shut across all five Meitei-dominated valley districts, as well as Naga-inhabited areas of Ukhrul and Senapati. Sit-in protests were held at multiple locations in Imphal valley, including Uripok and Nagaram.

The shutdown in the valley was called by the women's group Meira Paibis, which began a five-day protest on Sunday



following the April 7 blast in Tronglaobi village in Bishnupur

district. The explosion killed a five-year-old boy and his six-month-old sister while they were asleep, and left their mother injured. The incident triggered widespread outrage, with protests turning violent in some areas. During one such protest, three people were killed and around 30 others injured when security forces allegedly opened fire after a mob stormed a CRPF camp.

SEPARATE SHUTDOWN IN HILLS OVER CONVOY ATTACK

In the hill districts, the United Naga Council enforced a three-day "total shutdown" from Monday to protest the April 18 attack in Ukhrul district, where suspected militants fired on a convoy of civilian vehicles travelling from Imphal.

News box

Chakkarpur land parcel under spotlight as SC seeks replies on contempt plea

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Supreme Court has issued notice in a contempt petition filed by Rajdarbar Iconic Venture in connection with its Dec 17, 2024 judgment on unauthorised constructions, drawing attention to a land parcel in Chakkarpur village. Hearing a contempt petition on April 17, a bench of justices JB Pardiwala and Vijay Bishnoi condoned delay in filing the petition and directed respondents, including Anurag Rastogi and others, to submit their replies by May 7, 2026. The court also dispensed with their personal appearance at this stage. The petition names several respondents, including senior Haryana officials such as chief secretary, officers of the town and country planning department, HSVP, MCG, Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam and private individuals. The contempt plea arises from Supreme Court's earlier ruling in 2024, which laid down a framework for regulating building construction and ensuring compliance with sanctioned plans. The judgment stated that completion or occupation certificates must be obtained before essential civic services, including electricity, water supply, and sewerage connections, are provided. It also held that permission for commercial activities should not be granted in buildings that do not conform to approved plans. In the current petition, the company has referred to a 1.39-acre land parcel in the revenue estate of village Chakkarpur in Gurgaon. It stated that, after the Dec 2024 judgment, it submitted representations to the authorities seeking action in accordance with the court's directions. According to the petition, these communications were sent between Dec 2024 and Janu 2025 and sought implementation of the framework laid down by the court. It further stated that notices were issued to the authorities concerned for enforcement of the directions contained in the judgment, but no response was received. The matter is now before SC in its contempt jurisdiction, with the court seeking responses from the respondents. The case will be taken up further after the replies are filed. The proceedings assume significance in the context of enforcing judicial directions on building regulations and planned urban development, particularly in rapidly expanding urban regions such as Gurgaon.

Posts inciting Noida violence came from Jhelum city in Pak: Police

Noida.(Agency)

Two X handles that shared videos that were allegedly used to incite violence during the industrial workers' protest in Noida on April 13 were operated from Jhelum City in the Punjab province of Pakistan, police said on Monday. Posts falsely claiming '20 deaths and 99 injuries' in the protest were circulated through the X handles of Anushi Tiwari Proud Indian and Meer Ilyaz Inc. Investigators have found a recovery email associated with one of the accounts, which is being probed to uncover the individuals or groups behind the handles. "Contact details in the recovery mail would also help in reaching the next chain. This digital trail could help establish the motive, funding and any organised network involved," a senior police officer said.

Noida protests: Workers' outfit members from Delhi, Lucknow arrested; lawyer says due process not followed

NOIDA.(Agency)

Two members of Mazdoor Bigul Dasta were arrested on Sunday for their alleged role in the violence that broke out in Noida on April 13 during a protest by industrial workers demanding higher wages. Himanshu Thakur is originally from Kashipur in Udhampur Singh Nagar but lives in Delhi's Shalimar Bagh, and Satyam Verma is from Nishatganj in Lucknow, police said. According to Police commissioner Laxmi Singh, the two were present in the city during the violence and were in constant contact with Aditya Anand, who police are calling the 'mastermind' of the violence. Thakur and Verma were taken into custody at Phase 2 police station, where they were called for questioning.

Himanshu, according to police, joined Mazdoor Bigul Dasta through Aakriti, who has also been accused by police of inciting violence, and participated regularly in labour movements along with Anand. Mazdoor Bigul Dasta is a workers' rights group led by Rupesh Roy. Roy is among those who were arrested last week. Officials said Anand contacted more than 70 individuals belonging to Disha Student Organization, Revolutionary Workers' Party of India, Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Ekta Sangharsh Samiti before the April 13 protest for their support.

Police are scanning video footage to take into custody those responsible for arson during the protests. Investigations so far have revealed that people from various states, including West Bengal, Telangana and Karnataka, came to Noida on April 13 for the protests, officials said. A map outlining preparations for the workers' agitation was recovered from Anand's residence in Arun Vihar, officials said, adding it contained details of specific roles assigned to different individuals and locations where protesters were expected to gather. Speaking to TOI, advocate Manik Gupta, counsel for Anand, Verma and Thakur at the Gautam Budh Nagar district court, said, "Noida police applied for custody remand, but the court sent them to two days' judicial custody."

Gupta contended Anand's arrest because he was taken into custody by Railway Protection Force from Trichy railway station in Tamil Nadu for a BNS offence. "The RPF does not hold powers to arrest any person under BNS. They can only arrest people under the Railway Protection Force Act. The arrest was done in secrecy and the lawyer of the accused was not informed. No order for transit remand was taken from the judicial magistrate to bring the accused from Tamil Nadu to Noida," he said. In case of Thakur and Verma, he said, "They were not taken to a judicial magistrate within 24 hours of their arrest, as is mandatory under law. Their grounds of arrest were also not told to them as the FIR registered by police does not mention them as accused."

Service roads to link Sohna Road & SPR, ease traffic on main corridor

Gurgaon.(Agency)

With traffic building up along the Southern Peripheral Road (SPR), GMDA is planning to construct service roads across sectors 70-70A and 70-75 to improve commute on the internal road network and ease pressure on the arterial stretch. The proposed stretch spans around 3.5 km. These roads are expected to improve last-mile connectivity.

"We are aiming to improve internal sector road connectivity. The detailed project report is under preparation. Once approved, a tender will be floated," a senior GMDA official said. The project estimate is currently being prepared, he added. The push comes as SPR is set for major redevelopment. Officials said strengthening parallel routes and internal sector roads will be critical to handle traffic diversions during construction and avoid congestion. In addition, GMDA has floated a tender to complete a

long-pending missing link on the dividing road between sectors 68 and 69. The 900-metre stretch is expected to provide a key connection between Sohna Road and sectors 68, 69, 70, 70A and 75.



This will act as an alternative to SPR, which sees heavy traffic movement through the day. The project has faced years of delay. Work on the 2 km road began in 2019 but only 1.1 km was

completed by 2022. The remaining portion was stalled due to land acquisition issues, which were resolved recently. The project is now pegged at Rs 25.3 crore. Once awarded, it is expected to be completed within a year. Officials said the pending stretch will have dual carriageways and a service lane on one side. Green belts, cycle tracks and footpaths, are also part of the plan for the road. The already built 1.1 km section, especially near the junction of sectors 70/70A and 68/69, will be repaired as part of the project. "We have floated the tender for the missing link between sectors 68 and 69. Once complete, the entire 5 km corridor will act as an alternative to SPR for commuters heading towards Sohna Road. It will also improve connectivity between sectors 58 and 75," the official said. While the traffic management measures and service lanes

have been planned along SPR as part of the redevelopment project between Vatika Chowk and NH-48, internal roads are being strengthened to distribute traffic more evenly, the official said.

In March this year, GMDA floated the tender for the first phase of the proposed elevated corridor along SPR, between Vatika Chowk and NH-48, at an estimated cost of Rs 755 crore. The eight-lane elevated corridor will take at least 30 months to complete once the project is allotted to the agency.

Meanwhile, residents have welcomed the development. "SPR is already heavily congested, especially during peak hours. The situation worsens near Power Grid junction, DLF Alameda junction and American Express junction, where traffic tends to become a bottleneck. Without strengthening internal roads and service lanes, any redevelopment work will only add to the chaos. But the plan needs to be executed in a planned manner," said Rajat Srivastava, a resident of Sector 70A.

1,000 illegal house extensions taken down in 3 days in govt drive to clear right of way in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

In the biggest exercise the city has seen to clear infringement of public space by property owners, enforcement teams have removed illegal extensions from nearly 1,000 houses in three days, tearing down ramps, guard rooms, lawns, kiosks and other structures built on public land across major licensed colonies.

There are two more days to go in the exercise, after which the town and country planning department (DTCP) will submit an action-taken report to the state govt. Spread across DLF Phase 1, South City 1, Palam Vihar, Sushant Lok-2, Uppal Southend, Malibu Town, Ardee City and Suncity, the demolitions follow a Punjab and Haryana high court stay on the state's stilt-plus-four-floor policy and a subsequent govt order asking agencies to clear right of way violations by April 22. Officials said the drive is aimed at reclaiming roads, green belts and public spaces that have steadily shrunk under

years of unchecked encroachment. "This is a court-driven action linked to a PIL. All encroachments within the right of way — from 9 metres to 24 metres — must be cleared in a time-bound manner before April 22," district town planner (enforcement) Amit Madholia said.

On Monday, enforcement teams intensified action across multiple colonies. In DLF Phase 1, where the drive last Saturday began, around 550 houses in A Block Extension and J Block along Jacaranda Marg, Bougainville Marg, Dakshin Marg, Akashneem Marg and Madhya Marg were inspected and illegal extensions were removed, officials said. The operation started at Central Arcade market, where an illegal taxi stand and kiosks were demolished. DTCP teams also removed general stores and temporary shanties on Dakshin Marg, besides clearing around 150 illegal lawns and extended parks, over 40 ramps, and illegal grills, barricades, staircases and gates outside more than 100

houses. In South City 1, teams removed encroachments from 96 houses where private lawns and fencing had spilled onto internal roads. They also demolished 15 labour quarters and toilets built on public land, along with 27 guard rooms and 17 hoardings. At Palam Vihar, action covered 140 houses in Block A. Fencing was cleared, and gardens and other extensions obstructing an 18-metre-wide road removed. In Sushant Lok-2 near Golf Course Road, the teams removed 15 ramps, nine steps, six DG sets placed on footpaths, three guard rooms and 16 instances of landscaping extended onto roads. In Uppal Southend and Malibu Town, officials dismantled illegal barricading, boundary walls, ramps and steps, and cleared encroachments in green areas, including 14 metal barricades and two structures. A PG accommodation operating in violation of norms was also identified. Ardee City saw two teams remove guard rooms.

Gurgaon's temperature to rise 4°C, city braces for intense heat spell

NOIDA.(Agency)

The state is likely to experience heatwave conditions over the next five days. IMD put Gurgaon, Faridabad, Rewari and Mahendragarh under a heatwave watch on April 20, and the alert is set to expand across most parts of the state, with nearly all districts under a yellow alert from today till April 24. "Maximum temperatures in Haryana are already significantly above normal, with departures of 3°C to 5°C. Mahendragarh recorded the state's highest maximum temperature at 42°C, 4.5 notches above normal, and minimum was 25.7 degrees, which was 5.8 notches above normal. Warm night conditions have also been observed in Rohtak and Gurgaon," an IMD official said. The department has forecast a rise of 3-4°C in maximum temperatures over the next five days.

In Gurgaon, early signs of this trend are

visible in night temperatures. The city recorded a minimum temperature of 22°C



on Monday, 3.3 degrees above normal. Maximum temperature was 40°C, also 3.3 notches above normal. A "heatwave" is declared when the maximum temperature

exceeds 40 degrees Celsius and is at least 4.5 notches above the average temperature for a season. When the maximum temperature rises above 6.4 degrees Celsius above the average, IMD labels it as a "severe heatwave". Officials said the combination of high daytime temperatures and elevated night temperatures increases heat stress, as the body does not get sufficient time to cool down. The impact is expected to be more severe for vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses. Authorities have advised residents to avoid prolonged exposure to the sun, stay hydrated, wear light cotton clothing and cover the head while outdoors. Farmers have been advised to carry out irrigation during early morning or evening hours to reduce heat stress on crops.

Man strangles wife, dies by suicide in Gurgaon following marital discord

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 30-year-old man allegedly strangled his wife to death before dying by suicide at their rented house in Amedkar Nagar on Sunday evening. The couple, identified as Sonam (28) and Deepak, natives of Alwar in Rajasthan, had been married for about eight years and had been living in the city for the past seven years. Their six-year-old son was in another room at the time of the incident and was not aware of what had happened. Police said they received information about the incident around 6.30pm on April 19, following which a team from Sector 9A police station reached the spot along with crime scene and fingerprint experts. Police said Sonam's sister, who was staying with her, had stepped out for work around 4pm. When she returned around 6pm, she found Sonam lying dead in the kitchen, while Deepak was found dead in another room. The bodies were taken to a civil hospital, where doctors declared them dead. After the autopsy, the bodies were handed over to the family. "The couple had frequent disputes, mainly over Deepak's drinking habits. About a month ago, he had moved out after a quarrel, following which Sonam had called her sister to stay with her," police spokesperson Sandeep Turan said. Deepak worked as a taxi driver, police said. A neighbour said Sonam was employed at a private company and that the couple had frequent quarrels. "I was inside my boutique when I heard the screams of Sonam's younger sister. She ran downstairs around 6pm and raised an alarm," the neighbour said. Another neighbour said the family was residing alone in the double-storey building, adding, "They lived on the first floor of the house and had been staying there for several years." A relative of the woman alleged that Deepak had assaulted her last month and had earlier attempted to strangle her.

DHBN orders daily monitoring to fix estimated billing

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (DHBN) has initiated a monitoring mechanism to clear a large backlog of average and provisional (AV/PR) billing cases. During a recent review of billing efficiency, the utility recorded 93.5% OK billing — bills based on actual meter readings — against a target of 98%. Officials identified 25 sub-divisions with less than 90% OK billing as the primary contributors to the shortfall, prompting intensified monitoring.

Provisional billing refers to electricity bills issued when actual meter readings are unavailable — often due to faulty or inaccessible meters. In such cases, utilities estimate consumption based on past usage patterns. Average billing is a similar mechanism where consumption is calculated using historical averages instead of real-time readings.

The review revealed over 2.4 lakh pending AV/PR cases for Feb-March 2026, including over 1.2 lakh cases in the Delhi zone and over 1.1 lakh in the Haryana zone. Sub-divisions in Faridabad, Narnaul, Gurgaon, Palwal, Hisar, Fatehabad, Jind and Bhiwani were among the worst performers.

DHBN Managing Director and Special



Energy Secretary Vikram Singh, during the review of the utility, flagged the high number of provisional and average billing cases and mandated fortnightly reviews at headquarters, weekly monitoring at circle level and daily tracking by field officers. Officials have also been directed to update progress reports daily to ensure accountability. Heavy reliance on provisional or average billing often leads to inaccurate charges, consumer disputes and revenue uncertainty for utilities. Consumers may be overcharged or

undercharged, resulting in billing shocks when corrections are made later. It also reflects operational inefficiencies such as faulty meters, delayed replacements or poor field monitoring. Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission has repeatedly directed power utilities to minimise provisional billing and ensure timely meter reading and replacement. The regulator has emphasised that provisional billing should only be a temporary measure and must be regularised within a stipulated timeframe. It has also flagged

the need for improving metering infrastructure and accountability to avoid consumer grievances. At present, DHBN has a provisional billing rate of 6.5%. This is not within the permissible limit of 0.1% as per the Standards of Performance (SoP) regulations. DHBN has ordered immediate correction of all provisional bills where meters are functional, converting them into OK billing status. With adequate meter stock now available, officials have been directed to prioritise the replacement of defective meters and clear pending AV/PR cases on a priority basis. Additionally, the utility has set phased targets to improve billing performance — sub-divisions below 70% OK billing must reach 80%, those at 80% must achieve 90%, and higher-performing units must progressively reach 98%. In a significant directive, the corporation has barred the use of average or provisional billing for solar, high-tension and low-tension connections under any circumstances. The move is aimed at improving billing accuracy, reducing consumer complaints and strengthening the overall financial health of the power utility.

