

MAHANAGAR METRO

VOICE OF THE CITY, PULSE OF THE NATION



PM Modi inaugurates 594-km-long Ganga Expressway, linking Meerut to Prayagraj

The high-speed corridor is set to cut travel time across Uttar Pradesh while unlocking new opportunities in logistics, industry and agriculture. It also brings 12 districts into a faster, more integrated economic network.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated the 594-km-long Ganga Expressway, a mega infrastructure project connecting Meerut to Prayagraj, officials said. The high-speed corridor is expected to significantly enhance connectivity across Uttar Pradesh while boosting industrial investment, logistics, agricultural marketing and regional development.

The expressway links 12 districts: Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Badaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae

Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj, and is expected to drastically reduce travel time while enabling faster and safer movement of goods and people. Speaking at the inauguration in Hardoi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the Ganga Expressway as a transformative project for the state's growth. "The way the Ganga has



been the lifeline of Uttar Pradesh for thousands of years, similarly, this expressway will become a new lifeline for the state's development," he said.

CM CALLS PROJECT 'LIFELINE'

FOR GROWTH

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in a post on X, said the inauguration from Hardoi marks a new momentum in the state's development journey. He described the six-lane expressway, expandable to eight lanes, as a "lifeline" connecting villages, farmers, entrepreneurs and youth, adding that it will accelerate growth and bridge distances. Union Minister and BJP Uttar Pradesh president Pankaj Chaudhary also welcomed the inauguration, calling it one of the longest expressways in the country and a landmark infrastructure boost for the state.

DESIGN, SAFETY AND STRATEGIC FEATURES

Developed under a public-private partnership model, the project has been built as a six-lane corridor with provision for expansion to eight lanes and a design speed of 120 kmph. A 3.2-km airstrip near Shahjahanpur has also been constructed to facilitate emergency landings by the Indian Air Force.

The AHINDA card: Karnataka's Congress leadership war hits flashpoint as 'May deadline' looms

The AHINDA faction plays its card, demanding a Dalit Chief Minister if Siddaramaiah steps down. Shivakumar's camp expects a leadership change, creating a delicate balancing act for the High Command amid escalating political drama.



New Delhi.(Agency)

The long-simmering power struggle within the Karnataka Congress has erupted into a high-stakes political drama, as rival factions descend on the national capital to influence the future of the Chief Minister's office. With May 2026 widely rumoured to be the "transition month," the battle between the camps of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar has entered a decisive phase. In a strategic move to safeguard their interests, senior ministers Satish Jarkiholi and HC Mahadevappa rushed to Delhi to meet the party High Command. The purpose of their visit is to deploy the "AHINDA card," the powerful sociopolitical coalition of Minorities, Backward Classes, and Dalits that serves as the Congress party's electoral backbone in Karnataka.

The AHINDA leaders reportedly reminded the leadership that the movement, originally founded by Devaraj Urs and revitalised by Siddaramaiah, has spent 25 years as the party's primary support base. Their message was clear that no leadership decision can be made without the explicit consent of the AHINDA bloc.

The 'Dalit CM' ultimatum

Adding a new layer of complexity to the succession race, the AHINDA faction has introduced a "Plan B" to block a straightforward transition to DK Shivakumar. Senior leader KN Rajanna, a close confidant of the CM, has publicly demanded that if Siddaramaiah is to step down, his successor must be a Dalit Chief Minister.

"I am committed to the call for a Dalit CM after Siddaramaiah," Rajanna stated, warning the High Command that continued uncertainty over leadership is paralysing governance. While he noted that Siddaramaiah is a disciplined soldier ready to follow the High Command's orders, the insistence on a Dalit successor creates a significant hurdle for the Shivakumar camp.

The Shivakumar camp's May expectations

On the other side of the divide, supporters of DK Shivakumar, who also serves as the KPCC President, are increasingly vocal about a rumoured power-sharing agreement struck during the 2023 Assembly election victory. The DKS faction is reportedly "expecting good news" regarding a leadership change this coming May, viewing it as his rightful turn to lead the state.

'They are doing terrorism': Mamata alleges EC observers, central forces acting at BJP's behest

The TMC Supremo alleges irregularities and accuses the BJP of trying to influence the polling process through central forces and observers.

West Bengal.(Agency)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday lashed out at Election Commission-appointed poll observers and central forces, accusing them of indulging in "terrorism" and acting at the behest of the BJP.

Banerjee, who is the TMC candidate from Bhabanipur, visited several polling booths in her assembly constituency where voting is underway and alleged that "new people" brought in were "doing whatever they want" during the ongoing voting process.

She also alleged that all TMC party flags had been removed beforehand and claimed that outsiders were interfering with the polling process.



"There is a court order, but they (CRPF) are saying they will not obey it. We have issued a contempt of court notice, yet so many observers have come from outside. Whatever the BJP says, they are

doing. Just look around, all our posters have been removed," Banerjee told reporters.

"Is this how polls take place? Votes will be cast by voters, not by the police or security forces. Some new people have recently been brought in, and they are doing whatever they want. They are doing terrorism," she added. The Bhabanipur assembly segment is Banerjee's political bastion, where she is locked in a prestige battle against Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari in what is being seen as a symbolic rematch of Nandigram, where he had defeated her in the 2021 assembly polls.

The TMC supremo, who usually steps out of her Kalighat residence in the afternoon on polling day to cast her vote at Mitra Institution.

MAHANAGAR METRO | SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Attack on Jain Temples by the 'Jagat Syndicate': Centers of Faith or Targets for Extortion? Exposing a Honeytrap & Blackmail Racket

Pawan Makan (Group Editor)

Mumbai: A community known for its values of non-violence and philanthropy is now under threat from elements operating under the guise of religion. The Jain community, which generously donates for temple construction and public welfare, is allegedly being targeted by a well-organized criminal network that thrives not on devotion—but on fear and extortion. Mahanagar Metro uncovers a disturbing racket that is turning sacred spaces into battlegrounds for intimidation and illegal money collection. Main Story: Protectors of Faith or Predators of Devotion? According to sources and recent incidents, a criminal syndicate is actively targeting Jain organizations and temple construction projects, particularly in Gujarat. Their modus operandi is both calculated and alarming: Creating Obstacles: The group allegedly files complaints under the pretext of illegal construction to halt temple projects.