As poor-quality wheat piles up, procurement agencies seek waiver of storage gain norms

The committee warned that enforcing current norms could lead to financial losses and operational difficulties for procurement agencies, as they would be held accountable for weight variations that are beyond their control.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Flagging serious concerns over the quality of wheat, the Joint Coordination Committee of State Procurement Agencies, Punjab, has written to the state Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs urging it to take up the matter with the Centre for a complete waiver of 'storage gain' norms for the 2026-27 procurement season.

In its letter, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, addressed to the Secretary of the department, the committee said that extreme weather conditions—including heatwaves during February-March and unseasonal rains and hailstorms during harvesting—have severely damaged wheat crop. As a result, the state is witnessing a sharp rise in shrivelled and broken grains, damaged kernels, and loss of lustre, along with higher moisture content.

The committee pointed out that the Centre, through the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public

Distribution, has already relaxed procurement norms for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) wheat. The permissible limits have been increased to 15% for shrivelled and broken grains and up to 70% for lustre loss, while damaged grains have been allowed up to 6%.

However, it added that even with these relaxations, the wheat being procured falls under Uniform Relaxed Specifications (URS) and is of significantly inferior quality compared to normal FAQ wheat. "Applying the existing storage gain formula, which is based on ideal FAQ conditions, to such substandard wheat is neither scientific nor practical," the letter mentioned.

Citing a study by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the committee said that storage gain norms are derived from wheat stored under ideal conditions, which is not the case this year. Instead of gaining weight during storage, the current crop is likely to lose weight



due to moisture evaporation, grain damage, and structural deterioration.

The letter also highlighted that the situation is worse than the 2015-16 crop, when the Centre had reduced storage gain norms by 50%. This year, however, the extent of

damage is higher, warranting a complete waiver rather than partial relief. Another major concern flagged was the acute shortage of scientific storage space in Punjab. With state godowns already filled with previous stocks of wheat and rice, agencies may be forced to store the new crop in open and substandard conditions, increasing the risk of infestation, spoilage, and further quality loss. The committee warned that enforcing current norms could lead to financial losses and operational difficulties for procurement agencies, as they would be held accountable for weight variations that are beyond their control.

Calling the situation unprecedented, the committee urged the government to act swiftly. "The current wheat crop is neither comparable to standard FAQ wheat nor suitable for application of conventional storage norms. A complete waiver of storage gain is essential to ensure fair handling of this year's crop," the

Short news

Answering wildlife SOS: Gujarat's Gen Z networks, trade reels for real-world animal rescues

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

It starts with a WhatsApp message; a location pin. By the time most people look up from their phones, young volunteers are already on their way to a construction pit, a mobile tower, or a burrow in the ground. Across Gujarat, students, mechanics, accountants, and teenagers, some as young as 12, are building informal but serious rescue networks. Armed with hooks, torches, and cameras, they quietly step in to rescue birds, snakes and wild animals often in tense, unpredictable situations where every second matter. What they share is a refusal to let fear decide an animal's fate. Fighting fear, one rescue at a time.

Jay Parekh was 21 when a call came from Chiloda. A snake had retreated into a burrow. The Gandhinagar resident waited for hours — the kind of patient vigil he had been learning since he first started rescues in Class 11. When the tail finally appeared, he moved quickly. But he was too late. The spectacled cobra was already dead. A local woman later admitted that someone, in a panic, had poured acid into the burrow before help could arrive. "We try to save life, and then we see what fear and cruelty can do," Parekh says.

In Kutch, 22-year-old Raj Garva faces the same battle almost every day. A car mechanic from Mirzapur, Garva grew up in Devisar watching villagers kill snakes on sight. A neighbour, Jagdish Parmar, changed his perspective, explaining why snakes matter to the ecosystem. In four years, Garva has rescued nearly 2,000 snakes. He and other volunteers travel up to 85km — sometimes as far as Bhachau or Mundra — on their own expense to respond to calls. "People ask if a snake can be killed," he says.

Denial of receipts for complaints at police stations in AP draws criticism

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

The widespread practice of police failing to provide acknowledgement copies for written complaints at police stations across the State is drawing criticism from the public, legal experts and human rights activists, who call the negligence a clear violation of established law and Supreme Court guidelines. As per the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), an acknowledgement copy is a crucial document ensuring accountability and transparency in police procedures, particularly regarding the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs) and service of summonses.

Accordingly, every complainant has the right to receive an acknowledgement copy, often referred to as a 'complaint receiving' copy, immediately after submitting a written complaint at a police station. This document typically records key details such as the complainant's name, date of submission, police station details, and a brief description of the grievance. It serves as proof of submission and enables citizens to track the progress of their complaint, including whether an FIR has been registered.

Despite these legal safeguards, the practice is reportedly absent in many of the State's approximately 1,020 police stations.

Activists argue that the absence of acknowledgement copies creates room for delays or denial in FIR registration, particularly in the sensitive cases.

'Workload is the reason for violation of rules'

"It is a violation of procedure established by law. Without an acknowledgement, complainants are often forced to run from pillar to post," said Gutta Rohit of the Human Rights Forum. He added that issuing such copies would ensure accountability and compel police to act within a stipulated time frame.

JEE Main results: Mumbai, Pune students emerge state toppers

Siddharth from Pune prepared for JEE at Bakliwal Tutorials. He did not require any stress buster during the two years of JEE preparation as he enjoyed studying.

Mumbai. (Agency)

With the 2026 Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main result out on Monday, Madhav Viradiya from Mumbai and Siddharth Athaley from Pune have emerged as Maharashtra toppers. As both now prepare for JEE-Advanced, the entrance test for admission to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), another similarity, beyond their score of 100 percentile in JEE Main, is their shared source of inspiration — both have older siblings who are IITians. Madhav, a Gujarat resident, moved to Mumbai for JEE preparation to study at the Narayan Junior College in Andheri, an institute that his friend recommended. "My aim is to join IIT-Bombay. Hence, I wanted the best coaching," said Madhav, whose elder brother Poojal is studying metallurgical engineering at IIT Jodhpur and had prepared for JEE in Kota. In February, Madhav had bagged the spot of state topper for JEE Main Session 1 too.

Siddharth from Pune prepared for JEE at



Bakliwal Tutorials. He did not require any stress buster during the two years of JEE preparation as he enjoyed studying. "My objective to appear for JEE-Main session 2

was to improve my score. And I am glad to have been able to do so," said Siddharth, whose elder sister completed Chemical Engineering from IIT Bombay.

'Zero tolerance' to U-turn: MMRDA quietly retains Metro Line 4 consultant it threatened to sack after fatal Mulund slab collapse

Mumbai. (Agency)

In a reversal of its earlier stance following the fatal Mulund metro slab collapse, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has decided to continue with the services of DB Hill-LBG consortium as the general consultant for Metro Line 4.

The consortium, comprising Deutsche Bahn Engineering & Consulting, Hill International, and Louis Berger Group, has been responsible for monitoring construction and ensuring safety since being awarded the contract in 2018. It also oversees additional stretches, including the extended Line 4A and serves



as consultant on other metro corridors. This comes weeks after the authority signalled strict action, including a proposed termination, in the aftermath of the February 14 incident in Mulund, when a parapet wall slab fell onto LBS Road,

killing one person and injuring three others. The victims — Ramdhani Yadav, 50, who died in the incident, and his relatives Rajkumar Indrajeet Yadav, 45, and Mahendra Pratap Yadav, 52, who were critically injured — were travelling in a rickshaw when the slab collapsed. A fourth person, Deepa Rula, 40, who was in a car nearby, was discharged shortly after the incident.

Following the accident, MMRDA had imposed a Rs 1 crore fine on the general consultant and, in an Authority meeting chaired by Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, declared its intention to terminate the consortium. The move was then described as a "sign of zero tolerance policy towards safety violations and work site accidents."

Punjab Congress poses question: 'will culprits of 2015 sacrilege face action'

According to the new law, any person who commits sacrilege shall get a minimum of seven years of imprisonment, extendable up to 20 years, along with a fine of Rs 2 lakh to Rs 10 lakh.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

On a day the Punjab government notified the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Act, 2026, the Congress asked the AAP government whether the culprits of the 2015 sacrilege incidents and police firing at the anti-sacrilege protesters will face the law. State Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said the AAP government has enacted the law months before the state goes to polls to "befool the people". "The question is whether the culprits of the Behbal Kalan and Bargari incidents will get punishment. People want justice in the Behbal Kalan and Bargari incidents. If it (justice) is not being delivered, then there is no use of this act. After four years, you (AAP government) enacted this law to fool people," said Warring.

The PCC chief, was accompanied by Congress MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa,

was addressing the media.

According to the new law, any person who commits sacrilege shall get a minimum of seven years of imprisonment, extendable up to 20 years, along with a fine of Rs 2 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. Any person who in criminal conspiracy, commits sacrilege with an intention to disrupt peace or communal harmony, shall get a minimum of 10 years of imprisonment, extendable up to life imprisonment, along with a fine of Rs 5 lakh which may extend to Rs 25 lakh, according to the law.

Randhawa, while thanking the Governor for giving assent to the Bill, asked the state government whether old cases related to sacrilege would also be brought under the ambit of the new law so that victims can get justice. He also asked whether cases that have been transferred to Chandigarh would



come under the purview of the new law. The congress leaders were referring to the theft of a 'bir' (copy) of the Guru Ganth Sahib from Burj Jawahar Singh Wala gurdwara, putting up handwritten sacrilegious posters in Bargari and Burj Jawahar Singh Wala and torn pages of the holy book found scattered at Bargari in Faridkot in 2015. These incidents had led to

anti-sacrilege protests in Faridkot. In the police firing at anti-sacrilege protesters in October 2015, two persons were killed in Behbal Kalan while some persons were injured at Kotkapura in Faridkot.

Randhawa also targeted the AAP government over the law and order situation in Punjab alleging that "gangsters and terrorists, under the protection of the government, are working together to disturb the state's atmosphere".

Citing Gurdaspur as an example, Randhawa said that recently a jeweler was robbed of approximately Rs 8 crore, during which the attackers fired openly. Following public protests, police arrested two accused and showed a recovery of around Rs 1.75 crore, but the main accused is still absconding and the full amount has not been recovered, he said.

Bigotry is robbing our students of a future

Another student has taken his own life, leading to a few days of intense TV debates aimed at boosting TRP ratings, before we quickly return to business as usual. A student jumping from a college building is just another statistic added to an ongoing record of administrative indifference. The recent death of Nithin Raj at a dental college in Kannur is the latest example in another caste discrimination tragedy. Whoever called the educational institutions 'a temple of learning' had no idea what a temple was supposed to mean or had extreme hatred towards temples. Our colleges are slaughterhouses where the dreams of marginalised individuals are systematically destroyed by a privileged academic elite. Nithin, a Dalit student who reportedly faced relentless taunts about his skin colour and background, chose to leap from a five-storeyed building rather than endure the daily humiliation he faced in the classroom. Nothing much has changed from the day when Rohith Vemula took his life for the crime of committing the "fatal accident of birth." Our campuses are medieval fiefdoms.

We grant unchecked power to the faculty members, and they think they are divinely ordained. In our country, a 19-year-old is considered mature enough to elect the government of a nuclear-armed nation. However, the moment that same individual enters a college campus, they become inmates of a correctional institute, and the faculty becomes the jail wardens, drunk on power. One of the batons that these modern-day torturers in these cloistered institutions possess is the outdated attendance system. This insistence on compulsory attendance is not about education; it serves as a form of confinement. They are well aware that unless they shepherd the students into forced confinement, no one would waste their time attending their boring lectures. Mediocre instructors are given a captive audience over whom they can act like tyrants. Not many countries treat students as serfs. In Europe and America, higher education treats students as adult consumers. You pay for the credits, and if you choose not to attend a lecture, you accept the consequences on your final exam. There are no jailers disguised as professors counting heads or "marking" attendance. In the 'decadent' West, a student is an adult consumer; here in the land of divine Gurus, he or she is just raw material for a professor's fragile ego. The Thorat Committee report, which investigated discrimination at AIIMS, along with various subsequent commissions, highlights how "continuous evaluation" is often used to address personal grievances and reinforce caste hierarchies. This system is intentionally designed to lack transparency. For example, a teacher's mood during a viva-voce (oral examination) can ultimately determine whether a student from a rural background has the opportunity to become a doctor. Internal assessment is nothing but legalised extortion, a tool for the academic elite to extract servility from those whose surnames or skin tones offend their fragile, casteist sensibilities. I remember my time in a professional college that was anything but professional. Professors took out their personal grievances on the students. Some performances included flinging the record books that a student might have toiled on for many nights into the drainage, tearing off project reports, abusing and insulting the students and their family members for no reason and such things. Coming from a modest background, I was an easy target for professors who mistook their positions for a license to bully. I wore my worn-out chappals like a badge of poverty that my professors used for target practice. My stuttering English was their midday entertainment, a circus for men who would be cooling their heels in a psychiatric ward in any sensible society. While this was how they treated a poor but 'upper caste' student, the fate of those coming from the poor and 'Dalit or tribal' background was worse. Many of us had thick skins and laughed off such antics by our 'teachers' as 'nut cases', but not everyone is blessed with rhinoceros hide.

Balanced tourism or we only go downhill

Approach has to be 'resident first' — this creates interest, employment and enhances the visitor experience

A while back and over a period of several years, one was handling assignments for a state's tourism body. This was the cusp between a time of nascent tourism in that state and today's over-tourism in certain pockets and blanks in others. There were a limited number of hotels and at that time, much of the hospitality industry was state-driven and state-owned. A policy's success or failure was measured, substantially, by budget allocation and the number of tourist arrivals — never mind that the same tourist registered in a hotel in one town and carried on registering in other places; as far as the statistic was concerned, that singular turned into multiples. While that simple scrutiny isn't always applied, today, Aadhaar cards and passports, which are mandatory while checking into a hotel, can easily be filtered by a central system to see who has gone where — and how many times. Recently, while sitting in a sarkari waiting room, one had time enough to wade through some tourism promotional material that was at hand. It did not come as a surprise but was disappointing to see that what one and one's associates had created ages back was still doing the rounds. A few sentences had been altered (was that AI at work?). The quality of pictures, one must admit, was far better. It is accepted that the basics, like history and distances, won't alter, but some things will.

In this sector, where both thinking on one's feet and vulnerability go hand in hand, what are the benchmarks that will separate success from failure — and what lies in that huge grey area between both? Is this to be sustainable by compulsion or sustainable by choice — or should sustainability and its fine sentiments be flung down the closest khud? There is no doubt that domestic tourism provides the bulk of tourist traffic — and all else apart, this is wonderful as I've always felt that this is one of the strongest methods of national integration and seeing what a wonderful country we have. Yet, why do we bury our heads in the sand and get all uppity when it comes to exploring the international market? Let's take a look at what the world around us is doing — despite the wars, the madness and a 'let's sit tight moment'. This year, 45.5 million international visitors are expected to arrive in the United Kingdom. This is driven by strategic government support and innovative global marketing campaigns. What is important here is that the visitors are not going to remain concentrated in, say, just London or Edinburgh, but will travel to areas that lie in the penumbra of the main destinations. Across the world, in numerous places and in several ways, controls are being tightened to check over-tourism and natural and cultural exploitation. The EU has introduced new rules under its Green Directives to tighten how environmental claims



are made and to prevent 'green-washing'. This means that tourism businesses in other continents that are selling into Europe will have back claims of being 'sustainable' by hard evidence.

Spain's recent tourism policy is worth taking a look at. After decades of getting tourists in a limited number of places, this is now shifting to invite travellers in search of authentic experiences. A segment of marketing is focused on interests and not geography. The game plan is long and goes beyond the limited term of a minister or bureaucrat — which, often enough, is the case in India (and elsewhere). Tourism needs to be treated as a matter of governance as much as a marketing issue.

Simply put, the approach has to be 'resident first' — this automatically creates both interest and employment and enhances the visitor experience. The same land has to try and deliver many things — economic growth with a strong local emphasis, restoration of nature that has been damaged (if it hasn't already been destroyed outright), minimising the carbon imprints (which includes control of littering), and guarding both cultural and natural

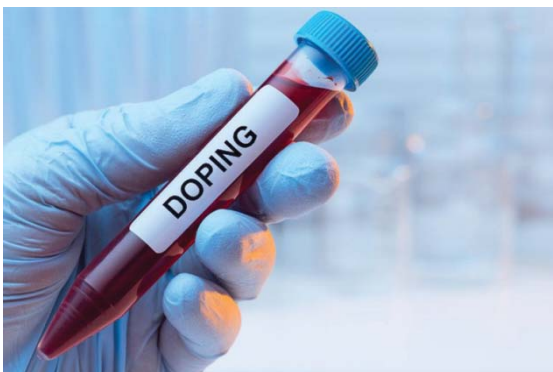
assets. The scope of a solitary article defined by a word limit isn't enough to do justice to the subject at hand. Especially when it is a substantial driver of employment and a significant contributor to the economy — and is something that is constantly evolving and changing. Everyone travels in different ways and looks for different things. I've still not understood why some young men lose their shirts in more ways than one, the moment they arrive in the hills. They can easily jump and cavort in streams and rivers closer to wherever they come from and take the help of technology to place a snow-covered mountain in the backdrop as they post their reels. They could save themselves some money and the locals and the police a lot of bother. Needless to say, perceptions of travel change with age. The fact that every successful destination and every dish on the table now has to be reel-worthy and Instagram-admirable can make or break a place. This is where the experiential aspect of tourism steps in. A word used often enough is 'fall'. A place can have rainfall, snowfall, 'guest-fall', 'tourist-fall' but hardly ever, a windfall.

Crackdown on doping: Penal provisions can act as a deterrent

India, which will host the 2030 Commonwealth Games and has set its sights on the 2036 Olympics, must go all out to improve its image

THE push to criminalise trafficking and use of banned performance-enhancing substances marks an overdue shift in India's battle against doping. Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has highlighted a harsh truth: doping is no longer an individual lapse but an organised enterprise that exploits ambition, ignorance and weak enforcement. India's anti-doping framework has leaned heavily on testing and imposition of bans on athletes. While these measures have led to a decline in adverse findings, the country continues to top the global dope offenders' list of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). This dubious distinction has exposed the limitations of the current strategy. It's apparent that punishing athletes alone is of little help. The proposal to penalise suppliers, facilitators and complicit support staff aligns with the global perception that the real culprits are often coaches, trainers and shadowy networks that profit from doping. Targeting these wrongdoers could disrupt supply chains and raise the risks associated with the use

of unfair means. Yet, criminalisation is not a silver



bullet. Similar provisions in the 2018 draft anti-doping Bill were ultimately dropped amid concerns about overreach and enforceability. There are legal grey

areas as not all substances banned in sports are illegal for general use. Careless drafting of provisions could lead to harassment or other unintended consequences, particularly for lower-level support staff.

The need to protect athletes, many of whom are victims rather than perpetrators, cannot be overemphasised. Coercion and misinformation often push them toward doping. Any legal framework must clearly distinguish between the exploiter and the exploited. The government's broader strategy — combining legislation with education, intelligence-gathering and international cooperation — is promising. India, which will host the 2030 Commonwealth Games and has set its sights on the 2036 Olympics, must go all out to improve its image on the dope front. A crackdown on doping networks can act as a strong deterrent, but much will depend on making the proposed legislation robust and loophole-free.

A confrontation over women

Each turtle seemed to carry its own ancient memory and an unerring sense of purpose

The sea under a full moon has a way of turning memory into something almost mythical. Yet what we witnessed that December night in 1999 on a remote shore of the Andaman Islands was no myth — it was nature at its most ancient, deliberate, and humbling. The Olive Ridley sea turtle, among the smallest of its kind, embodies one of the ocean's most enduring instincts: the return to sandy shores to begin the next generation. With its olive green, heart-shaped carapace and modest size, it is an unassuming creature. The name 'Ridley', possibly derived from 'riddle', reflects the once-mysterious mass nesting behaviour known as arribada.

Classified as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the species symbolises both continuity and fragility. India's conservation commitment began with the Olive Ridley Conservation Project at Gahirmatha Beach in Odisha in 1975, and sustained efforts since have safeguarded nesting habitats, including those in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. On that particular night, conservation was not a concept we analysed but an experience we lived. Our journey began where the motorable road ended and a waiting truck carried us deeper into the darkening wilderness. The air grew cooler and quieter until we reached a narrow creek. Beyond it lay the protected sands of Cuthbert Bay, part of a wildlife sanctuary long cherished as a refuge for nesting sea turtles. A modest camp awaited us — two gas lanterns flickering in the night, a small tent, and a welcoming dinner table.



As the tide rose, we boarded small dinghies to cross the creek, the restless sea testing both vessel and resolve. A sudden swell lifted our craft, tightening the night around us, yet the skilled oarsmen steadied it and brought us safely ashore. On the far side, the world seemed transformed: sand shimmered silver beneath the moon, and a sudden chill settled into the air. Anticipating this,

the forest staff had replaced chairs with thick rubber mats inside the tents and provided blankets that soon became welcome companions.

Waiting proved as integral to the experience as the sight itself. To keep sleep at bay, our guide spoke softly of constellations, the Andaman Sea, and nature's quiet cycles, while cups of hot coffee circulated. Close to

midnight, soft, reverential whispers from the forest staff signalled their arrival. We stepped out in silence, careful not to disturb the fragile theatre unfolding before us.

From the dark edge of the sea emerged a living tide — scores of turtles, their movement slow yet purposeful, their shells glistening under the moonlight. It was not the chaotic abundance associated with mass nesting elsewhere, but something more intimate and elemental. Each turtle seemed to carry its own ancient memory and an unerring sense of purpose. What followed was a ritual both precise and profound. With swift, practised movements, the females dug into the sand, laid their eggs, and carefully concealed each nest, entrusting it to the earth. There was no spectacle — only instinct, steady and unbroken. Beneath the smooth stretch of sand, the next chapter had already begun. After an incubation period of about 45 to 60 days, hatchlings would emerge, guided by the faint glow of moonlight reflecting off the sea. Many would not survive, yet enough would endure to sustain the cycle — a quiet testament to nature's balance. The Andaman Islands, with their unspoiled beaches and rich biodiversity, remain a vital refuge for these turtles. Efforts to protect nesting grounds are acts of custodianship, preserving a rhythm that predates human memory and honouring a timeless connection between land, sea, and life itself. That night, however, what stayed with us was not just the ecological significance of the event, but its quiet poetry. The rhythm of the waves, the silvered sand, and the steady crawl of life towards continuity came together in a moment that felt both deeply personal and universally profound.



Wisdom in a perfect

Cup of Tea

The heavy on chai patti, heavy on milk, boiled to milky-brown perfection liquid that we dunk our biscuits in every morning is a regular accompaniment with the morning paper for most of us, Indians.

That's how we like our tea - a cup full of flavoursome goodness that unofficially kickstarts the day. Of course, we have had our share of experiments with tea bags containing myriad herbal and fruit-infused flavours, but the customary chai, needless to say, remains an unrivalled favourite. And so, it took a very splendid, not to mention,

equally enlightening tea-tasting session when I got introduced to "tea" and not chai. An animated bunch of 15 tea-enthusiasts gathered in Gurgaon's Star Mall at Mridu Gupta's The Tea Room Co., where sommelier Anamika Singh waited in anticipation to unveil seven handpicked blends of Anandini Himalaya Tea, her own brand which was launched in the summer of 2012. Anamika spent her childhood amidst the tea estates of Darjeeling where she grew up to acquire the affinity and taste for tea from her father, Abhai Singh, a renowned tea specialist. She trained under him as an apprentice for several years to be able to master the nuances of different kinds of tea. Then, in 2000, she and her father decided to extend their love for producing tea to the quaint town of Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. And thus came into being the Manjhee Valley tea estate of which Anamika is a proud owner in the present day. Having spent 20 years in the tea industry, her expertise goes beyond tea manufacturing, blending and drinking to food pairing.

The tea gardens of Manjhee Valley have been producing several kinds of tea - Orthodox Tea (two long leaves and a bud), White Tea (hand plucked, sun dried and white in colour), Oolong, Handmade Needle Tea (hand rolled tea resembling needles), and Flowery Green (resembling flowers) to name a few. All of their produce was being exported to European countries until Anamika launched her take on modern tea drinking with Anandini Himalaya Tea, a combination of seven blends comprising two black and five green teas. "I have introduced a mix of natural Himalayan flowers and herbs to begin with. Next year I plan to take in spices and later fruits," said she as the server greeted us with tall glasses of 'First Flush Tea with Lavender Flowers and Lemon Grass' ice-tea along with a colourful, summer salad, an ideal opening to the delightful tea tasting session which was to follow. "The first flush", Anamika explained, "is the prime time to pluck tea leaves. It begins in February and goes on till the month of April and mid of May." Between sips of fresh tea and bites of the salad, tiny porcelain saucers containing fragrant tea leaves were passed around the table for us to get to know the tea better.

Before long it was time for act two. Anamika infused for us 'Autumn Tea with Rose Petals and Lemon Balm' in a glass kettle containing warm water. Just sight of tea leaves and flowers dancing and swirling in the water was enough to

make us crave a cup. Shot glasses were laid out and Anamika did the honours of pouring careful portions for everyone. This tea came accompanied with cheese sandwiches and nachos.

An animated conversation of what makes green tea different from black tea ensued. "Both the teas come from same plant. The difference lies in the way they're manufactured. Green tea is semi-fermented where as black tea has no trace of fermentation", explained Anamika while she infused yet another blend into the kettle. This was 'Green Tea with Pomegranate Flowers and Himalayan Tulsi'; an intense and citric flavour that refreshed our palates evenly for the delectable cupcakes that came along with it.

"Tea is a palate cleanser," Anamika had said sometime in between the session but what lingered as a sweet aftertaste in the end were the energy, effervescence and wisdom infused in a perfect cup of tea!

Anamika Singh's Anandini Himalaya Tea bouquet comprises 7 blends:

1. First Flush Tea with Lavender Flowers and Lemon Grass
2. Green Tea with Rose Petals and Mint
3. Green Tea with Rhododendron and Himalayan Tulsi
4. Autumn Tea with Rose Petals and Lemon

Balm

5. Green Tea with Chamomile and Rose Hip

6. Green Tea with Fire-Flame Bush and Mint

7. Green Tea with Pomegranate Flowers and Himalayan Tulsi

Anamika's secret of making a perfect cup of tea!

Before you begin, know the difference between "tea" and "chai". Tea is an "infusion" of tea leaves into warm water. Chai, on the other hand, is brewed or boiled along with milk and sugar.

Serves: 2 cups

You need: A wide-bottomed tea pot/pan. A wide and spacious pan allows the tea leaves to swirl effortlessly into the water. Try picking a borosil, glass or ceramic pan and avoid one made of steel, aluminium or iron. Pour in 2 full cups of water.

Temperature of water: The water should be boiled at 90 degrees heat. Tiny bubbles appearing on the sides indicate the water is ready. Take it off the fire and add two teaspoons of tea leaves. Cover it immediately with a tea cosy to keep the temperature of the water intact.

Keep a tea timer handy and let the infusion begin. Once ready, pour out the tea into the cups through a tea strainer.

Recipe: Sesame fish finger with hummus

Fish fingers are oh-so-popular; every wedding or party kicks off with a round of fish fingers to go with a host of roasted appetizers.

But it can be quite monotonous the way fish fingers are typically served - thin strips of fried fish with the ubiquitous mint chutney. Simply break free of the old recipe and try out our new one that gives an interesting spin to the orthodox fish fingers making it more crispy and savoury. Executive chef Deepak Dhanwariya of My Way or The Highway, a Mediterranean cuisine restaurant in Noida's Centre Stage Mall, tells us how to get this innovative fish preparation right.

Sesame fish finger (One portion)



Ingredients: Fish (sole/Basa) 150 gms
Egg 1
Mustard powder 10 gms
Paprika powder 10 gms
Sesame seeds to coat
Lime juice 20 ml
Salt as per taste
White pepper a pinch
Oil for frying

Method: - Clean and cut fish in 6cm long finger shapes and keep aside.
- Make a marination in a bowl, mix egg,

mustard powder, lime juice, salt, paprika powder, white powder, and whisk well till emulsion is formed.

- Put fish in the marination and let it stay for 20-30 minutes.

- Take one plate and spread sesame seed on it.

- Roll fish into sesame one by one.

- Heat oil in fryer, deep fry fish finger till golden brown.

- Serve with tartar sauce and salad.

You may want to substitute tartar sauce or salad with a bowl of hummus, and give a touch of the Middle East to your cooking. Here is a very simple way of making hummus, the perfect dip for many an appetizer, at home.

Hummus

Ingredients:

Chickpeas
Garlic
Green chilli
Lemon juice
Coriander or parsley
Olive oil
Salt to taste
Yoghurt

Method:

- Soak chickpeas in water overnight. Boil it and allow it to cool.

- Chop two cloves of garlic and green chillies, and together with lemon juice, 2 tbsp yogurt and salt as per taste add to the boiled chickpeas while retaining a bit of the stock. Then, put it in the mixer.

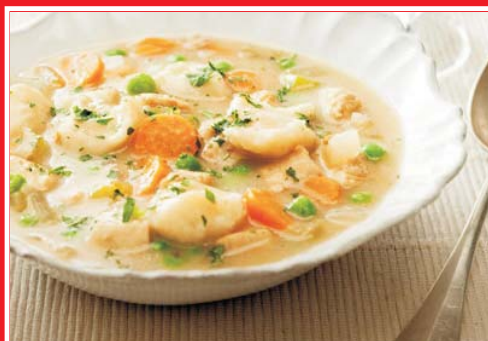
- Make sure the mix turns smooth with no chickpea granule sticking out.

- Pour out the mix in a bowl and add to it a tbsp of olive oil. Blend well.

- Sprinkle fresh coriander or parsley from the top.

...and the world's best fish finger dip is ready to be served.

Recipe: Chicken Dumplings



Here is a recipe to make the most delicious chicken dumplings at home.

Ingredients:

6 boned chicken breast with skin, 10 cups water, 1 tsp sage, 1 tsp poultry, 1/8 tsp ground basil leaves, 1 tsp salt and pepper.

Method:

Put these ingredients in a large sauce pan to simmer over low heat, until the chicken is done. Then remove the chicken and remove the skin. While the chicken is cooking, make the dumplings.

Ingredients (for dumplings):

5 cups of all purpose flour, 1/2 cup shortening (or desi ghee), 1/4 tsp salt, 1 beaten egg and some water.

Method (for dumplings):

Put flour into a mixing bowl and stir in salt. Work in shortening as you would when making pie crust, using two knives or a pastry cutter. Add egg, working it into the dough. Then stir in cold water 1/2 cup at a time, until the dough comes together and is at a stage where you will be able to roll it out. Lightly flour a surface and roll out the dough to a pie shell thickness (about 1/8 inch). Using a pizza cutter, cut the dough into 1/2 to 1 inch squares. Finally, put the squares into the chicken broth and cook until done (about 30 minutes). Return the chicken to the soup with the dumplings to cook another 15 minutes or until you have a gravy texture. After you get a gravy texture, it's ready to serve.

Recipe: Thai mango basil salad with olive oil

Did you know that apart from tasting yumilicious, mango is rich in health benefits? It lowers cholesterol, fights cancer and clears skin too! So today Godrej Nature's Basket food consultant, Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal gives us a easy to whip up and healthy mango basil salad recipe.

Thai Mango Basil Salad with Olive Oil

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 2-3 as a Side Dish

Ingredients: 1 medium bowl

fresh lettuce, or a combination of mixed greens (1 semi-ripe to ripe mango) 1/2 to 1 cup

cucumber, sliced 1/4 cup dry-roasted

cashew nuts 1 tbsp Thai chillies, sliced

fine

Basil Dressing: (serves 2 people; double

recipe for 3 or more) 15-20 basil leaves,

or up to 25 if leaves are small 1 green

onion, sliced (including green stem) 3

tbsp. fresh lime juice 1 tsp salt 1 tbsp

extra virgin olive oil 2 tsp. brown sugar

or palm sugar 1 chilli

Method

Rinse fresh greens and use salad spinner

to dry. Place in a salad bowl. Add all the

other vegetables.

Slice the mango on either side of the

stone and scoop out the fruit. Slice fruit



up into cubes. Add mango cubes to the salad.

To make the dressing, place all basil dressing ingredients in a mini chopper, food processor or blender. Process to a coarse paste. Drizzle dressing over salad. Add nuts and toss again.

Variations of this Salad

Add cooked prawns, simply boiled or grilled

Add fried tofu, cut into cubes

Add grilled chicken

HMU Tip: Boiled eggs help in muscle gain, improved eye sight, brain function and stronger bones. Add boiled eggs as a variation to this salad to increase your healthy quotient.