Honeytrap Network: Influential members of the community are reportedly targeted through honeytrap schemes to compromise and control them.



Extortion Game: In exchange for withdrawing complaints or suppressing scandals, the syndicate allegedly demands hefty settlements running into crores. Investigations indicate that the network is allegedly operated by Ahmedabad-based **Jagat Parekh**, described by sources as having a history of criminal cases

and a deeply entrenched network. Names such as Hardik Hudiya and Vikram Bafna have also surfaced in connection with the syndicate. The same pattern was reportedly attempted at a Jain temple in Surat, where unified resistance from the community thwarted their plans. Will extortion be allowed to flourish under the teachings of Lord Mahavira? Is religious donation now a source of illegal profit for criminal

networks? Why is there silence despite serious allegations? Is the system waiting for a major incident before taking action? How long will fear dictate responses? Can unity not overpower such intimidation? Lord Mahavira's philosophy of "Live and Let Live" stands in stark contrast to what appears to be a growing culture of "Intimidate and Extort." Those attempting to exploit faith for personal gain must face both legal consequences and social accountability. The exposure of this network marks the beginning of its end. Mahanagar Metro demands strict action under relevant laws, including provisions similar to the **Goonda Act**, against Jagat Parekh and his associates. Any attempt to obstruct religious construction and extort money must be met with zero tolerance. This is not just news—it is a warning. The silence of the Jain community should not be mistaken for weakness. Mahanagar Metro remains committed to exposing every layer of this alleged syndicate.

— Pawan Makan (Founding Group Editor)

From Shadow To Spotlight: Being Abhishek Banerjee In Bengal Politics

New Delhi.(Agency)

Abhishek Banerjee formally stepped into politics in 2011. But long before, in 1990, his aunt and three-time chief minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, had spotted a knack in him that would manifest as one of her Trinamool party's biggest faces decades later. Fast forward to 2026, nearing his forties, Abhishek has grown into one of Bengal's frontline leaders. After years of learning the game that is politics from a gutsy and feisty champion of grassroots politics like his aunt, he has stepped out of her shadow.

There has been no dearth of dynastic politics barbs, or in Bangla, the 'bhaipo' (nephew) taunts. But Abhishek hasn't shied away from claiming what's his. He has claimed his space in a party formed by his aunt.

Even if Trinamool is not looking for a successor for Mamata yet, Abhishek has announced his arrival.

A 1990 Throwback

It is 1990. Her head bandaged, Mamata Banerjee is seen on a bed. Facing her is her mother. In her lap sits a two-year-old Abhishek, curiously staring at his aunt as she narrates how she suffered injury in an attack by CPM workers. This scene is captured in an iconic photo that Mamata had gifted her nephew at a public rally decades later. After that 1990 day, Banerjee recalled at the rally, a toddler Abhishek used to shout slogans in the house, demanding 'answers' from the CPM, why his aunt had been attacked. "He had been politically aware since that day," the chief minister had remarked at the rally in 2023.

Abhishek Banerjee entered the political turf in 2011, the same year that saw a historic shift in Bengal's power dynamics. The Left fortress had collapsed after 34 years. The Trinamool was in power, and his aunt was the chief minister. Just 23 at that time, he was also appointed the national president of the All India Trinamool Youth Congress. His rise within the party was swift, characterised by a focus on professionalising the party's grassroots machinery, in a departure from the more emotive, street-fighter style of the senior leadership. In 2014, he made his Lok Sabha debut, marking his entry into electoral politics. Elected from the Diamond Harbour constituency, he had become the youngest MP in the

News box

Auto goes up in flames on NH-8, driver dies

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A CNG auto-rickshaw driver succumbed to burn injuries at 11am on Tuesday, hours after his vehicle caught fire on the Delhi-Jaipur Expressway (NH-8) around 2am near Hans Enclave.

While a team from Naharpur Rupa police post and a fire tender from Sector 29 fire section rushed to the spot soon after the incident, by the time the fire was controlled, the driver sustained critical burn injuries.

He was sent to a private hospital in Sector 5, where he died during treatment.

Cops said the identity of the deceased is yet to be established, and his body has been kept in the mortuary as efforts continue to identify him.

Preliminary investigation suggests that the auto caught fire suddenly, possibly due to a cylinder explosion, and the driver may not have been able to escape in time. Officials are also probing whether he was under the influence of intoxicants, which could have hindered his ability to react quickly as the fire spread.

Investigators found that the auto was originally registered in 2018 at an address in Arjun Nagar. However, the registered owner left Gurgaon about five years ago after selling the vehicle, and the current owner remains untraceable.

Discom adds 24 feeders to enhance power supply in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

In a bid to improve power supply during the summer months, DHBVN has added 24 new feeders to its distribution network in the city between Jan and April. With this, the total number of feeders has increased from 504 to 528.

Officials said the move is aimed at reducing outages caused by overloading of the distribution system rather than power shortages. Overloading of feeders has been a key reason for recurring power cuts, voltage fluctuations and tripping in recent years.

"The additional feeders will help in load balancing and reduce pressure on existing feeders, leading to a more stable supply," a DHBVN official said, adding that feeders transmit electricity from substations to residential and commercial areas, and faults in this network can disrupt supply even when adequate power is available at the source.

The move comes days after the state power department had directed discoms to replace faulty transformers within two hours in urban areas and four hours in rural areas to minimise disruptions during summer. Discoms have also been asked to maintain transformer banks, keep mobile trolleys ready in each subdivision and submit daily supply reports to the minister's office.

Superintending engineers will be held accountable if outages exceed the prescribed limits. Officials have also been instructed to ensure the timely pruning of trees near 11 kV and 33 kV feeders and arrange transport for the quick movement of transformers, particularly to avoid inconvenience to farmers.

Payouts ready for nearly 7k farmer families for airport land

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The Noida administration has processed compensation files for 6,720 farmer families since April 3 through special camps set up to speed up land acquisition payments for the expansion of Noida International Airport. Officials said compensation of nearly Rs 3,700 crore has been processed so far, while around 800 hectares have already been acquired.

The drive is part of the administration's effort to complete acquisition for phases 3 and 4 of the airport project.

"Out of the Rs 3,700 crore, around Rs 1,500 crore has already been deposited in the farmers' accounts so far. A total of Rs 8,000 crore is to be disbursed for the acquisition of land for phases 3 and 4 of the Noida International Airport," Jewar SDM Durgesh Singh told TOI.