Short news

Lilavati Hospital starts GIFT City operations with pre-launch health check-ups

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

Mumbai-headquartered Lilavati Hospital expanded its footprint in Gujarat with the start of its GIFT City premises. As a pre-launch activity, senior members of the hospital administration were at GIFT City on Monday for free health check-ups. Prashant Mehta, director of Lilavati Foundation, said that the GIFT City premises will be fully functional in three phases. "The first phase is likely to be active in the next four months with 120 beds. Eventually it will be a 300-plus-bed facility catering to the rapidly growing fintech hub of Gujarat," he said. He added that the hospital is part of the Mayo Clinic Care Network to enhance patient care standards and technical expertise. "Tech, digital-first wave inspiring youth for entrepreneurship" Members of the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India on Monday observed the institute's 44th foundation day. Kishor Kharat, former MD and CEO of Indian Bank and IDBI Bank, was the chief guest at the ceremony. He termed entrepreneurs as a strong foundation of India's economy, and added that even failures propelled the story of entrepreneurship forward. Dr Sunil Shukla, director general of EDII, said that the tech and digital-first wave are inspiring the youth to adopt entrepreneurship as a career. On the occasion, 55 success stories from EDII were shared as a book along.

An eight-year-old girl underwent surgery at GCS Hospital for spinal aneurysmal bone cyst, or ABC, which is considered a rare benign but aggressive lesion that can grow rapidly and compress the spinal cord, leading to severe pain and weakness.

Kerala's 'Unnathi' scheme aids 42 ST students in two years to pursue studies abroad

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. (Agency)

Climbing the ladder of success from marginalised communities, as many as 42 Scheduled Tribe (ST) students from Kerala went abroad for higher studies in the past two academic years 2024-25 and 2025-26 after receiving assistance through the state government's Unnathi scholarship scheme. While 25 tribal students received scholarships in 2024-25, 17 students availed the same in 2025-26. The rise is remarkable as only 40 students went overseas under the programme between 2013-14 and 2024-25, before the scholarship scheme was revamped.

According to officials, a total of Rs 9.87 crore was disbursed as scholarship amounts to these students from the tribal communities during the period, with some receiving up to Rs 25 lakh.

With this, the total number of tribal students who have flown abroad to pursue higher studies under the Unnathi scholarship scheme has increased to 82, starting from 2013, and Rs 19.76 crore has been spent for their studies. The United Kingdom has remained the favourite destination over the years, with the students also seeking careers in countries like Australia and New Zealand.

The courses they pursue also vary, ranging from an MA in social policy and criminology to post-graduate engineering courses. "However, these students generally tend to study, find a job, and settle in these foreign countries.

There is nothing wrong in hanging KCR for his misdeeds, says CM Revanth

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

Stating that there was nothing wrong in hanging former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for his "misdeeds" during BRS rule, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday vowed to ensure that the BRS chief does not even get the Leader of Opposition post after the next Assembly polls.

"My stomach is burning seeing the plight of the Kaleshwaram project. If laws do not exist and if it is a kingdom of savages, there would be nothing wrong in hanging KCR from a tree. KCR sank Rs 1 lakh crore in the Godavari. If such corruption happened during the Nizam era, they would have sent lizards into the pants (lagula tondalu vidichevullu)," Revanth said.

He added he would change his name if KCR remains the Leader of Opposition after the next election. He also termed KCR as "Paapala Bhairavudu".

Addressing a public meeting at Kataram in Bhupalapally district on Monday, the chief minister said: "In the 2023 Assembly elections, I defeated you. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, I gave you zero seats. In panchayat and municipal elections, I buried you. In the Cantonment and Jubilee Hills byelections, I constructed a tomb for you. In the next elections, Congress workers will hoist our party flag on that tomb. This is my challenge."

He reiterated that the Congress will remain in power in the state at least till 2034. Stating that Congress activists will bury T Jeevan Reddy under 100 feet in Jagtial, the chief minister said: "Jeevan Reddy is saying 'Praja Palana Povalu'.

Compassionate jobs crushing the hopes of unemployed youth: Andhra HC

Compassionate appointments should be considered only when the family of an employee who died in service is in extreme poverty, the Court said.

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

The Andhra Pradesh High Court has expressed its serious concern over the growing number of compassionate appointments in the State, noting that 20,801 such jobs were given from 2014, which averages nearly 2,000 appointments every year exceeding the State's regular annual recruitment.

The Court observed that indiscriminate compassionate appointments are harming the rights of unemployed youth. It clarified that compassionate appointment is not a right but only an exception to help the family of a deceased employee facing distress. It pointed out that beneficiaries

are crushing their hopes. While the government shows excessive sympathy to families of deceased employees, it acts harshly toward unemployed youth, the bench remarked. In this context, the Court directed the State government to frame fresh guidelines within three months. The guidelines must clearly cover the family's financial status, payment of ex-gratia instead of jobs, and providing employment on temporary or outsourcing basis rather than



permanent posts through compassionate grounds. While hearing the petition of Sujana who approached the court seeking directions for a job under compassionate grounds, Justice Nyapathi Vijay delivered the verdict and directed the Registry to send a copy to the Chief Secretary, General Administration Department.

Govt must aim for greatest good for the greatest number: HC

Sujana is married daughter of Pendalayya, a library assistant from Pennepalli village, Pellakuru mandal, Tirupati district, who died in service.

During the hearing, Justice Vijay sought details from GAD on how many persons were appointed on compassionate grounds across departments, corporations, and societies. The data showed 20,801 appointments since State bifurcation in 2014.

Crowds swell for pind clinic vacancies in state, spotlight on Punjab's job crisis

The 'pind clinic' initiative is an extension of the state government's Aam Aadmi Clinics aimed at expanding primary healthcare coverage in rural areas.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Many candidates turned up at the Civil Surgeon office in Punjab's Sangrur Monday for just 117 'pind clinic in-charge' vacancies underlining the prevailing unemployment and highlighting the stark gap between demand and supply of jobs in the state. The rush was particularly striking because the job is temporary and the candidates will only be paid Rs 620 per day. The candidates at the venue, meanwhile, alleged lack of basic arrangements such as drinking water despite the scorching heat.

Looking at the heavy turnout, Civil Surgeon (Sangrur) Dr Amarjeet Kaur said, "Hundreds have turned up for the vacancies of pind clinic in-charge and we are busy attending to them... we will continue tomorrow... (as we could not attend all the candidates today)."

As per the eligibility criteria, candidates must have one of these: a B.Sc in Nursing, a diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery (GNM), Auxiliary Nursing and Midwifery (ANM), be a pharmacist with a diploma or degree in pharmacy. Preference will be given to



GNM/B.Sc Nursing candidates, followed by ANM candidates and then pharmacists. Similar scenes also took place on April 17 reported from other districts.

In Mansa, around 500 candidates turned up for just 11 posts of pind clinic in-charge and nearly 450 appeared for interviews. Sources said many also left due to the heavy rush. In Ludhiana, nearly 1,500 candidates reportedly appeared for around 200 temporary posts.

Reacting to the situation, Union Minister of State Ravneet Singh Bittu posted on X, "The Real

face of 'Badlav' — Punjab's youth forced onto the streets... The massive flood of unemployed youth is a stinging reality check for the Punjab government's hollow claims of providing jobs.

When thousands of qualified candidates are forced to scramble for a mere 117 posts, it exposes the dire state of unemployment in the state. Where are the tall promises of 'Har Ghar Naukri'? Is this the 'Rangla Punjab' you envisioned — where our youth are left to despair?" The 'pind clinic' initiative is an extension of the state government's Aam Aadmi Clinics aimed at expanding primary healthcare coverage in rural areas.

On January 23, the Chief Minister's Office had made the formal announcement of pind clinics. The post on social media said: "Punjab Government, led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, has announced the launch of 2,500 'pind clinics' to ensure that no villager has to travel to the city for primary healthcare. These clinics will be opened across every corner of rural Punjab within the next 4 to 5 months."

More than 1.5 lakh devotees throng Simhachalam for Chandanotsavam

Officials implement slot-based system with separate lines to ensure crowd management

VISAKHAPATNAM.(Agency)

The annual Chandanotsavam at Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Simhachalam concluded on Monday with Nijaroopa Darshanam of the deity, witnessed by more than 1.5 lakh devotees in a peaceful and organised manner. The festival, held once a year when the deity is revealed in his original form after the removal of sandal paste, began in the early hours with queue lines opening at 3 am. Devotees were allowed uninterrupted darshan throughout the day, according to temple officials.

The first darshan was performed by the hereditary trustee, who is also the Governor of Goa, Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju, after which public darshan commenced. Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha later offered silk garments to the deity on behalf of the state.

She said arrangements were made to ensure smooth movement of devotees



and added that around 3,000 police personnel were deployed for security, crowd regulation and traffic management. Temple Executive Officer Venkata Rao said the festival was conducted on Akshaya Tritiya with morning rituals beginning at 2.45 am after the removal of sandal paste from the deity. He said the total turnout was estimated at more than 1.5 lakh. He added that the arrangements and crowd management experience would be documented for future improvements, including planning for even higher turnout.

Officials implemented a slot-based

system with separate lines, and devotees' cooperation, including restricted mobile use, ensured faster movement and crowd management.

In view of the summer heat, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation deployed around 550 staff members for sanitation, drinking water supply, queue line maintenance and crowd support services. Temporary sheds were arranged in queue lines and drinking water, buttermilk, milk, biscuits, fruits and glucose were distributed continuously to devotees.

By mid-morning, around 40,000 devotees had completed darshan, while nearly 80,000 had completed darshan in the early hours, according to preliminary estimates. Devotees expressed satisfaction with the arrangements. Speaking with a resident of Yendada, Bhavani, said she entered the queue at 9.30 am and completed darshan within three hours. She said facilities such as drinking water, prasadam distribution and queue management were well.

Kerala police intel flags Rs 20-crore scam tied to Sabarimala ritual

MYSURU.(Agency)

The state police's intelligence wing has flagged serious irregularities linked to the 'neyy thenga' ritual at the Sabarimala temple, with contractors suspected of illegally diverting the ghee-filled coconuts, meant to be consigned to the sacred 'aazhi' (fire pit), to private godowns.

The 'illicit trade' is estimated to have generated up to Rs 50 lakh a day, potentially touching Rs 20 crore during the last pilgrimage season. At present, contract permits only the collection of coconuts broken at designated areas on the temple premises.

A report of the intelligence wing seeking a detailed investigation has been submitted to higher authorities and the matter has reached officials of the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), including the Sabarimala special commissioner and the executive magistrate, said a top source.

A Bengaluru-based company had secured the contract to collect the coconut offerings for an amount of Rs 7.61 crore, engaging workers holding contractor-issued ID cards in shifts both day and night during the pilgrimage season, the source said.

"On April 14, a person was found carrying sacks filled with broken 'neyy thenga' pieces. Upon questioning, he said the coconuts were collected from devotees under the pretext of offering them in the 'aazhi', on the contractor's instructions, and that he received a commission of Rs 7 per kg. Devotees later confirmed that they had handed over the coconuts believing they would be properly offered," according to the state police intelligence's report accessed by.

Eco-sensitive zone around Himachal Pradesh national park quashed: What the high court said and why it matters

Villagers staying in the vicinity of Col Sher Jung National Park had challenged the ESZ notification as unfair, saying it adversely affected their livelihood.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

On April 16, the Himachal Pradesh High Court quashed a 2022 notification that had declared areas around Col Sher Jung National Park, also known as Simbalwara National Park, in Sirmour district as eco-sensitive zones (ESZs). The court held that both the state and central governments had "miserably failed to follow the procedure" required for issuing such a notification.

The notification had been issued in January 2022 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC), on recommendations of the Himachal Pradesh government.

Here's a look at what the notification said, the activities it prohibited, regulated and promoted, the issues raised against it, the high court ruling, and what it means going forward.

Col Sher Jung National Park and its history

Col Sher Jung National Park is located in Himachal Pradesh's Sirmour district, next to the Kala Amb-Paonta Sahib-Dehradun National Highway-7. It is spread over an area of 27.88 sq km. Initially a protected forest and later a wildlife sanctuary, it was notified as a national park on June 7, 2013. The park holds ecological significance due to its strategic location at the confluence of three major biogeographic zones—the Himalayan region, the Gangetic plains, and semi-arid areas.

As per a 10-year management plan for this national park, its unique positioning results in a rich mix of flora and fauna, reflecting characteristics of the Western Himalayas, the Punjab plains, and the Upper Gangetic plains.



Geographically, the park is defined by the Shivalik Hill ranges, forming a bowl-shaped valley intersected by seasonal streams locally known as "khala" or "rau". The main stream system is the Nimbuwala khala and its tributaries. Vegetation in the park is dominated by species such as sal, sain, mahua, jamun, amla, and amalats. The park supports diverse wildlife,

including leopard, sambar, barking deer, nilgai, wild boar, jackal, and langur. It also hosts rich birdlife typical of the Shivalik and Himalayan regions, along with around 70 species of butterflies.

Historically, the area was part of elephant migratory routes, though such movement has now reduced due to habitat fragmentation caused by infrastructure projects such as the Yamuna barrage.

What the 2002 notification said

In January 2022, the MoEFCC issued a notification declaring an area around Col Sher Jung National Park as an ESZ. The ESZ covered an area of 31.24 sq km, encompassing 19 villages across three Gram Panchayats, Bhatanwari, Patalia, and Behral. The objective was to create a buffer zone to protect the park's fragile ecosystem by regulating human activities.

UP's prepaid smart meter drive sees more heat than light. Here's why

Across several districts of Uttar Pradesh, anger spilt onto the streets as consumers alleged installation of pre-paid electric meters without consent. People claimed they received inflated bills and were subjected to sudden power cuts. The UP government halted the drive amid rising summer temperatures, and ordered a probe.

New Delhi.(Agency)
A Noida-based journalist was in the middle of an important Zoom meeting when the lights went out. The Wi-Fi snapped and his laptop screen froze. He switched to mobile data, but when power wasn't restored even after an hour, alarm bells rang. A call to society management revealed the twist. "My electricity meter had been quietly switched from postpaid to pre-paid, and my balance had slipped into the negative. So, the supply had been cut," said the journalist. "I must have missed that one email," he said, adding that his society's WhatsApp group was flooded with similar complaints. Meters were changed from post-paid to pre-paid "bina pooche (without being asked)". This comes even as Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on April 3 clarified that pre-paid smart meters were not mandatory for all consumers. Yet, the journalist faced an ordeal. And the ordeal is just one glimpse

into the growing unease around Uttar Pradesh's pre-paid smart push. Across districts in Uttar Pradesh, consumers are flagging a range of issues. Apart from alleged installation without consent, there have been complaints of sudden spikes in electricity bills, power cuts despite positive balance on the app, and frequent technical glitches in the new pre-paid meter system. In Uttar Pradesh's Jalaun, villagers dumped their smart meters onto the streets and staged a road blockade, alleging that their electricity bills had shot up after the pre-paid meters were installed, reported Aaj Tak, India Today Digital's sister portal. In Aligarh, the anger spilt over as a group of women surrounded a power

department official and chased him away. It's the reports of these very problems faced by customers that have turned the pre-paid

The controversy comes even as the north is bracing for a harsh summer with the mercury inching up with every passing day.

Taking note of the mounting complaints against discoms for allegedly forcing consumers to switch to pre-paid smart meters, the Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (UPERC) has stepped in. The regulator on Sunday directed the state's parent DISCOM, Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL), to submit a detailed report within 10 days. The Uttar Pradesh government on Sunday said that electricity would not be disrupted for three days even after smart meters, which are soon to be installed, run out of



smart meter rollout in Uttar Pradesh into a policy that is generating more heat than light. balance.

Record growth in clean electricity in India helps decline in global power production from fossils: Report

New Delhi.(Agency)
Record power generation from clean energy sources in India in 2025 resulted in a rare decline in production of electricity from fossil fuels not just in India but also globally, a new report has revealed. India's fossil fuel-based electricity production in 2025 was about 52 TWh (52 billion units) less than the previous year, the global energy think tank Ember said in its annual Global Electricity Review. China also reported a similar decline in fossil-based electricity, producing about 56 TWh lesser power than 2024. The combined effect of declines in these two countries drove down global fossil electricity generation, the Ember report said. It was only the fifth time this century, and the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, that fossil fuel-based electricity generation did not show a year-on-year increase, it said. "The global fall in fossil (fuel-based power) generation was driven by a historic reversal in fossil trends in China and India, the largest and third-largest fossil power countries globally. 2025 was the first year this century when fossil generation fell in both countries," the report said. "In China, it fell by 56 TWh, marking the first decline since 2015... In India, a record increase in both solar and wind generation, combined with strong hydro output and lower-than-average demand growth, led to a decline in fossil generation of 52 Twh," it said. India added almost 38 GW of new solar energy capacity in 2025. This was the first time that India had installed more solar capacity than the United States in a year. The US added about 33 GW of solar capacity in 2025. India also added more than 6.3 GW of wind power and about 4 GW of hydropower capacity. The total renewable energy capacity added in the year happened to be more than 48 GW.

'He was simply demanding a fair wage for labourers, is that so wrong?': Kin of main accused in Noida protest case

New Delhi.(Agency)
The last time Aditya Anand, a B.Tech graduate from NIT Jamshepur, called home was over a week ago. It was a seemingly regular conversation between two brothers — Aditya asked after their mother's health, enquired how things were at home and discussed what had to be bought. The next time Akash Anand heard about his brother was on social media — as the main accused who allegedly led the Noida workers' protest that turned violent last week. "His pictures were circulating online and people were saying he was absconding. Then the calls from TV channels began pouring in," Akash told. The Noida Police has alleged that Aditya used WhatsApp groups to instigate violence during the protest and booked him on charges of rioting, criminal intimidation, provoking breach of peace and criminal conspiracy, among others. On April 18, a joint team of Noida Police and Uttar Pradesh STF had arrested him from Tiruchirappalli railway station in Tamil Nadu. Anand's lawyers told The Indian Express that they are yet to receive his remand papers seeking custody. They claimed that the police are likely to seek to extend the period of his judicial custody in the next hearing on Tuesday. Aditya, who first left home to attend NIT Jamshepur, was not politically active on the campus, Anand said. But he continued to do social work. Around 2019, while working in a corporate office as a software developer in Gurgaon, Anand became involved with Mazdoor Bigul, which, according to its website, is a Left-wing periodical and organisation focused on informing urban labourers about their rights. "Aditya always looked for an organisation to volunteer wherever he went," said Akash. The family said that while they were aware Aditya was interested in social work, they did not know that he was so deeply involved. "When he spoke about his work, he mostly just told us about how he wished to teach the underprivileged children in Noida. We got to know about his arrest (in Tamil Nadu) only after my mother received a call from his friends," he added.

CBI arrests Reliance executives in multi-crore bank fraud case

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested two senior executives of M/s Reliance Communications, D Vishwanath and Anil Kalya, in connection with an alleged large-scale bank fraud case involving multiple public sector banks. The case was registered by the CBI on a complaint filed by the State Bank of India (SBI) against Reliance Communications Limited, Anil D Ambani, and others, over alleged fraudulent activities linked to credit facilities extended to the company. According to SBI, the fraud has caused a total wrongful loss of around Rs 2,929.05 crore to the bank, while cumulative losses across 17 public sector banks and financial institutions are estimated at Rs 19,694.33 crore. Investigators have alleged that Reliance Communications engaged in circuitous transactions through

Investigators have alleged that Reliance Communications engaged in circuitous transactions through shell entities controlled by company officials. The probe also indicates the use of discounted letters of credit (LCs) for allegedly bogus service-related transactions with group entities, which subsequently devolved and resulted in significant losses to banks.



shell entities controlled by company officials. The probe also indicates the use of discounted letters of credit (LCs) for allegedly bogus service-related transactions with group entities, which subsequently devolved and resulted in significant

losses to banks. The CBI stated that D Vishwanath, who served as Joint President of Reliance Communications, was responsible for overseeing the group's banking operations and played a key role in coordinating with banks for sanctioning and disbursement of credit facilities. Anil Kalya, Vice President of the company, is accused of actively supporting him and assisting in managing corporate finance, banking operations, and fund utilization. Both accused executives are scheduled to be produced before the jurisdictional court. The investigation remains ongoing. The agency has also noted that in recent months it has registered seven cases against the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group based on complaints from various public sector banks and the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), alleging large-scale financial irregularities involving thousands of crores of rupees.

Court raps police, orders probe into Hero Future Energies CEO in harassment case

New Delhi.(Agency)
A Delhi court has rapped the Delhi Police over an alleged improper investigation into allegations of sexual harassment against the CEO and a senior office-bearer of Hero Future Energies Ltd. In an order passed on April 17, which has been accessed by India Today, Mahila Court Magistrate Neetika Kapoor directed the ACP of South Delhi district to monitor the investigation and ensure that the persons named by the complainant are probed. The order also includes directions to interrogate Hero Future Energies CEO Shrivatsan Iyer by the next date of hearing in May. Meanwhile, Hero Future Energies said in a statement that the allegations against its CEO are "baseless and unfortunate." Hero Future Energies is a global renewable energy company and is part of the well-known Hero Group of companies. The case relates to the alleged sexual harassment of a woman employee by Mayur Maheshwari,



who is named as "Global Compliance Officer and Company Secretary," according to his online profile accessed by India Today. After the complaint was sent to the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the company, instead of strict action against the accused, the matter was sought to be dismissed after a written warning to Maheshwari. The complainant then took the issue to the CEO, Shrivatsan Iyer, but was allegedly subjected to further sexual harassment and intimidation. During the hearing, advocate Apoorva Pandey, appearing for the survivor, pointed out that the FIR against CEO Shrivatsan Iyer and Mayur Maheshwari was registered after multiple complaints. Despite the FIR for sexual harassment under Sections 75, 78, and 3(5) of the BNS, the police failed to investigate the CEO and other senior company officials.

Some boundaries should never be crossed: Indian Army ahead of Pahalgam anniversary

A year on, as India mourns the victims, the Army sent a strong message aimed at Pakistan, warning that some boundaries should never be crossed and reminding them what follows if they are.

New Delhi.(Agency)
On April 22, 2025, terrorists backed by Pakistan opened fire on a group of tourists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, killing 25 tourists and a local resident. In the aftermath, India launched Operation Sindoor, targeting Lashkar and Jaish terror camps in Pakistan. A year on, as India remembers and mourns the loss of lives, the Indian Army issued a strong message aimed at Pakistan, saying some boundaries should never be crossed and offering a stark reminder of what happens when they are. A day ahead of the anniversary of the Pahalgam attack, the Indian Army tweeted: "When the boundaries of humanity are crossed, the response is decisive. Justice is served. India stands united." The post was accompanied by a graphic that read: "Some boundaries should never be crossed. India does not forget." Meanwhile, security has been heightened at tourist locations throughout

Kashmir ahead of the first anniversary of the Pahalgam terror attack. All security agencies have been instructed to remain vigilant against



potential subversive activities, particularly around tourist areas, in light of the attack's anniversary. Preparatory meetings to ensure a comprehensive security plan have been conducted at the ground level, with senior officers reviewing these arrangements. The attack, which devastated the Baisaran

meadow in Pahalgam, led to a significant decline in tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and the temporary closure of nearly 50 tourist spots, which have since been reopened following a security audit. Currently, the meadows of Pahalgam are once again bustling with tourists, as the region, often referred to as 'Mini Switzerland,' moves beyond the shadow of last year's attack. New safety measures have been implemented at the Pahalgam resort, including the verification of service providers and vendors, such as ponywallahs, before they interact with tourists. A QR code-based identification system has been introduced for all tourism service providers to enhance tourist safety in Pahalgam. This system allows for easy identification and verification of registered service providers, including pony-ride operators, hawkers, business establishments, and external vendors.

Muslim BJP leader putting tilak on Lenskart staff shows India's short fuse

The incident at a Lenskart store in Mumbai, where a Muslim BJP leader barged in, intimidated the Muslim manager, and applied a tilak on staff, cannot be brushed off as just another episode in the ongoing controversy. It was a stark example of how quickly public anger in India can escalate.



New Delhi.(Agency)
The controversy over the internal grooming policy of eyewear brand Lenskart has escalated quickly. However, in today's "reel age", it shouldn't be a surprise. Controversies are no longer small. What started as a debate quickly turned to outrage. Boycott Lenskart calls followed. But the incident in Mumbai this week, where a Muslim woman BJP leader barged into a store in Mumbai and started applying a tilak on the staff, is a stark example of how quickly public anger in India can escalate. On Monday, the protest became intimidation. Nazia Elahi Khan, who calls herself a BJP minority morcha leader, stormed into a Lenskart store in Mumbai with a camera crew and boldly confronted the store manager, who turned out to be a Muslim, over alleged curbs on bindi, tilak and kalawa (sacred thread worn by Hindus). "Mohsin Khan ho, isliye band karvaya tilak? (You are Mohsin Khan. Is that why you stopped everyone from wearing tilak?)" Nazia is heard asking in a confrontational tone. Now, let us not deny the fact that the controversy around Lenskart's alleged internal "style guide" has struck a nerve. Issues around religious expression - whether it be a tilak or a hijab - are deeply personal in India. Instances of religious insensitivities have often been blown out of proportion. Remember Fab India's 'Jashn-e-Riwaaz' controversy. Or Tanishq's 2020 ad that showed a Muslim family organising a baby shower for their Hindu daughter-in-law. In both cases, the companies had to withdraw their ads amid

Online LPG cylinder bookings increased to 99% amid geo-political crisis: Govt

New Delhi..(Agency)

LPG supply continues to be affected by the prevailing geopolitical situation, the government said on Monday, adding that supply of LPG to domestic households has been prioritised, as online LPG cylinder bookings increased to 99 per cent on industry basis. Delivery authentication code (DAC) based deliveries have increased to around 92 per cent to prevent diversion. DAC is received on the registered mobile number of the consumer. Many of the LPG distributorships were operating on Sunday to ensure delivery of domestic LPG cylinders to households," said Petroleum Ministry. Total commercial LPG allocation has also been increased to about 70 per cent of pre-crisis levels, including 10 per cent reform-linked allocation.

Since March 23, 2026, more than 18.45 lakh 5-kg free trade LPG cylinders have been sold.

"A three-member committee of Executive Directors from IOCL, HPCL and BPCL is coordinating with State authorities and industry bodies to plan commercial LPG distribution in the States/UTs. During the last 5 days, on an average more than 7000 MT/day of commercial LPG has been sold," informed the ministry. Auto LPG sales were observed to have shifted from private to PSU OMCs. To meet the rising demand, the sale of auto LPG by the PSU OMCs has been increased. The major increase has been observed in the States like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Rajasthan and West Bengal, etc. Moreover, since March 2026, more than 4.93 lakh PNG connections have been gasified. Further, more than 5.51 lak customers have been registered for new connections. Till April 19, about 39,200 PNG consumers have surrendered their LPG connections via MYPNGD.in website.

Will Suzlon share rise today as firm signs pact with Korean firm GS E&C

New Delhi..(Agency)

The shares of Suzlon Energy are expected to be in focus on Tuesday after India's leading renewable energy solutions provider signed a pact with South Korean company GS E&C to partner on India's renewable energy business and the optimisation of related solutions. Both the companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) during the India-Korea Business Forum in the presence of Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and his Korean counterpart, Yeo Han-ko.

Both the companies will mutually work on developing renewable energy projects in India and optimising related solutions. A PTI report mentioned that the total project size would be approximately KRW 80 billion and the specific investment amount to be determined. Around 300 direct and indirect jobs are expected to be created. In March 2026, Suzlon Group sealed a deal with PSU giant, Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL). The deal is important one for India's leading renewable energy solutions provider, as it bagged its sixth wind energy project of ~100 MW from GAIL. This also marks Suzlon's fourth PSU order of FY26.

Suzlon share price target

Suzlon share price stood at Rs 52.67 at the time of writing this article on 21 April 2026. Suzlon Energy share price has been on the rise over the past one month. Motilal Oswal has initiated a Buy rating on Suzlon stock with a target price of 66. Stock Market expert, Arun Mantri has predicted the Suzlon stock to reach a target price of 55-57 in the near term. JM Financial has backed Suzlon share price to increase and expects it to touch the level of Rs 64.

Bhive ropes in Milind Soman as Brand Ambassador for fitness workspaces

New Delhi..(Agency)

Bengaluru-headquartered flex space provider Bhive on Tuesday announced the appointment of model, Ironman finisher and actor Milind Soman as its brand ambassador, becoming among the first in the segment to onboard a brand face.

The company said the association aligns with its positioning around fitness-led workspaces and integrated campus environments.

"We have always believed a workspace should support how people live, move, and show up every day. When we sat down to think about who could truly represent that vision, there was only one name. Milind Soman is one of the people who put Ironman on the map in India, long before endurance sports went mainstream," said Shesh Rao Paplikar, founder and chief executive officer, Bhive Workspace.

Unlike conventional coworking spaces, Bhive's campus model integrates large-format workspaces with sports infrastructure, recreational facilities and community ecosystems under one roof.

Its campuses include running and endurance clubs, pickleball courts, cricket and football turfs, and large-scale community events such as the Bhive Premier League. Soman said the partnership reflects shared values around fitness and lifestyle integration. "Bhive's commitment to fitness and health is deeply aligned with my own values that extend into every aspect of life. What drew me to Bhive is that they are not just talking about fitness, they are building fitness, discipline, and consistency into the very infrastructure of work," he said.

The move comes as workplaces globally shift towards hybrid models, integrated wellness and experienced environments, particularly among global capability centres (GCCs) and high-growth enterprises. Bhive said its campus format is positioned to benefit from this demand.

Bhive currently operates more than 28 centres with eight campuses across Bengaluru and Mumbai, covering around 1.8 million square feet of workspace.

Rs 20 electricity bill, nearly Rs 2 lakh lost -- How SBI customer to now get Rs 2.25 lakh as compensation

New Delhi..(Agency)

A State Bank of India (SBI) customer lost Rs 1.99 lakh in a cyber fraud after trying to pay a Rs 20 electricity bill. The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has directed the bank to reimburse the money and pay an additional compensation of Rs 25,000, the Indian Express reported.

Fraud triggered by fake electricity bill The case goes back to July 19, 2022, when Bengaluru resident Prodosh Kumar Banerjee received a fake SMS warning of non-payment of an electricity bill. After calling the asked number, he downloaded a mobile app that appeared to be the official electricity department interface, the Indian Express reported. When Banerjee tried to pay Rs 20, he received alerts showing a debit of Rs 25,000 from his SBI account and another unauthorised transaction of Rs 1.99 lakh without sharing an OTP. Later on, his phone stopped working.

Customer reports fraud to police and SBI

Banerjee immediately approached cybercrime police and filed a case and FIR. On the same day, he informed SBI through its helpline and email. Later, the bank credited the Rs 25,000 and froze the account. However, the bank was unable to reverse the Rs 1.99 lakh debit.

After that, the matter reached NCDRC.

The bench of Presiding Member AVM J Rajendra (Retd) and Member Justice Anoop Kumar Mendiratta was hearing SBI's second appeal against a Karnataka State Consumer Commission order dated May 26, 2025.

NCDRC says bank cannot be absolved of liability

The commission said the bank cannot be absolved of liability towards the loss suffered by the complainant on account of unauthorised electronic transactions because the fraudulent transactions were reported within the stipulated period. It said that despite the fraud being reported

promptly SBI failed to take corrective measures. The commission said that simply downloading a fake app does not

NCDRC directs SBI to pay Rs 1,99,000 and Rs 25,000 compensation

SBI had claimed that there was a delay in reporting and argued that the fraud could not have happened without sharing OTP. However, the commission noted that the fraud was reported within hours and that the bank's own credit of Rs 25,000 weakened its position. It also relied on the RBI's July 6, 2017 circular on zero liability for unauthorised electronic transactions reported within three working days. The commission directed SBI to recredit Rs 1,99,000 and pay Rs 25,000 compensation. The commission further asked the bank to comply within four weeks and said that an 8 per cent annual interest would be charged if no action was taken.



amount to negligence by the consumer. It said that there was no proof that the OTP was shared and the transaction was clearly unauthorised. It further said that the bank failed to prove any wrongdoing on the part of the customer.

Tim Cook net worth: How rich is Apple's outgoing CEO after 15-year run?