As per the rehabilitation plan, nearly 16,000 farmer families are expected to receive compensation under the ongoing acquisition process. The compensation is to be disbursed at Rs 4,300 per sqm. To accelerate payments and documentation, the district administration set up daily camps across 14 villages in Jewar.

The camps began on April 3 and are aimed at resolving pending paperwork, verification issues and compensation disbursement in a time-bound manner. The villages covered under this exercise include Thora, Neemka Shahjahanpur, Khwajpur, Ramner, Kishorepur, Banwaribas, Parohi, Muqimpur Shivara, Jewar Bangar, Sabauta Mustafabad, Ahmedpur Chaurauli, Dayanapur, Bankapur and Rohi. Camps will be held at designated locations, including primary schools, panchayat bhawans and community centres in these villages until all farmers are covered, officials said.

At each camp, revenue teams are collecting required files from affected farmers, preparing compensation files and completing necessary formalities on the spot. A revenue inspector, lekhpal (village accountant) and amin (village surveyor) have been deployed in every village for this purpose.

Officials said the camp-based model has significantly reduced delays in processing claims and has helped clear a large volume of pending cases within a short period.

Gurgaon civic body set to elect deputy mayors on April 30 after Punjab and Haryana high court push

Gurgaon.(Agency)

More than a year after MCG House was elected, polls for senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor will be held on April 30, in line with directions from Punjab and Haryana high court. On March 5, the civic body told HC it would conduct the elections within eight weeks. The matter had reached HC through a petition filed by city-based resident and advocate Rohit Madan, who sought to fill the two posts that have remained vacant for over a year.

The elections will be held at Haryana Institute of Public Administration. Sources said if BJP fails to arrive at a consensus on candidates, some councillors may abstain from voting.

BJP has a clear majority in MCG House, having won 24 of the 36 seats in March 2025 civic polls, its first majority in the corporation. Ten independents were also elected, and eight of them later joined

BJP. Congress and JJP won one seat each. Gurgaon mayor Raj Rani Malhotra said, "Names of candidates contesting the two posts will be announced at the meeting on April 30. If more than one candidate comes forward for any post, elections will be held. Otherwise, one candidate for each post will be elected unopposed. We stand united as one House, committed to the welfare of the city, regardless of the party affiliation of winning candidates."

Under Section 36(2) of Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994, the corporation is required to elect two members from among its elected councillors as senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor. Their term is five years or the remainder of their tenure, whichever is shorter.

An earlier attempt to hold the elections on

August 11, 2025, along with polls for the finance and contracts committee in both MCG and MCM, was postponed indefinitely because councillors failed to



reach a consensus. Vacancy in the two posts has also raised questions about the legality of F&CC, as the Act requires both deputy mayors to be

part of the panel. Section 40(3) states that the committee must include the mayor, two deputy mayors, two elected members and the MCG commissioner. The panel is empowered to take decisions on contracts and procurement on behalf of the corporation.

At present, MCG's F&CC comprises mayor Raj Rani Malhotra, councillors Anup Singh of Ward 25 and Sundar Singh of Ward 1, and commissioner Pradeep Dahiya. Elections to these two posts in MCM were also held after the intervention of HC. It was in July last year that HC directed Haryana govt to conduct the elections for the posts of senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor of MCM fairly, preferably within a three-week period, following which deputies were elected in MCM House.

10 years gone but no flat, Rera asks Gurgaon-based builder to pay 10.8% interest to buyers

Gurgaon.(Agency)

After waiting a decade for a flat they had booked with more than Rs 1.8 crore, two buyers have won relief from Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, which has ordered a city-based builder to pay 10.8% annual interest for the delay in handing over possession at its Sector 111 project.

The authority found that despite the committed timeline expiring in Jun 2015, possession had still not been offered, leaving the two buyers burdened with prolonged uncertainty and a bank loan.

The April 7 order came on a complaint filed by the two allottees against M/s KNS Infracon Pvt Ltd and its associate developer in the Capital Gateway project.

The buyers told the authority they had booked a 2,675 sqft flat each, paid over Rs 1.8 crore and later faced additional demands after the developer allegedly increased the super area by 315 sqft.

As recorded in the order, the project was scheduled to be completed within 36 months from the sanction of building plans, which made June 2015 the committed date for possession. The flats, however, had not been handed over even by the time the matter was decided.

H-Rera noted that the respondents neither filed a reply nor appeared before it despite notices to them. On the basis of the material on record, the authority held that the developer had violated Section 11(4)(a) of the Rera Act, which requires

promoters to complete projects and hand over possession on time. The authority asked the builder to pay interest at 10.8% per annum on the amount deposited by the complainants from the committed possession date until the offer of possession or actual handover, whichever is earlier. It also ordered the developer to clear the arrears within 90 days, issue an updated statement of account and not levy any charge not provided for in the buyer's agreement. H-Rera, however, declined the buyers' plea for refund of the amount allegedly collected due to the increase in super area, saying there was not enough evidence on record. But it awarded Rs 50,000 towards litigation costs.

800 homes in Noida with solar power see zero bill in at least one cycle

Noida.(Agency)

Over 800 power consumers of a private discom in Greater Noida have got the supply virtually free in at least one billing cycle because of solar power. Eight hundred and eight consumers of Noida Power Company Ltd (NPCL) have achieved this zero power charge under PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana. Zero power charge means that a domestic consumer has generated enough solar electricity via a rooftop system to fully offset the electricity they consumed from the grid during that month. According to the recent tariff, the per-unit charge for domestic electricity in Greater Noida ranges from Rs 3.00 to Rs 6.50/kWh, depending on usage, plus fixed charges.

Of the over 2.2 lakh consumers of NPCL in Greater Noida, 1,781 rooftop solar panels have been installed in the discom's licensed area, of which 1,162 were installed under the scheme. This is a ray of hope and an encouraging one.

The Rs 75,021-crore Yojana was launched on Feb 15, 2024, under which households are provided a subsidy to install solar panels on their roofs. The subsidy covers up to 40% of the cost of the panels.

At the heart of this transformation is net metering that allows households to generate electricity through rooftop solar panels and export surplus power to the grid. During peak sunlight hours, excess electricity is fed into the grid, while at night or during low-generation periods, consumers can draw the power. Over a billing cycle, if solar generation equals or exceeds consumption, the net energy charge becomes zero.

"Installing a 3-kWh rooftop solar plant under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana has made a huge difference," a resident of Sector Sigma 1, Shyamal Datta, said. "Since I installed the panels in April last year, my solar generation consistently exceeds my net consumption, and now I can keep my energy bill limited to just the fixed charges."

Gurgaon swelters at 38°C, but rain and gusty winds likely

Gurgaon.(Agency)

After Monday's searing heat drove the city's temperature to the season's highest, residents woke up to unusually warm conditions on Tuesday. India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast fresh dust storms and thunderstorms across the state over the next two days.

IMD data showed the city recorded a maximum temperature of 38 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, while Gurgaon KVK station was hotter at 38.4 degrees Celsius and NorthCap University station touched 39.3 degrees Celsius. Across Haryana, Rohtak was the hottest at 41.3°C, followed by Bopani in Faridabad at 41°C, Narnaul at 40°C, Hisar at 39.6°C, and Mahendragarh and Nuh at 39.7°C each, reflecting widespread heat stress despite a marginal dip from previous highs.

The city recorded a minimum temperature of 26.1°C. IMD noted Haryana's average minimum temperature was significantly



above normal, signalling persistent heat retention even after sunset, a factor experts say can sharply raise health risks.

According to IMD Chandigarh's latest forecast, the state is likely to witness thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 50 to 60 kmph at some places on April 29, followed by similar storm activity with winds of 40 to 50 kmph on April 30. Light rain is also likely in some places, with a likely fall in maximum temperatures by around 3°C to 4°C over the next four days.

"This evolving weather pattern marked by intense daytime heat, unusually warm nights and sudden thunderstorms, is placing significant stress on the body. The key issue is that the body doesn't get a chance to cool down at night, leading to fatigue, dehydration and strain on the heart," said Dr Rajiva Gupta, senior consultant at CK Birla Hospital.

He warned that sudden shifts from extreme heat to dust storms and lightning could also trigger respiratory distress in vulnerable groups and increase the risk of accidents. "We are already seeing rising cases of fatigue, dehydration, headaches, poor sleep and worsening diabetes and BP control, accounting for nearly 20% of daily visits," Gupta said. He advised residents to avoid stepping out between 11am and 4pm, drink water regularly, reduce tea, coffee and alcohol intake, wear light cotton clothing, cover the head outdoors and keep ORS handy.

No right of way clearance, metro work in Gurgaon hits hurdle

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 2.5km gap in 'right of way' clearance between Hero Honda Chowk and Umang Bharadwaj Chowk has emerged as a serious bottleneck for the first phase of city metro, threatening to slow down a project slated for completion in 2028. Even as piling, pier work and casting of girders have moved ahead on other sections of the 15.3km corridor, construction on this stretch cannot begin until the road is handed over — a delay that has dragged on for more than a year now.

The stretch is being redeveloped by NHAI as a 'deposit work' for GMDA. But the handover has been held up by uncertainty over the final road design and a delay in utility shifting, leaving one of the corridor's most critical links out of bounds for metro builders.

A senior GMRL official said repeated requests for clearance have had little effect. "We have been asking for

RoW clearance for the past year, but it has still not been handed over. This will hamper progress and affect the timeline we are trying to achieve," the official added.

The stalled section falls on the 15.3km phase-1 line from Millennium City Centre to Sector 9. The project, estimated at Rs 1,277 crore, was awarded in Aug last year and physical work began in Nov.

On the ground, work has advanced up to Hero Honda Chowk. "Pile work is underway from Millennium City Centre to Hero Honda Chowk, piers are being built and girder casting has started. We are hoping to begin launching girders within the next two months," the GMRL official said.

The delay has also reached a high-powered committee chaired by the chief secretary, which is reviewing the metro project's progress.

NHAI officials agreed that the main hurdle is shifting of utilities, which involves multiple agencies and a tightly linked sequence of work. H V P N L's transmission infrastructure has to be moved, a



substation is under construction, and DHBVN is relocating feeder lines along the corridor. "Most of HVPNL's transmission line work is complete, while civil work on the substation is still going on," an NHAI official said. Of the 32 feeder

lines on the stretch, 17 are being shifted by DHBVN and 15 by NHAI. Officials said sewer lines and water pipelines cannot be shifted until the power infrastructure is moved. "There are a large number of electric poles. Until they are removed, the underground utility work cannot proceed," the official said, adding that power shifting is being targeted by June, though progress depends partly on DHBVN.

Phase 1 of the city metro will run from Millennium City Centre to Sector 9, with a spur from Basai to Dwarka Expressway at Sector 101. The corridor will have 14 elevated stations, including Millennium City Centre, Sector 45, Cyber Park, Subhash Chowk, Hero Honda Chowk, Basai and Sector 9.

How a typo by cops helped Meghalaya honeymoon murder accused secure bail

A Meghalaya court granted Sonam Raghuvanshi bail after finding serious flaws in her arrest documents. She is accused of murdering her husband while the couple was on their honeymoon last year.

Meghalaya . (Agency)

A Meghalaya court has granted bail to Sonam Raghuvanshi, the woman accused in the high-profile 2025 murder of her husband while on honeymoon, over a troubling paperwork error by the police: The application of a section of India's criminal code that does not exist. The police termed it a clerical error, but the court had none of it as it granted bail to Sonam Raghuvanshi after noting that her arrest memo had mentioned a non-existent Section 403(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The BNS, which replaced the British-era Indian Penal Code nearly two years ago, does not have any section numbered 403(1). The relevant section on murder is

actually numbered 103(1), suggesting that a typo may have been behind the mistake.

According to the court order, Sonam Raghuvanshi's arrest memo, inspection memo, intimation of rights memo, and even entries in the case diary mentioned a "non-existent Section 403(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita".

Rejecting the police argument of a "clerical error", the court said the accused was not given "effective grounds for arrest", making the arrest legally untenable.

NO PROOF OF LEGAL ACCESS

The court also pointed to another lapse, saying there was nothing on record to show that Sonam was given access to a lawyer when she was first produced before a court in Ghazipur after her arrest. Because of this,

she could not challenge the defects in the arrest at an earlier stage.