New Delhi..(Agency)

After nearly 15 years at the helm, Tim Cook is set to step down as chief executive of Apple, leaving behind a legacy that transformed the company into one of the most valuable businesses in the world. Cook, who will transition to the role of executive chairman, leaves behind a company that has grown into a nearly \$4 trillion giant. Not only has he helped Apple become one of the most valuable companies, but he has also added to his personal wealth with his net worth surging over the years. **TIM COOK'S NET WORTH**

Tim Cook's real-time net worth stands at around \$2.9 billion, according to Forbes's latest available data. Despite leading one of the world's most valuable companies, his wealth is modest compared to founder-CEOs in the tech industry. His wealth is largely tied to Apple stock. Cook owns more than 3 million shares of Apple, though this represents less than a 1% stake in the company. Over the years, he has also sold more than \$1 billion worth of

shares, adding to his personal fortune. Cook's journey at Apple spans nearly three decades.

He joined the company in 1998, after working at IBM for 12 years and a brief stint at Compaq. At Apple, he initially



handled operations and supply chain, an area where he built a strong reputation.

He later became chief operating officer under Steve Jobs, before taking over as CEO in 2011 when Jobs stepped down due to health reasons. That means Cook

has spent:

Nearly 28 years at Apple. Around 15 years as CEO. **APPLE'S GROWTH DURING HISTORIC LEADERSHIP**

Under Cook's leadership, Apple saw unprecedented growth. Market value surged from about \$350 billion to nearly \$4 trillion. Annual revenue grew from \$108 billion in 2011 to over \$416 billion in 2025. Apple expanded to 500+ retail stores globally. Its active device base crossed 2.5 billion units. Cook's strength lay in operations and scaling. He turned Apple into a global powerhouse with one of the most efficient supply chains in the world. Apple has named John Ternus as the next CEO. Ternus, a long-time Apple insider and current hardware chief, will take over on September 1. Cook, now 65, will remain involved as executive chairman, ensuring continuity as the company transitions into a new phase. Unlike founders such as Steve Jobs or other Silicon Valley leaders, Cook did not build Apple from scratch.

SEBI slashes minimum investment in social impact funds to Rs 1,000 -- How will it impact small investors?

New Delhi..(Agency)

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has drastically slashed the minimum investment requirement for individual investors in social impact funds to Rs 1,000 in order to lower the barrier for entry from the Rs 2 lakh level that was in place until now, with the aim of increasing retail participation on the Social Stock Exchange (SSE). The reduced threshold of Rs 1,000 allows small investors to participate in SIFs, which are Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) focusing on social or environmental impacts.

The SEBI amended AIF regulations to enable this change. This would align the minimum application size requirement for subscribing to zero-coupon zero principal instruments under its ICDR (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2018, with the minimum investment value requirement for individual investors in the Social Impact Fund.

The move intends to increase capital flow for Not-for-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and social enterprises listed on the NSE and BSE Social Stock Exchange. The SEBI has amended AIF regulations to enable this change, lowering the barrier for entry from the previous mandatory Rs 2 lakh minimum.

By slashing the requirement, the capital markets regulator aims to make impact investing a "democratised" space, similar to retail equity investing, enabling broader participation in funding social causes. This initiative is part of broader SEBI efforts to strengthen the SSE ecosystem, which also includes easing registration norms for NPOs. The SEBI also said AIFs, which do not retain any funds after the expiry of their fund life, may be permitted to seek an "inoperative" status, subject to compliance with prescribed norms.

"An Alternative Investment Fund may be

tagged as an inoperative fund, in such manner and subject to conditions as may be specified by the Board from time to time," according to a SEBI statement. The move is premised on the principle that while entry into the securities market is subject to specified eligibility criteria, the regulatory framework for exit -- where an entity seeks to discontinue its activities -- should be clear, predictable and operationally efficient.

Earlier, the SEBI extended the registration validity for not-for-profit organisations on the Social Stock Exchange, allowing their enrolment as NPOs for three years without raising funds, and lowered the minimum subscription requirement for issuing zero-coupon zero-principal instruments. The regulator extended the validity period to three years from the existing two, during which NPOs can remain registered on the SSE without raising funds.



"The mother market US cruising at high levels do not reflect any concern of prolonged war. A prolonged war means slower growth and higher inflation for long. Such a scenario will push the market down," said Vijaykumar.

"In brief, uncertainty looms large. During such periods of uncertainty, the only thing investors can do is to remain calm and exercise utmost discipline in investing. Fairly-valued fundamentally sound stocks will be available at reasonable prices during this period of uncertainty and fear. Such stocks can be accumulated in a calibrated manner for the long-term," he added.

Apple shares rise 1% after Tim Cook exit, John Ternus named CEO

The stock closed at \$273.05, up \$2.82 or 1.04%, reflecting a measured but positive reaction from investors to the unexpected leadership change as John Ternus steps up to lead Apple.

New Delhi..(Agency)

Shares of Apple ended higher on Monday after the company announced that Tim Cook will step down as chief executive and be replaced by longtime insider John Ternus. The stock closed at \$273.05, up \$2.82 or 1.04%, reflecting a measured but positive reaction from investors to the unexpected leadership change. The gains suggest that markets are viewing the transition as stable, given that Apple has once again chosen an internal candidate to lead the company. Apple said Ternus, currently its hardware chief, will take over as CEO from September 1, while Cook will move into the role of executive chairman. The decision came as a surprise

to Wall Street, raising immediate questions about whether the new leadership can sustain Apple's growth trajectory. Despite the uncertainty, the stock's rise indicates investor confidence in Apple's succession planning and its ability to maintain continuity at the top.

TERNUS TAKES CHARGE AT A CRUCIAL TIME

Ternus, who joined Apple in 2001, has been a key figure behind the company's core products, including Macs, iPads and AirPods. He has also been credited with helping revive the Mac business and sharpening Apple's product lineup with both premium and more affordable offerings. His appointment comes at a critical moment for Apple, which is facing increasing pressure in artificial intelligence and semiconductor innovation. The company recently lost its position as the world's most valuable firm to chipmaker Nvidia, as investors grow concerned about its pace in AI development.



AI PUSH TO DEFINE NEXT PHASE
One of the biggest challenges for Ternus will be integrating artificial intelligence more deeply into Apple's ecosystem, especially the iPhone, widely regarded as the most successful consumer product

globally. Earlier this year, Apple partnered with Google to bring its Gemini AI model into Siri, signalling a push to strengthen its capabilities in the fast-evolving AI space. Analysts expect Apple under Ternus to accelerate work on new categories such as AI-powered devices, smart wearables and potentially foldable hardware, as it looks to regain momentum

in next-generation technologies. **COOK ERA LEAVES A MASSIVE LEGACY**

Cook's exit marks the end of a 15-year tenure that transformed Apple into a global powerhouse. When he took over from Steve Jobs in 2011, Apple's market value stood at around \$350 billion. Under his leadership, it surged to nearly \$4 trillion. Revenue also saw a sharp rise, growing from \$108 billion in 2011 to over \$416 billion in 2025. Apple expanded its retail footprint to more than 500 stores globally and built an installed base of over 2.5 billion devices. The modest rise in Apple shares suggests that investors are not alarmed by the leadership change, but are taking a wait-and-watch approach.

While the internal transition provides stability, the real test for the stock will depend on how quickly the company can deliver on innovation, particularly in artificial intelligence. For now, the market response indicates cautious optimism as Apple prepares for its next chapter under John Ternus.



Nagpur early risers say yes to healthy Breakfast

City is witnessing a renaissance of sorts with health enthusiasts avoiding the calorie-laden samosas and wadas and making a beeline for the small-time breakfast joints and juice centres, serving healthy breakfast near the gardens, joggers' streets and lake-side trails of Nagpur.

Fruity flavours There are many morning walkers, who prefer to stay away from the snacks early in the morning, so they go in for refreshing fruit shakes and juices. Dr Veena Talavia, who goes for a walk to the VNIT campus, is happy that there are quite a few options available there when it comes to fruit juices. "It has become a routine of sorts for my friends and I, post our morning walk. The number of juice centres has increased manifold in the past one year due to rise in the number of fitness enthusiasts these days. People of all age groups enjoy shakes and juices of their choice. There are many cane juice centres too, which are crowded early in the morning," she said. Vote for Veggies One can also relish a variety of vegetable juices near different jogging lanes. A kiosk at Dattatraya Nagar, which serves aloe vera, bitter gourd and spinach juice, is crowded since six in the morning. Also, the wheat grass juice centres attract many fitness freaks, taking a walk around the Japanese Garden. Entrepreneur Bharat

Goenka confessed that the vegetables juices are the biggest motivation for him to get up early. He said, "The juicewala outside the garden knows my vegetable juice combination, so the moment he sees me coming back from my rounds, he keeps the juice ready. Now I look forward to wake up early and come here for a walk." Medicinal Neera Neera is a popular beverage, which has become an integral part of many fitness freaks' lives. Makeshift neera centres opposite G S College, at Zero Mile and the Gandhi Sagar Lake are favoured by many. This healthy drink has to

be consumed before the sun rises lest it becomes alcoholic. A marketing professional, Anil Dhurve, confessed, "I feel fitter and healthier as I take neera every day; so it has become a habit now. After this traditional drink, I relish the idlis and upma at the roadside South Indian eateries at Sadar and Dharampath." Egg it on For those who swear by the health benefits of eggs, have become the regular patrons of the road-side kiosks specialising in eggy delights. Owner of one such food truck joint at Bajaj Nagar, Nahush Badge, said, "We have set up this joint specially for

the people who come for early morning walk in this area. Exotic dishes like egg tham jhan and egg flip corn are favoured by the health conscious people." City businessman Atul Bangre, who religiously eats eggs post his running stint every day, said, "I get so tired after my exercise that I want to have something instant as well as healthy. So, I eat egg salad along with cheese chilla almost every alternate day. There's another joint at Abhyankar Nagar bus stand, which serves egg sandwiches in the morning hours, which are to die for; so I go there too on a regular basis."



Summer coolers with a Twist

We all love our lemonades and ice creams on a hot summer day. As the mercury soars, Amdavadis are giving cool twists to your summer staples.



Fancy a chilled soup or an ice cream sandwich? In this heat, as your appetite goes for a toss, why not try some summer special meals that will not only ensure you stay cool but also fill you up and have you feeling light and happy.

Say cool:

Be it some breezy rose sherbet, rejuvenating fresh juices, tall glasses of iced falooda or the humble nimbu pani — walk into one of our local cafes and enjoy a volley of unique cool mixes. So you find flavoured drinks like kiwi, strawberry and even plum lemonades and fruity buttermilk concoctions to chilled and wholesome pumpkin, cucumber and bell pepper soups and watermelon gazpachos. Says Reena Kakkar, owner of a cafe, "Lot of chilled fruit and vegetable soups are nutritious meals and perfect for summers." Play with your imagination and see the cool twist.

'Hot' ice:

The long lines at the street side gola walas laari are no joke! You really have to wait

for your turn if you want to savour some tart kala khatta and kachi keri or that deliciously seasonal falsa and dadam golo. And this time, you can enjoy your golas with an amazing twist too! Some city youngsters have come up with unique gola flavours like gajar ka halwa, rosogulla and mango barfi too! Says Payal Vora, owner of a stall selling golas, "Amdavadis are not just foodies but adventurous with their tastes." For a city obsessed with chocolate, these gola walas have some choco-licious varieties too! Says Ekta Soni, another stall owner, "Youngsters love stuff like chocolate cake gola, chocolate mousse and even chocolate pudding golas."

I scream ice cream:

It's the kind of weather when you feel like making a meal out of ice cream and that's probably what pioneered some Amdavadis to fuse your favourite ice cream flavours with your favourite snacks. The regulars at the Manek Chowk khau galli, would know of the popular ice cream sandwich! A luscious chunk of icecream sandwiched between two slices of white bread that is slathered with some delectable fruit jam! And when talking of snacky fare, we even have dosa ice cream! Dosa rolled into a cone and served with a scoop of your favourite ice cream! Says Smith Raval, a regular icecream snacker, "You just need to have an open mind to try combos! I love the idea of a crisp dosa with black currant ice cream! Even the ice cream bhajiyas you get during winters are delicious! I also love eating my French fries dipped in a vanilla softy! It tastes awesome!"

Healthy weekend drink: Cucumber Caipiroska

Even the most popular alcoholic beverage, beer is fattening. Chef Ashis Rout, Executive Chef at the Courtyard by Marriott, Gurgaon shares a recipe with us, which is not only tasty, but also low in calories.

Ingredients:

2 large cucumbers cut into chunks
60 ml vodka
15 ml of lemon juice
6 pieces of lemon chunks

Method:

- A glassfull of crushed ice, topped with lemonade.
- Add the cucumber, lemon chunks and mash them together. Then, add the vodka, lemon juice and fill it up with crushed ice, top it with lemonade.



Go bananas with so many options

Banana prices have hit a 10 year-low and it's time to satiate your cravings for this fruit, which not only tastes yummy, but is packed with the goodness of vitamin B6, vitamin C, potassium, dietary fibre, potassium, biotin and copper.

The best thing about this fruit is it can be eaten straight off the rack, or be used in scrumptious smoothies, desserts, halwa, fudge, fritters, cutlets, bonda, am payasa, curry and what not. So what are you waiting for? Go grab a few dozens while the prices are in control. Bangalore Times lists some popular varieties available in the city and what you can do with them...

Variety name: YELAKKI

Can be used for: HALWA FUDGE

1 Kg Rs 35

Recipe for halwa: Take three fully ripe bananas and mash them till they are smooth.

Fry some dry

fruits in ghee and keep aside. In a pan, add bananas and water and keep stirring on a low flame. Add sugar and cook till the paste is thick. Now add ghee, cardamom powder and fried dried fruits. Once the mixture is lumpy transfer it into a bowl and let it cool.

Variety name: ROBUSTA

Can be used for: BURFI FRITTERS SHAKE BONDA CUTLET

1 Kg Rs 24

Recipe for bonda: Mash three bananas with a fork. Mix the mash, one cup flour, approximately half cup sugar and two pinches of soda powder. Now, heat oil in a wok on medium flame. Drop in the banana mixture spoon by spoon, without overcrowding the vessel. Fry it till brown. Serve when hot.

Variety name: RED

Can be used for: SMOOTHIES, DESSERT, CHIPS CHICKEN

1 Kg Rs 75

Recipe for smoothie: Mix one cup of almond milk, one red banana and half cup of cooked oats in a blender. Your smoothie is ready! Garnish with almond pieces.



NEWS BOX

How Hardik Pandya's mid-innings charge-up sparked Tilak Varma's comeback vs GT



Mumbai. (Agency)

Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya's mid-innings intervention proved to be the turning point as Tilak Varma scripted a stunning comeback for the side against Gujarat Titans in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 clash on April 20. A moment that looked routine during the drinks break ended up changing the course of the match.

The moment gained even more attention after a video of the exchange went viral on social media, showing an animated Pandya having a word with Tilak in the middle. At that point, MI were under pressure and Tilak was struggling at 19 off 22 balls, with wickets falling around him. The likes of Danish Malewar, Quinton de Kock and Suryakumar Yadav had already departed, while a set Naman Dhir also failed to convert his start. What followed was a complete shift. From a cautious 19 off 22, Tilak exploded, smashing 82 runs off his next 23 deliveries. The innings transformed from a rebuilding effort into a statement knock, as he brought up his maiden IPL hundred and powered MI to a competitive 199 on what was a tricky Ahmedabad surface. Speaking after the match, Pandya revealed the essence of that conversation, emphasising the need for Tilak to trust his natural game.

The message I think, I realised that the kind of talent Tilak has, he really doesn't have to worry. So my message to him was just watch the ball and hit the ball. Was about time he came out and delivered. It was much needed for Tilak, the group and Mumbai Indians," Pandya said at the post-match presentation. The impact of that knock went beyond just the scoreboard. It lifted a side that had been struggling for momentum and injected belief into a campaign that was starting to drift.

HOW TILAK'S TON LIFTED MI

Tilak's unbeaten 101 off 45 balls came at a crucial juncture, when MI were placed at 103 for 4 after 14 overs. What followed was a calculated acceleration that completely altered the tempo of the innings, turning a modest total into a daunting one.

IPL Play of the Day: Relief for Jasprit Bumrah after MI figure out right way to use cheat code

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

The Mumbai Indians in Ahmedabad is usually a horror story, but this time, the script flipped on the Gujarat Titans. And at the heart of it was a man who, until recently, looked like he was in a two-horse race with Ajinkya Rahane for the 'Most Outstandingly Aureless Captaincy' award. Jasprit Bumrah hadn't taken the new ball in the IPL since 2022. The moment he finally did, he needed just one delivery to end a five-innings wicket drought. We keep calling Bumrah the "X-factor," but this season, he has often been treated more like a luxury kept in reserve than a weapon used upfront. "It's quite fascinating. I see a lot of people asking why Jassi isn't bowled up front, but he's only bowled the first over seven or eight times in his career," Hardik Pandya said after the game. "So, it's not a Hardik Pandya problem; it's an 'everybody'



problem. Bumrah is so special that you naturally want to save him for later." FROM DEJECTION TO DOMINANCE Only days ago, there was footage doing the rounds of a frustrated Jasprit Bumrah staring into the distance from the boundary rope. Fast forward to Ahmedabad, and that mood flipped the moment he was handed the new ball against a Gujarat Titans top order most bowlers would rather avoid.

Charging in against Sai Sudharsan, Bumrah delivered one of those teasing full balls that shape away just enough. Sudharsan, caught in between, pushed at it with heavy feet and only managed a toe-ended slice.

The result? A straightforward catch for debutant Krish Bhagat inside the circle. One ball, one wicket, drought ended, mood reset.

Novak Djokovic eyes India trip, wants to meet Virat Kohli in tennis-cricket crossover

Novak Djokovic eyes India visit, thanks fans for support and hopes to meet Virat Kohli for a tennis-cricket crossover, saying the India trip has been on his mind for the past few years.

Madrid. (Agency)

Novak Djokovic has expressed his desire to visit India in the near future, saying he feels a strong connection with fans in the country and hopes to spend time there soon.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion thanked Indian supporters for their backing over the years, highlighting their presence both at tournaments and across the world. "My message is always love, respect, appreciation, first of all, for all the support over the years that I've personally been receiving from all the Indian tennis fans and Indian sports fans around the world," Djokovic told Times Now in an interview on



the sidelines of the Laureus Sports Awards in Madrid. He added that he has long felt a 'calling' to visit India and is keen to engage with fans more closely. "My message would also be: see you very soon in India, because I need to go to India. I've been feeling a calling to come for the last couple of years," he said, adding that he hopes to organise an event or even play a match during the visit.

DJOKOVIC EYES INDIA VISIT

Djokovic said he is hopeful of making the trip



in the near future, although he acknowledged the uncertainties at this stage of his career. "I really hope that I'll be able to come to India and do an event, play a match or whatever it is. I really wish for that because I feel very close to Indian people," he said. The Serbian great added that while timelines for his India visit remain uncertain, the intention to travel is firm, with scheduling likely to depend on his playing commitments. Djokovic also looked ahead to the Olympic cycle,

acknowledging the challenges at this stage of his career. "I am looking forward to it. I think it's a very long way, two years, for me at this stage of my career and life, but you never know," he said. He added that representing Serbia at the Olympics remains a key goal going forward.

THE VIRAT KOHLI CONNECTION

Djokovic also spoke about his relationship with Virat Kohli, revealing that the former India captain played a role in introducing him to cricket. "Yes, Virat is a friend and someone I, of course, respect and admire. He is actually, to be honest, the reason why I started following cricket," he said.

He added that the two have stayed in touch and could share a light-hearted sporting moment if his visit materialises. "When I come to India, hopefully he can join, and then we could do a little bit of tennis, a little bit of cricket, and have fun and just spread positive, good vibes with people and celebrate sport," Djokovic said. The prospect of a crossover between tennis and cricket involving two of the biggest names in global sport has already generated excitement among fans.

Carlos Alcaraz, Aryna Sabalenka headline Laureus Awards in Madrid as PSG win big

Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka led the winners at the Laureus Awards 2026 in Madrid, while PSG clinched Team of the Year. India women's cricket team, despite a historic World Cup win, missed out on the top honour.

Manchester. (Agency)

The Laureus World Sports Awards lit up Madrid on Monday as the biggest names in global sport gathered for a star-studded ceremony celebrating the finest achievements of the past year. The red carpet event brought together champions, legends and rising stars at one of sport's most prestigious honours nights.

Tennis players led the winners, with world No.1s Carlos Alcaraz and Aryna Sabalenka named Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Year respectively, while Paris Saint-Germain were crowned Team of the Year after a dominant season. In Formula One, Lando Norris secured the Breakthrough of the Year award. The ceremony was hosted for the first time by two athletes, Novak Djokovic and Eileen Gu, and also featured a series of special honours. Nadia Comaneci received a lifetime recognition, while Lamine Yamal and Toni Kroos were among those

recognised for their impact on the sport. Held in the Spanish capital during a busy sporting week, the awards once again had winners across multiple disciplines. Voted by



members of the Laureus World Sports Academy, the honours recognise both elite performance and lasting influence on sport.

FUTBOL MAS WINS SPORT FOR GOOD Futbol Mas received the Laureus Sport for Good Award in recognition of its work supporting young people across Latin

America, Africa and Europe. The organisation uses football as a tool to promote resilience, inclusion and community leadership.

Its programmes are part of a wider network of more than 300 Laureus-supported initiatives worldwide. The award highlights the role of sport in driving social change and creating opportunities for at-risk communities.

COMANECI RECEIVES LIFETIME HONOUR

Nadia Comaneci was awarded the Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award, 50 years after becoming the first gymnast to score a perfect 10 at the Olympic Games. She won three gold medals in 1976 and added two more in 1980, redefining the sport. A founding member of the Laureus World Sports Academy, she has also played a key role in promoting sport as a tool for social change. Her influence continues to be felt across generations of athletes.

India may rest top stars for Afghanistan Test, final call with management

BEIJING. (Agency)

The Indian cricket team faces a packed international calendar after the IPL 2026 concludes on May 31, and the management will monitor workloads before finalising squads for the subsequent assignments. With only a few days separating the IPL final and the one-off Test against Afghanistan (June 6-10), top players might be rested for the red ball contest and play the ODI series that follows instead.

TimesofIndia.com has learnt that the management will make the final decision, but the idea is under discussion, and selectors will monitor how far the regular Test players advance in the IPL. The discussions around it will remain fluid since no World Test Championship points are on offer and there is a strong possibility that star players - including captain Shubman Gill, Jasprit Bumrah and other regulars in

both ODIs and Tests — will sit out. The situation could well change if, for example, the Gujarat Titans and Mumbai Indians are not in playoff contention. With all options on the table, a final call is expected when the selectors finalise the



squad for the Test and three ODIs.

"There is not much gap between the IPL final and the Afghanistan Test, so the selectors and management will be wary of not

burning out the players, as there are three ODIs, then the white-ball series in England.

"There are no WTC points in the Afghanistan Test, and the stakeholders need to carefully manage the workload because some of the players would be on the road for close to two months and have a lot of cricket in the remainder of the year." ODIs and WTC are priority right now, and you want your best players to be fit, fresh and available for the four Tests - two vs Sri Lanka and two vs New Zealand - and the many ODIs. Why even risk a Bumrah for this Test?" said a source tracking developments.

It is further understood that the selectors have been tracking fast bowlers and spinners in the domestic circuit; maiden call-ups could be on the cards for the fixture in Mullanpur starting June 6. Gurnoor Brar has impressed the men who matter, and so has left-arm spinner Manav Suthar.

Aone by the boundary ropes, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi in tears after RR's loss to KKR

IPL 2026: Ashwani Kumar's stunning 4-24 on his season debut dismantled the Gujarat Titans' middle order, lifting Mumbai Indians from the bottom of the table. Combined with Tilak Varma's century, this clinical performance snapped MI's losing streak and secured their first-ever win in Ahmedabad.

Mumbai. (Agency)

When you think of Mumbai Indians' bowling, names like Jasprit Bumrah usually dominate the conversation. Ashwani Kumar might have been the last name on the fans' lips, and perhaps even Hardik Pandya's, considering the left-arm pacer was benched for the first five matches of the season. However, after MI plummeted to the bottom of the table with four losses, Ashwani's inclusion proved to be a crucial factor in the context of the

game. Making his season debut at the Narendra Modi Stadium, a venue that had become a bogey ground for Mumbai, Ashwani dismantled the Gujarat Titans with a stunning 4-24. His performance ensured that Mumbai maintained their near-flawless record of defending 200-plus targets, now winning 19 out of 20 such instances. Despite the high-pressure environment of a must-win game, Ashwani remained unfazed by the unpredictable Ahmedabad surface.

"It's a black-soil pitch, so we expected the ball to stay low. From the first delivery, we noticed some uneven movement," Ashwani noted during the post-match press conference. Rather than sticking to a rigid pre-game script, Ashwani emphasised the importance of real-time adaptation. "We had studied the batters beforehand, but once we got onto the field, we realised we had to adapt to what the pitch demanded. Success came from adjusting to the conditions."

Ashwani's haul was no fluke; he systematically removed GT's dangerous

middle order, including Shubman Gill, Rahul Tewatia, Shahrukh Khan, and Rashid Khan. His strategy relied heavily on aggressive



lengths and constant communication with his captain. "Once I went in there, I saw that bowling hard lengths and back-of-a-length deliveries was working, so I kept backing that plan," Ashwani explained. When asked about his frequent use of the short ball, he

quietly building in the background. Because this isn't just another bilateral series, it could very well shape what comes next. With the Los Angeles Olympics and the 2028 T20 World Cup on the horizon, every innings starts to carry a bit more weight. Which brings us to the man waiting in the shadows. Shreyas Iyer. In form, in control, and increasingly ticking the leadership boxes in the shorter format. If Suryakumar finds his rhythm again, the script stays intact. If not, India already have a ready-made alternative lined up.

CAPTAIN SHREYAS KEEPS RISING

Shreyas Iyer hasn't exactly shouted for attention. He's just quietly stacked results. Think about it. Took Delhi Capitals to their first-ever IPL final in 2020. Then went one better with Kolkata Knight Riders, lifting the title in 2024. Followed that up by dragging Punjab Kings to the 2025 final.



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Sanya Malhotra

Reveals Why She Felt 'Worried' She Won't Get Work: 'Mujhe Panic Attack Aata Tha'

This year, Sanya Malhotra completes ten years of being an actor. It was in 2016 that she marked her debut with Aamir Khan's Dangal, where she played wrestler, Babita Kumari. She may have had a shorter screen time in the film but Sanya went on to carve a niche for herself with critically acclaimed performances in both mid-budget as well commercially big films.

An outsider from Delhi, Sanya navigated the ways of showbiz on her own terms. But what has been the toughest part of her journey was learning to say no to patterns that didn't sit well with her. "I learnt how to say no over time. Now, I say it quite easily. But it took me some time. Na bolne se pehle mujhe panic attack aa jaata tha," she tells News18 exclusively.

What further petrified her was the fear of less work offers as a consequence. "I used to wonder, how do I say no? I would be worried that if I do that, I may not get work after that. And even if I somehow did it, I would carry this guilt for months on end. Apart from me not getting more opportunities, mujhe yeh darr lagta tha ki unko bura lag gaya hoga," says Sanya.

Polite but stern is her mantra now. "You need to understand this that a film is a director's medium. But you, as an actor, can definitely give your suggestions. Sometimes, they listen to you and sometimes, they don't. But I learnt it the hard way that if I don't say no, it would mean that I'm only living their dream and doing things their way instead of living my own life," she remarks.

The actor, who was recently seen in Toaster, further adds, "I believe that there's a way to put your point across. If you do it in the right way, then there's no problem. If it's about a stunt, then you'll really have to put your foot down. You can't take these things so lightly."

Sanya's Toaster co-actor Archana Puran Singh recalls an episode from the sets that stayed back with her. "I learnt this facet from Sanya while working with her on the sets of Toaster. She had put her foot down and said that she can't give a certain shot by riding a scooter. I tried pushing her but then I came to know that she had had a bad experience while riding a scooter earlier. She had met with an accident," Archana tells us.

Further praising the Mrs and Kathal actor, she adds, "Since she wasn't confident, she said no because she didn't want to give a bad shot. That's when a body double was brought in. I remember speaking to her at that time and lauded her for saying no with so much confidence and self-assurance and that's when she told me that she has learnt this the hard way."



'Nobody's Offering Me Roles': Archana Puran Singh Regrets Turning Down Films For Kapil Sharma Show



After grabbing eyeballs with her role as a protagonist in Jalwa (1987) opposite Naseeruddin Shah, Archana Puran Singh went on to be relegated to supporting roles. Sometimes, she appeared in item songs in films like Baaz and Judge Mujrim, and at other times, her comic roles (in Insan, Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, De Dana Dan and Bol Bachchan) led to her getting typecast.

In 2019, her entry as a judge in The Kapil Sharma Show by replacing Navjot Singh Sidhu may have led to a popularity resurgence, but according to Archana, that also meant lack of film offers. Speaking exclusively to News18, she says, "I haven't been able to work in films for all these years. This one time, I got a call. They required me to travel to Scotland for a shoot for 25 days."

"But it wasn't possible for me to leave the shoot of Kapil's show and film elsewhere. Earlier, when the show used to be aired on TV, we would film a hundred episodes a year. That's the reason I didn't have time to anything else. I ended up saying no to a lot of films. And since I've said no so many times, people stopped approaching me for acting assignments," she adds.

But with The Great Indian Kapil Show now streaming on Netflix, Archana's hopeful she'll get a new lease of life. "Now we shoot for it on a season-to-season basis. As a result, I don't have the commitment to be in India for the whole year. I can now travel and shoot for other projects. This is why I'm very happy that the show now runs on Netflix," Archana states.

On a related note, she was recently seen in a comic but pivotal role in Toaster. It marks her second collaboration with Rajkumar Rao, who also marked his debut as a producer with the film. In Archana's words, Toaster would've never happened if not for Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video, where they had shared screen space for the first time. "Rajkumar saw my work in Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video. That was the first that he and I was in a relationship of being colleagues. And that's how Toaster happened. If didn't work with him in that film, I may not have been a part of Toaster. And much like how that film gave way to Toaster, I'm hoping that Toaster gives way to at least two more films for me," she says.

Jawan Director Atlee Welcomes Baby Girl With Wife Priya: 'Feeling Blessed'



Congratulations are in order for filmmaker Atlee and his wife, producer-actor Priya Atlee, who have shared that their family has grown. After welcoming their son Meer in January 2023, the couple announced on Instagram that they have now welcomed a baby girl on April 20. Taking to Instagram, Atlee and Priya dropped the announcement post. It reads, "YAY! I'VE GOT A BABY SISTER!" with an arrow pointing to a sketch "Big Brother Meer". He is seen sitting on a toy car, smiling and looking excited - clearly celebrating becoming an older sibling!

In January 2026, the couple took to Instagram to reveal they're expecting a second baby, and the announcement is filled with love, family and plenty of furry friends. In a beautifully styled announcement post, Priya shared a series of photos that radiated their joy.

One photo showed Priya cradling her baby bump in a relaxed mendhi-green dress while leaning into Atlee's warm smile. In another frame, their little boy Meer sat playfully alongside, adding a sweet "big brother" energy to the photos. In another photo, the pets are seen lounging around the shoot. Priya even signed off her note with all their names together. In the caption Priya wrote, "Our home is about to get even cozier with the addition of our newest member! Yes! We are pregnant again! Need all your blessings, love and prayers With love Atlee, Priya, Meer, Becky, Yuki, chocki, Coffee and Goofy"

The couple had first announced Priya's pregnancy in December 2022, eight years after their marriage, and welcomed their son Meer on January 31, 2023.

Atlee married Priya in 2014 after dating for several years. Their wedding was an intimate ceremony attended by close friends and family from the film industry. Since then, Priya has remained closely involved in Atlee's journey, supporting his work and standing by him as he rose to become one of the most successful directors in South cinema.

Shraddha Kapoor

To Star Opposite Aamir Khan In Ashneer Grover's Biopic? Deets Inside

It was in 2025 when Aamir Khan made his first on-screen appearance with his film Sitaare Zameen Par, and a recent update suggested that the actor is now looking forward to headlining Ashneer Grover's biopic. With Aamir reportedly on board, reports around the female lead of the film have started coming in. As per a recent update, Shraddha Kapoor will be starring opposite Aamir Khan as the lead.

As per Mid-Day, Shraddha Kapoor playing the lead in Ashneer Grover's biopic was finalised quite early. "It was decided early on that Shraddha would play the female lead. She has seen the screenplay develop up close," an insider shared with the portal.