BAIL WITH RESTRICTIONS

While granting bail, the court imposed conditions, directing that Sonam should not leave Shillong district without prior permission. Her brother, Govind Raghuvanshi, said the family was still awaiting the court order and unsure about her immediate release or stay arrangements. "I also learned that Sonam has been granted bail, but the court order is still pending. I don't know when she'll be released, where she'll be staying," he said. He added that the family may not take her

home immediately. "We won't keep her in the house right now. If my parents want to



bring her home, I won't be staying at home."

CASE BACKGROUND

Sonam Raghuvanshi is accused of plotting the murder of her husband, Raja Raghuvanshi, during their honeymoon in Meghalaya. The couple had married in May 2025 and travelled from Indore to Shillong. Raja went missing days later, and his body was found on June 2 in a gorge. Police have alleged that Sonam conspired with multiple people in the killing. Eight accused were arrested in the case, with three having secured bail earlier. With the court finding serious flaws in the arrest process, the case now faces a legal challenge that could shape its course going forward, even as the investigation continues.

Short news

Howrah Sweetmaker Turns Bengal Election Fever Into Culinary Art

Howrah.(Agency)

As West Bengal braces for the high-stakes second phase of its assembly elections on Wednesday, the political battle has moved from the rallies to the dessert platters.

In Howrah, a local confectioner has unveiled a vibrant collection of "election-themed" sweets, turning the state's fierce political rivalry into a celebration of its famous culinary heritage.

At a renowned sweet shop in the heart of Howrah, the display cases are no longer filled with just traditional Rosogollas and Sandesh. Instead, they feature meticulously crafted sweets shaped like party symbols. Elaborate Sandesh moulds featuring the grass and flowers of the TMC, the lotus of the BJP, the open hand symbol of Congress and the hammer and sickle of the Left.

The shop has colour-coordinated its offerings, using saffron, green, and red natural extracts to represent the various contesting factions. While the political climate in the state remains intense, the atmosphere inside the shop is one of camaraderie. People were seen buying sweets.

West Bengal's election cycle has been marked by high voter turnout and spirited campaigning. As the second phase commences on April 29, security has been tightened across polling stations. However, in the narrow lanes of Howrah, these sweets serve as a reminder of the "Mishti" (sweet) culture that binds the state together, even amidst a polarised electorate.

Transgenders Have No Legal Right To Demand Traditional 'Badhai': High Court

Lucknow.(Agency)

The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday held that members of the 'kinnar' community do not have any legal right to demand the traditional 'badhai' or 'neg' -- customary monetary offerings on auspicious occasions -- observing that such demands could amount to an offence under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Justice Alok Mathur and Justice Amitabh Kumar Rai of the Lucknow bench passed the order while dismissing a writ petition filed by one Rekha Devi, a transgender person from Gonda district, who had sought demarcation of a specific territory for collecting 'neg'.

The petitioner sought to earmark an area from Kati Ka Pul in Jarwal town to Ghaghra Ghat and up to Saryu Bridge in Colonelganj as her exclusive zone, claiming she had been collecting 'badhai' there for several years. Her counsel argued that frequent disputes and clashes occur when others from the community enter the same area and that the long-standing practice amounted to a customary right. Rejecting the plea, the court held that any levy, tax or fee can only be collected under the authority of law, and the practice of collecting money in the name of 'badhai' or 'jajmani' has no legal sanction.

"Extraction of money from any individual wilfully or otherwise cannot be permitted, and any citizen can only be directed to pay such amounts as are legitimately authorised by law," the bench observed.

The court also noted that the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, does not provide for any such right.

Dismissing the petition, the bench said granting such a plea would effectively legitimise illegal extortion and could encourage criminal activities. It added that such an extraction has never been sanctioned by law and may attract penal provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

System Collapses in Ankleshwar: Criminal 'Vijay' Thrives Under Alleged Police Protection, Illegal Liquor Dens Turn into Death Traps

Mahanagar Metro Beuro

Bharuch/Ankleshwar: Despite Gujarat's strict prohibition and anti-gambling laws on paper, the industrial hub of Ankleshwar in Bharuch district is increasingly emerging as a safe haven for criminal activities. Ironically, the fear of law seems to affect not the offenders, but the ordinary citizens and journalists who dare to raise their voices against these illegal operations. Across Ankleshwar, illegal liquor and gambling dens are flourishing openly—almost like public kiosks at every corner.

Chauta Bazaar: Where Law is Openly Defied

Near Ankleshwar railway station, in the slum clusters of Chauta Bazaar, a parallel criminal empire allegedly run by a man identified as Vijay is thriving. Illegal gambling operations such as Worli Matka and Asra are reportedly generating daily turnovers worth lakhs. What's more alarming is that people are said to be arriving not just from local areas, but from distant cities like Vapi, Valsad, and Surat to participate—often risking financial ruin.

Police Protection or Criminal Shield?

Mahanagar Metro's investigation has uncovered serious allegations against certain local police personnel and members of the Local



Crime Branch. Instead of taking action, they are accused of collecting regular "protection money" from these illegal dens.

Key Allegations:

Whistleblowers Exposed:

When concerned citizens report illegal activities, instead of acting, some officials allegedly leak the complainant's identity and contact details to the accused—leading to threats and intimidation. The 'Nil Raid' Game:

In a recent incident, despite prior information, an LCB team reportedly conducted a superficial raid and declared a "nil recovery," allegedly after accepting bribes.

A Looming Disaster:

Illegally manufactured chemical-laced liquor is being sold openly, raising fears of a potential mass casualty incident similar to past hooch tragedies.

Direct Challenge to State

Leadership

The situation in Ankleshwar raises serious questions about the effectiveness of the Gujarat government's "zero tolerance" policy. When criminals allegedly operate with impunity and possible police collusion, where does the common citizen turn for justice?

Mahanagar Metro's Burning Questions

1. To the Bharuch SP:

Is your intelligence network unaware of these widely known hotspots, or is there deliberate inaction?

2. To the Home Department:

Does leaking a complainant's identity to criminals not constitute a punishable offense?

3. To the Administration:

Who will take responsibility if toxic liquor leads to fatalities? Will the local police station be held accountable?

Conclusion

Mahanagar Metro will continue to pursue this investigation to its core. Evidence in possession strongly suggests that a section of Ankleshwar's law enforcement may be acting in favor of criminals rather than upholding the law. This issue will be escalated to higher state authorities until strict action is taken against offenders like Vijay and any officials found complicit.

UP bride dies in trailer accident while heading to beauty parlour on wedding day

Deoria.(Agency)

A heartbreaking incident has emerged from Uttar Pradesh, where a 22-year-old bride-to-be lost her life in a tragic road accident on the very day of her wedding.

TRAGEDY STRIKES ON THE WAY TO BEAUTY PARLOUR

The victim, identified as Rachna, a resident of Gaur Kothi village under Bariyarpur, was on her way to a nearby beauty parlour to get ready for her wedding. She was traveling on a motorcycle with her younger brother when the accident occurred at a local intersection. According to reports, the motorcycle lost control, causing Rachna to fall onto the road. In a tragic turn of events, a speeding trailer truck coming from the opposite direction ran over her, leading to her instant death.

POLICE ACTION UNDERWAY

Station House Officer Deepak Singh confirmed that the bride died after being crushed under the trailer. The vehicle has been seized, and the driver has been taken into custody. The body has been sent for post-mortem, and a case has been registered under relevant legal sections. Further investigation is ongoing, he added.

FROM CELEBRATION TO MOURNING

Rachna's family, headed by her father Minister Paswan, had been busy with wedding preparations as the groom's procession was expected to arrive later that day. What was meant to be a day of joy and celebration turned into one of unimaginable grief.

Local representative Rajesh Rajbhar described the incident as deeply tragic, noting that the wedding festivities instantly turned into mourning after the news of her death reached home.

ALIFE CUT SHORT

The young woman was rushed to a nearby hospital by locals, but doctors declared her dead on arrival. The shocking incident has left the entire community in sorrow.

'Only Asked For Papers': Odisha Bank After Man Goes With Sister's Skeleton

A shocking clip of the man carrying the remains to the Maliposi branch of Odisha Grameen Bank on Monday has gone viral on social media.

Bhubaneswar.(Agency)

A day after a tribal man carried his sister's exhumed skeleton to a rural bank in Odisha's Keonjhar district as proof of death to withdraw her money, the parent bank clarified they had only sought valid documents, even as the incident triggered a row on Tuesday. A shocking clip of the man carrying the remains to the Maliposi branch of Odisha Grameen Bank on Monday has gone viral on social media.

The parent bank said the incident appears to have arisen due to a lack of awareness and asserted that the branch will settle the man's claim to withdraw money from his dead sister's account on a priority basis as soon as local authorities issue a death certificate. Odisha minister Suresh Pujari said there was a "lack of humanitarian approach" and the government would ensure strict action against the officials concerned, while the

opposition took potshots at the BJP dispensation, pointing out that Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi represents Keonjhar in the state Assembly.

Terming the incident a proof of "harsh insensitivity of rural banking systems", the BJD's Rajya Sabha leader MP Manas Ranjan Mangaraj wrote to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, seeking her urgent intervention in simplifying banking procedures and ensuring the dignity for the poor trying to access their family's savings.

Expressing disgust over the incident, Odisha's Revenue and Disaster Management minister Pujari said, "The death certificate was not sufficient for the bank officials, and the man had to dig out a skeleton from the grave to prove that the account holder was dead.

"A humanitarian approach was lacking in the whole episode. The government will ensure that the banking officials who are



responsible for this are punished." Jeetu Munda (50) of Dianali village was seeking to withdraw Rs 19,300 from the bank branch, where his elder sister Kalra Munda (56) held an account.

"I visited the bank several times. Though I told them that my sister had died, they kept insisting that I bring her to the bank to withdraw the money deposited in her name," Jeetu Munda said on Monday. Exasperated, he dug up his sister's skeleton from the grave and carried it on his shoulder to the bank. Upon seeing the skeleton, the frightened bank officials immediately informed the local police.

Following police intervention, the remains were taken back to the graveyard and reburied, said Kiran Prasad Sahu, the inspector in charge of the Patana police station.

"Jeetu is illiterate. He does not know what a legal heir or a nominee is. The bank officials failed to make him understand the procedure to withdraw money in case of a kin's death," the police officer said.

From Panipat to Bengal

FIVE hundred years ago exactly this week, on April 21, 1526, in a town called Panipat only 161 km from Chandigarh, Zahiruddin Muhammed Babur overran the last ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, the most cruel Ibrahim Lodi, and laid the foundation of Mughal rule in India. By the time it more or less ended, 231 years later, in 1757, in faraway Bengal in the killing fields of Palashi — far better known by its anglicised name, the Battle of Plassey — the Mughals had been reduced to a whimper of the progeny Babur had sired. Alamgir II was the titular head in Delhi's Lal Qila. Of his son, Shah Alam II, who succeeded him two years later, in 1759, the Persian taunt was thrown around publicly. Sultanat-e-Shah Alam, az Dilli ta Palam. The Sultanate of Shah Alam extends, in today's geographic terminology, from Delhi-6 to Palam village, on the outskirts of the capital's Terminal 1 airport, less than 30 km.

This short history lesson is hardly necessary in the already hot days of a Punjab summer, when the koel hoots insistently and the mango tree sheds its fine blossoms. Nobody need tell Punjab, it's seen everything these past 500 years — and forever, before — by virtue of being the favourite stomping ground of invaders, conquerors, dictators and democrats. And then there is Bengal. Anything that happens anywhere in India, is multiplied several times more in this part of the subcontinent. The green is greener, especially during the monsoons. The red is redder, especially during the nine days when the Devi reigns supreme during Pujo. The rivers are longer — some even longer than those in Punjab, although both states have rivers that flow into other countries and allow people of other castes and religions to live off them. (Moreover, back in 1398, when Babur's ancestor, Timur, was laying waste to Punjab — more than a hundred years before Babur defeated a fellow Muslim to win Hindustan — Muslim Pathan rulers of Bengal like Ghiyasuddin Azam Shah encouraged the translation of Hindu epics like the Ramayana into Bengali, apart from fostering diplomatic ties with the Ming dynasty and co-writing poetry with the Persian poet Hafiz.) All the emotions are played out in Bengal, many at the same time. Anger : Partition of the province in 1905. Reconciliation : Reunification in 1911. Betrayal : Mir Jafar, Suwendu Adhikari. Religion : birth of the Muslim League in 1906 and 34 years of the atheist Communists, 1977-2011. Culture : Both Jana Gana Mana and Vande Mataram. Empire : Fall of the Mughals in 1757 in Plassey; in Barrackpore in 1857; rise and fall of East India Company and British Raj. Revenge : Direct Action Day, 1946. Politics : Partition of the country in 1947.