Meanwhile, a source informed Bollywood Hungama about Aamir coming on board. The source shared, "Aamir has read it and loved it; he is doing this film. It's in the pre-production stage. It's also very relatable as Ashneer is an extremely popular figure with today's audience." The movie will reportedly be directed by Shraddha Kapoor's rumoured beau and the writer of Pyaar Ka Punchnama, Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie, and Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar, who will be directing and producing this film. However, there's no official confirmation on the same. Aamir is yet to announce the project.

More about Ashneer Grover

Ashneer Grover, who gained widespread popularity as a Shark on the first season of Shark Tank India, already has an autobiography. The book is titled

Doglapan: The Hard Truth about Life and Start-Ups. In the past, he had himself confirmed that the movie about him is in the works. His tweet read, "'Doglapan' - the autobiography continues to deliver strong numbers even after 15 months. While I have even more intense stories (stranger than fiction) for Doglapan 2.0, we are busy working on the MOVIE for now. Stay tuned."

About Aamir and Shraddha's work front

Aamir is reportedly working on a biopic on Dadasaheb Phalke and has reunited with Rajkumar Hirani for the project. Reports further suggest that shooting has already begun, putting to rest rumours about the film being on hold. Meanwhile, as per reports, Shraddha Kapoor will next be seen in Eetha, a biopic inspired by the life of Maharashtra's celebrated Tamasha performer Vithabai Narayangaonkar. After this, she will begin shooting for Naagin. As per Mid-Day, Shraddha will finish Eetha shooting in March this year, and in April, she will begin shooting for Naagin.



NEWS BOX

India, UN officials discuss peacekeeping cooperation

VIENNA. (Agency)
Senior officials from India and the United Nations met in New York on Tuesday to discuss issues related to UN peacekeeping, the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations said. The meeting was held between Sibi George, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations. Gorge and Khiari held a "productive discussion on various topics, with particular focus on UN peacekeeping", the mission said in a social media post. According to the UN India website, India is one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping missions. More than 275,000 Indian troops have served under the UN flag since 1948, with around 5,900 troops currently deployed in 12 UN Missions.

Tim Cook to exit as Apple CEO after 15 years, John Ternus to take over

TEHRAN. (Agency)
Apple CEO Tim Cook is stepping down from the job that he inherited from the late Steve Jobs, ending a 15-year reign that saw the company's market value soar by more than \$3.6 trillion during an iPhone-fueled era of prosperity.
Cook, 65, will turn the CEO duties over to Apple's head of hardware engineering, John Ternus, on Sept. 1 while remaining involved with the Cupertino, California, company as executive chairman. That's similar to the transitions made by Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Netflix's Reed Hastings after they ended their highly successful tenures as CEO.
To allow Cook to assume his new job, Arthur Levinson will relinquish his role as Apple's non-executive chairman while remaining on its board of directors.
"It has been the greatest privilege of my life to be the CEO of Apple and to have been trusted to lead such an extraordinary company," Cook said in a statement. "I love Apple with all of my being, and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with a team of such ingenious, innovative, creative, and deeply caring people." Ternus, 50, has been with Apple for the past quarter century, including the past five years overseeing the engineering underlying the iPhone, iPad and Mac — a role that made him a prime candidate to succeed Cook. "I am profoundly grateful for this opportunity to carry Apple's mission forward," Ternus said in a statement.
Cook and Ternus may have more to say about the changing of the guard on April 30 when Apple is scheduled to release its financial results for the first three months of the year. The transition to a new CEO comes at a pivotal time for Apple. Artificial intelligence has unleashed the most upheaval within the industry since Jobs unveiled the first iPhone in 2007. Apple has gotten off to a rough start in AI after stumbling in its efforts to deliver new features built on the technology, as promised nearly two years ago.
Earlier this year, Apple finally turned to Google — an early leader in the AI race — for help making the iPhone's virtual assistant Siri into a more conversational and versatile helper.

Chemicals For Missiles From China On Seized Iran Ship? Nikki Haley's Big Claim

Washington. (Agency)
Nikki Haley, the Indian-origin member of US President Donald Trump's Republican Party, has claimed that the first Iranian ship seized by the American Navy in the Strait of Hormuz, after the US blockade was imposed, was travelling from China and was carrying chemical shipments for missiles.
"The ship the US seized in the Strait of Hormuz this weekend was headed from China to Iran and is linked to chemical shipments for missiles. It refused repeated orders to stop," Haley said in a post on X.
She also claimed that the prospect of China helping Iranians in the war is a "reality that can no longer be ignored." "Another reminder that China is helping prop up Iran's regime — a reality that can't be ignored," Haley added. US forces seized the Iranian-flagged container ship *Touska*. The small container ship,



which is part of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) group that has been hit with US sanctions, was boarded on Sunday off the coast of Iran's Chabahar port in the Gulf of Oman, according to ship-tracking data on the Marine Traffic platform.
Iran's military said the ship had been travelling from China and accused the US of "armed piracy". Tehran also said it would not join the US in Islamabad for the second round of talks until the blockade is lifted. Iranians said they were ready to confront US forces over the "blatant aggression" but were constrained by the presence of crew members' families on board. Meanwhile, US security sources told news agency Reuters that their initial assessments were that the vessel was likely to be carrying dual-use items after a voyage from Asia. The vessel had previously transported items deemed as dual-use, one of the sources said. The sources did not go into details on the items. However, US Central Command (CENTCOM) has listed metals, pipes and electronic components among other goods that could have a military as well as an industrial use and could be captured

Gunman shoots several tourists at historic pyramids in Mexico, killing a Canadian

The shooter later died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, authorities said, and security officials found a gun, a knife and ammunition.

MEXICO CITY. (Agency)
An armed man standing atop one of the historic Teotihuacán pyramids opened fire on tourists Monday, killing one Canadian and leaving at least 13 people injured at the archaeological site north of Mexico's capital, authorities said. The shooter later died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, authorities said, and security officials found a gun, a knife and ammunition.
The local government said seven people were wounded by gunshots. How the other people were injured was not disclosed, but those taken to hospitals for treatment were

six Americans, three Colombians, one Russian, two Brazilians and one Canadian, the local government said. Video and photos published by local media showed a man standing with a gun on top of a pyramid while people ducked for cover. A number of gunshots rang out in the videos. The shooting took place shortly after 11:30 am when dozens of tourists were at the top of the Pyramid of the Moon. A man standing on the structure's platform began firing upward, according to a tour guide who was at the scene and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for safety reasons.
"Some people, because they were scared ... threw themselves face down on the ground, and the rest of us started to go down," the guide said, recounting how the shooter, upon seeing the tourists descending the pyramid's steps, began firing. Another group of visitors lay motionless on the pyramid's platform to avoid being targeted by the shooter, who authorities have not yet identified. Brenda Lee, of Vancouver,



British Columbia, said she was waiting to buy a souvenir when she and others in her group thought they heard firecrackers. "Before we knew it, someone said, 'No, that's gunfire, run,' and we saw people coming off the top," she told CTV News, one of Canada's national television broadcasters. "There were thousands of people there and there were a lot of gunshots that just kept coming," Lee said. The scene quickly turned chaotic as people tried to escape, Lee said.
"And then a fellow jumped," she said. "It was someone trying to get away, and he dropped to the next level, but he fell on his

back, and it was ... it just was awful." In past years, staff at the archaeological site carried out security scans before people entered the area but have since stopped.
Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum wrote on social media that the shooting would be investigated and that she was in touch with the Canadian Embassy.
"What happened today in Teotihuacán deeply pains us. I express my most sincere solidarity with the affected individuals and their families," she wrote. Anita Anand, Canada's foreign affairs minister, said on X that as a "result of a horrific act of gun violence, a Canadian was killed and another wounded in Teotihuacán" and that her "thoughts are with their family and loved ones." The Teotihuacán pyramids are a series of massive structures on the outskirts of Mexico City built by three different ancient civilizations. As one of Mexico's most important touristic destinations, the site drew more than 1.8 million international visitors last year, according to government figures.

Trump says recovering Iran uranium 'will be a long and difficult process'

The US leader regularly uses the term "nuclear dust" to refer to Iran's stock of enriched uranium, which the United States accuses Iran of hoarding in order to make an atomic bomb.

WASHINGTON. (Agency)
US President Donald Trump said late Monday the United States obtaining uranium from Iran would be "long" and "difficult" in the aftermath of last year's US strikes on Tehran's nuclear sites. "Operation Midnight Hammer was a complete and total obliteration of the Nuclear Dust sites in Iran," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform, adding: "Therefore, digging



it out will be a long and difficult process." The US leader regularly uses the term "nuclear dust" to refer to Iran's stock of enriched uranium, which the United States accuses Iran of hoarding in order to make an atomic bomb. But he has also sometimes used it to refer to material left from US strikes on Iran's

nuclear facilities in June last year. The 79-year-old president maintains Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium would ultimately be transferred to US territory, despite Iran's foreign ministry denying any such plans.
The United States and Israel launched joint strikes on Iran on February 28 to remove what Israel described as "the existential threat" posed by the Islamic republic's nuclear program.
Israeli officials say Tehran had stepped up efforts to acquire an atomic weapon since the end of the 12-day war in last June, which was launched by Israel and included US bombings of three nuclear facilities, including an enrichment plant.

Japan approves scrapping a ban on lethal weapons exports in a change of its postwar pacifist policy

JERUSALEM. (Agency)
Japan on Tuesday endorsed scrapping a ban on lethal weapons exports, a major change of its postwar pacifist policy as the country seeks to build up its arms industry and deepen cooperation with defense partners. The approval by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's Cabinet of the new guideline clears a final set of hurdles for Japan's postwar arms sales. The move comes as the country accelerates its military buildup in the face of growing security challenges in the region.
While the change of policy met with China's criticism, it has been largely welcomed by Japan's defense partners like Australia and attracted interests from Southeast Asia and Europe.
Opponents say the change violates Japan's pacifist constitution and will increase global tensions and threaten the safety of the Japanese people.
The new policy would "ensure safety for Japan and further contribute to the peace and stability in the region and the international society as the security environment around our country

rapidly changes," Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara told reporters.
"The government will strategically promote defense equipment transfer to create a security environment that is desirable for Japan and to build up the industrial base that can support fighting resilience." Japan had long prohibited most arms exports under its post-World War II pacifist constitution. It has made recent changes due to rising global and regional tensions, but exports were limited to five areas: rescue, transport, alert, surveillance and minesweeping.
The new guideline scraps those limits and allows the export of equipment such as fighter jets, missiles and destroyers, a major change from existing exports such as flak jackets, gas masks and civilian-use vehicles Japan has sent to Ukraine and intelligence radar sold to the Philippines. The export, for now, will be limited to 17 countries that have signed defense equipment and technology transfer agreements with

Japan. They also must be approved by the National Security Council and the government will monitor how the weapons are managed afterward.
In principle, Japan still will not export lethal weapons to countries at war.
In 2014, Japan began to export some non-lethal military supplies, and in December 2023 it approved a change that would allow sales of dozens of lethal weapons and components that it manufactures under licenses from other countries back to the licensors such as the United States.
An earlier easing in 2023 was to clear the way for Japan to sell U.S.-designed Patriot missiles to America to make up for munitions that Washington has sent to Ukraine. The revision was also to pave the way for Japan to jointly develop a next generation fighter jet with Britain and Italy. In its biggest deal ever, Japan formalized a deal last week to deliver the first three of a \$6.5 billion fleet of Japanese-designed frigates for the Australian navy and jointly build eight others in that country.

Mexican President Sheinbaum demands explanation after US officials die after operation in Chihuahua

YANGON. (Agency)
Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said Monday she would demand explanations over what US and Mexican officials were doing in northern Chihuahua when they died in an accident over the weekend, noting that any joint collaborations between the local government and the US without federal permission would be a violation of Mexican law. The crash, following an operation to destroy a clandestine drug lab in a rural area, has reignited a debate over the extent of U.S. involvement in Mexican security operations. Speculation was only fueled by Sheinbaum, local officials and the U.S. Embassy appearing to contradict each other and at times themselves, and offering sparse details about the U.S. officials who died. "It was not an operation that the security cabinet was aware of," Sheinbaum told journalists. "We were not informed; it was a decision by the Chihuahua government." It comes at a key moment for the relationship between the two neighboring nations as Mexico faces escalating pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump crack down on cartels and Sheinbaum underscores Mexico's sovereignty. Sheinbaum said her government would investigate the incident to ensure no laws were broken after the deaths on Sunday, adding that state governments must have authorization from Mexico's federal government to collaborate with U.S. and other foreign entities "as established by the Constitution." A resurfaced debate Sheinbaum said her government would provide more information when it has more details, but insisted Monday that "there are no joint operations on land or in the air" in Mexico. She said there is only sharing of information between her government and the U.S., carried out within a "well-established" legal framework. While U.S. officials' training of Mexican security forces is common, their presence on Mexican territory has been the subject of ongoing debate, which has intensified after Trump's military actions in Venezuela and Iran. Trump has repeatedly offered to take action on Mexican cartels, intervention which Sheinbaum has said was "unnecessary." The Trump administration has already launched joint military operations in Ecuador, a country that has been roiled by violence by drug gangs in recent years. Last year, Sheinbaum said the U.S. had conducted surveillance drone flights at Mexico's request after a series of conflicting public statements on the issue, also sparking alarm among observers. The most recent controversy surfaced in January over the detention in Mexico of former Canadian athlete Ryan Wedding, one of the United States' most wanted fugitives.

US, Iran warn ready for war as talks in limbo

Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned of targeting any vessel attempting to pass through the Strait of Hormuz without permission.

TEHRAN. (Agency)
The United States and Iran each warned they were ready for war as the clock ticked down Tuesday on a ceasefire, with uncertainty on talks that President Donald Trump had announced would resume in Pakistan.
The White House said Vice President JD Vance was ready to fly back to the Pakistani capital Islamabad, which was preparing for a second round of talks on ending the war that has engulfed the Middle East and shaken global markets. But Tehran's cleric-run government declined to confirm that it would participate and accused the United States of violating the truce through its blockade of Iranian ports and seizure of a ship. "By imposing a blockade and violating the ceasefire, Trump wants to turn this negotiating table into a surrender table or justify renewed hostilities, as he sees fit," said Iran's powerful parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who headed the delegations to talks two weeks ago in Pakistan. "We do not accept negotiations under the shadow of threats, and in the last two weeks we have been preparing to show new cards on the battlefield," he wrote on

X. Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned of targeting any vessel attempting to pass through the Strait of Hormuz without permission. Trump has similarly accused Tehran of violating the truce by harassing vessels in the key strait, the transit passage for about a fifth of the world's oil that Iran had all but shut in retaliation for the war launched February 28 by the United States and Israel. The channel in peacetime sees around 120 daily transits, according to Lloyd's List, a shipping industry intelligence site. On Tuesday, the site reported that more than 20 Iranian so-called "shadow vessels", had transited past the US blockade. In one of a series of posts on his Truth Social platform, Trump insisted that the blockade was "absolutely destroying" Iran and said it will not end "until there is a 'DEAL,'" in which the United States is pressing for Iranian concessions on its contested nuclear programme. Agreed to attend talks Trump told PBS News that Iran was "supposed to be there" at the talks in Pakistan. "We agreed to be there," he said, warning that if the ceasefire expired "then lots of bombs

start going off". He separately told Bloomberg News it was "highly unlikely" he would extend the two-week truce. Based on its start time, the truce theoretically expires overnight Tuesday, Tehran time,



although in his comments to Bloomberg. Trump said the end was a day later, on Wednesday evening Washington time. Oil prices fell on Tuesday while most stocks rose on lingering hopes for a deal to end the US-Iran war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, even as Tehran said it had not decided whether to attend peace talks. Despite some normalcy of life returning to Tehran during the ceasefire, city residents who spoke to Paris-based

AFP journalists said the situation was far from rosy.
"Let's see what happens by Tuesday," one 30-year-old doctor said on condition of anonymity. Saghar, 39, said there was little hope for Iranians squeezed by the government and the war's impact, adding that the "economy is horrible".
New Israel-Lebanon talks
A separate ceasefire agreed between Israel and Lebanon was announced on Friday and included Hezbollah, whose rocket fire in support of Iran drew Lebanon into the war.
Israel and Lebanon, which have no diplomatic relations, will hold a second round of talks on Thursday in Washington, a State Department official told AFP.
Sporadic violence continued and Israel's military warned civilians against returning to dozens of villages in southern Lebanon, claiming Hezbollah's activities were violating the truce. The UN Security Council condemned on Monday the killing of a French peacekeeper in Lebanon, whose death France blamed on Hezbollah.