You can love or hate Bengal, but you cannot ignore it. Both PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah understand that fundamental truth well, which is that Amartya Sen's "argumentative Indian" is probably Bengali. In what is now an oft-quoted line from his book by the same name, Sen argued that India's centuries-old tradition of dialogue is remarkable because it is enriched by a diversity of opinion that cuts across caste, class and education. In his preface to the book, Sen writes that just before the 2004 General Election, a villager just outside his home in Kolkata, "barely literate and certainly very poor" told him this : "It is not very hard to silence us, but that is not because we cannot speak." No wonder Bengal — and Punjab, as was made more than clear on Friday evening — has been in the BJP's fish eye for some time now. Unlike in 2021, when the PM's "Didi, oh Didi" heckle didn't go down too well with Bengal, the BJP's arsenal this time around has been far more diverse. The deletion of 27.10 lakh voters in the Special Intensive Revision which has cut the electoral rolls by 11.63 per cent in the state, has thrown political equations out of gear.

Sabarimala: Who may enter & how many?

Turning the religion debate into a forest debate does not diminish faith as in the Sabarimala case; it safeguards the landscape that makes faith possible

BEFORE asking who may enter Sabarimala, India must ask how many the forest can bear. The Supreme Court's nine-judge Bench is once again hearing arguments on one of India's most polarising constitutional questions: what counts as an essential religious practice, and can women be excluded from a place of worship on that basis? The 2018 Indian Young Lawyers Association judgment struck down the exclusion of women aged 10-50 from Sabarimala, holding that the practice violated equality, dignity and non-discrimination. It also held that Ayyappa devotees do not constitute a separate religious denomination and that the exclusion was not an essential religious practice (ERP). The present Bench is re-examining the correctness of that ruling and its wider implications for religious freedom across India.

The ERP doctrine, first articulated in Shirur Mutt (1954), requires courts to protect only those practices that are indispensable to a religion's identity. This framework was later tightened in cases such as Acharya Jagdishwarananda Avadhuta (Ananda Marga), where the court held that the Tandava dance was not an essential practice because it lacked scriptural foundation, historical continuity and consistent observance. The significance of this precedent is clear: a practice does not become "essential" merely because a group asserts it. Essentiality must be demonstrated through doctrine, history and continuity-not belief alone. The Union government has argued that courts should not act as social reformers and that constitutional morality is too subjective to guide judicial review. Petitioners opposing women's entry claim denominational autonomy under Article 26. Others argue that gender-based exclusion cannot be shielded by religious freedom when it violates Articles 14, 15, and 21.1. What is essential to a religion?

- Who qualifies as a religious denomination
- Where religious autonomy ends and constitutional equality begins. These are weighty questions. But they are not the only questions. While the Court decides who may enter, the forest landscape asks a more fundamental one: how many can the land sustain?

Sabarimala is not merely a shrine; it is a pulse within the Periyar Tiger Reserve in the Western Ghats of Pathanamthitta, Kerala. The pilgrimage route is a corridor of wildlife, soil, rivers and forest thresholds. Yet the ecological dimension - carrying capacity, habitat

stress and landscape fragility - remains the "silent party" in this litigation, rarely entering the courtroom or the public imagination. This silence is striking because other states have recognised the limits of their hill ecosystems. The Madras High Court has insisted on scientific carrying-capacity studies for the Nilgiris and Kodaikanal. The SC has previously upheld access controls in tiger reserves when unregulated entry threatened habitat integrity. These judicial experiences show that ecology is not an afterthought - it is the foundation of sustainable pilgrimage.

Sabarimala is a shrine inside a protected area, a pilgrimage route carved through one of the most fragile forest ecosystems in the Western Ghats. Yet the ecological

landscape stress are already choking a fragile mountain system. The way forward is real-time management: chip-based entry tags, GPS-linked dashboards for crowds and vehicles, dynamic caps, staggered slotting and automated alerts for police and administrators. Such digital governance replaces guesswork with evidence, ensuring safety, ecological balance and orderly movement in high-pressure sacred and tourist spaces.

The daily entry - of both pilgrims and vehicles - must therefore be scientifically regulated if the landscape is to remain intact. The Kasturirangan Committee has warned that the Western Ghats are nearing ecological thresholds. As access expands and devotees increase in number, the pressure on the habitat will rise, not fall. Sabarimala

needs the same shift that other fragile hill ecosystems have adopted: a carrying-capacity regime that respects both faith and forest. Only then can the pilgrimage endure without breaking the land that sustains it.

Every season brings more pilgrims, more waste and more pressure on soil, water and wildlife corridors. The forest absorbs it all quietly because forests do not file petitions or hold press conferences. They simply endure - until they cannot. If ecological strain continues unchecked, the debate over women's entry may become irrelevant. A pilgrimage cannot survive if its landscape collapses.



dimension remains almost absent from public debate. A religion debate asks: who may enter? What is tradition? What do scriptures say? A forest debate asks: how many may enter without breaking the land? What is the carrying capacity of a protected habitat? What do the soil, the river and the wildlife corridor say?

The two debates are not enemies; they simply speak different languages. But only the ecological one determines whether the pilgrimage can survive. Turning the religion debate into a forest debate does not diminish faith; it safeguards the landscape that makes faith possible. Tiger reserves do calculate visitor carrying capacity, but their logic differs from pilgrimage sites. Sabarimala's challenge is not wildlife disturbance alone but the sheer surge of people overwhelming terrain, queues, sanitation systems and emergency response. Unregulated vehicular inflow, waste loads and

As the SC re-examines essential practices, denominational rights and gender equality, India must confront a fourth question: Can a pilgrimage inside a protected forest continue without a scientific carrying-capacity framework? This is not a question of faith versus ecology. It is a question of whether faith can survive without ecology. The court's final judgment will shape the future of religious freedom and gender justice. But unless the ecological dimension enters the conversation, any legal victory - whichever side prevails - may stand on a landscape slowly eroding beneath it. The challenge is not only to reconcile gender-neutral entry with the constitutional tension between Articles 25 and 26. It is also to recognise that the pilgrimage itself depends on the carrying capacity of the fragile landscape that sustains Sabarimala. Rights shape entry, but ecology shapes survival. Sabarimala needs both.

Familiar danger: Women's safety demands more than outrage

Crimes committed by drivers, domestic help, acquaintances and even family members underline a harsher truth: familiarity is not always safety

THE rape and murder of a young UPSC aspirant in New Delhi is not merely another horrifying crime; it is a reminder that in Delhi, violence against women often comes not from strangers, but from familiarity. The victim, daughter of an IRS officer, was allegedly assaulted and killed by a domestic help who once worked in the household. He knew the house, the family's routine, and the vulnerabilities within the home. Police investigations suggest that the accused, Rahul Meena, had earlier been removed from the job after complaints about borrowing money and suspicious conduct. Yet he allegedly returned, used his knowledge of the house, committed the crime and fled with cash and valuables. Reports indicate that mounting online gambling debts may have deepened his desperation. His alleged lack of remorse, reportedly saying "it just happened," adds another layer of horror. Delhi has seen this pattern

too often. From the 2012 Delhi gang rape and murder to



repeated assaults inside homes, gated colonies and

workplaces, the city continues to prove that women are unsafe not only in public spaces but within private ones as well. Crimes committed by drivers, domestic help, acquaintances and even family members underline a harsher truth: familiarity is not always safety. This tragedy exposes a dangerous urban complacency. Domestic workers are often hired through informal references without proper police verification or institutional safeguards. Convenience replaces caution.

Police verification must become mandatory, not optional. Resident welfare associations and housing societies must maintain stronger records and accountability. At the same time, gambling addiction, financial distress and violent misogyny cannot be ignored as private matters. Privilege, CCTV cameras and gated colonies create only an illusion of safety. Women's safety in Delhi demands more than outrage.

Punjab's anti-sacrilege law faces test of constitutionality

Although the prescribed punishment falls under the domain of the legislature, it becomes disproportionate when coupled with a vague definition of sacrilege

Punjab's Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Act, 2026, prescribes enhanced punishment for sacrilege -- a prison term not less than seven years, which may extend to 20 years, and a fine of not less than Rs 2 lakh, which may extend to Rs 10 lakh. Before the constitutionality of the Act was challenged in the Punjab and Haryana High Court in Simranjeet Singh v. State of Punjab, an article by Justice RS Sodhi (retd), "The Guru's Word is Beyond Law" (The Tribune, March 24), gave an interesting early response to the legislation. Justice Sodhi wrote that the living embodiment of the Guru ought not to be subjected to juridical regulation and that the existing legal framework is sufficient to address such offences. While rooted in a religious perspective, the critique raises legitimate concerns regarding the Act's constitutional validity. Article 245 read with Article 246 of the Constitution distributes legislative powers between the Union and the States through the three lists in the Seventh Schedule. List I enumerates subjects on which Parliament may legislate, List II those reserved for State Legislatures and List III includes those on which both may legislate concurrently. For present purposes, the relevant entries are Entry 1 of List II, relating to "public order", and Entries 1 and 2 of List III, relating to criminal law and criminal procedure, respectively.

The issue of legislative competence must be determined by applying the doctrine of pith and substance, which examines the true nature, object and effect of the legislation. As recognised by the Supreme Court in Kartar Singh v. State of Punjab (1994), the classification of legislation depends on its substance rather than its form. The original enactment was confined to regulating

the supply and handling of birs of Guru Granth Sahib, a subject traceable to "public order" under Entry 1 of List II. However, the Act, by introducing and punishing the offence of sacrilege, travels into the field of criminal law under Entries 1 and 2 of List III. The use of a "public



order" legislation as a vehicle to introduce a distinct criminal offence indicates that the Act is colourable in nature, seeking to achieve indirectly what the previous legislative attempts could not achieve directly. Article 254 of the Constitution provides that in the event of repugnancy between a State law and a parliamentary enactment on a Concurrent List subject, the latter shall prevail, rendering the State law inoperative to the extent of the inconsistency, unless the State law has received Presidential assent. This position was recently affirmed by the Supreme Court in Innoventive Industries Ltd. v. ICICI Bank (2018). In the present case, the definition of

"sacrilege" under Section 3(bb), read with the punishment prescribed under Section 5 of the Act, is in direct conflict with provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, including Sections 298, 299, and 302, which already criminalise acts injuring or defiling places of worship and outraging religious feelings. This overlap indicates that the field is already occupied by Central legislation, thereby giving rise to repugnancy under Article 254. In such a situation, the provisions of the BNS would prevail. The definition of sacrilege under the Act may be divided into two parts: a wilful and deliberate act of damaging, tearing, burning or defacing saroops of Guru Granth Sahib; conduct by visible representation, spoken or written words, or through electronic means of such a nature as to hurt religious feelings. The second strand bears a close resemblance to Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, which penalises the dissemination of information of an offensive or grossly menacing character. The Supreme Court, in Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015), struck down that provision on the ground of being violative of Articles 14 and 19 of the Constitution, holding that such language is vague and fails to provide any reasonable standard of application. It was further observed that in criminal law, the conduct sought to be criminalised must be certain and clearly defined. Similarly, the Act contains no definition of the term "hurt to religious feelings." Thus, even far-fetched or scholarly expression that bears no proximate connection to the mischief sought to be addressed could fall within the sweep of the provision. Therefore, the definition of "sacrilege" in the Act is arbitrary and violative of Articles 14 and 19. In Vikram Singh v. Union

of India (2014), the constitutionality of Section 364A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was challenged on the ground of being unreasonable, which prescribes punishment of death or life imprisonment with fine. The Supreme Court upheld the provision on the ground that it was brought into force due to the increasing incidence of ransom and kidnapping, not only by ordinary criminals, but also by terrorist organisations which have the potential of destabilising the country. It was further held that the prescription of punishment is a function of the legislature, which is best suited to assess the needs of the people, and that courts cannot interfere merely because the punishment is perceived to be excessive. Applying the same principle to Punjab and considering its history, there may be cases where incidents of sacrilege have been funded or plotted with the intent to disrupt the sovereignty and security of the nation. Moreover, the legislature has prescribed the punishment with respect to the increased incidence of sacrilege over the past few years. Furthermore, in the present scenario too, the courts have the discretion to award imprisonment in accordance with the gravity of the crime. The amendment Act, though aimed at curbing sacrilege in Punjab, raises concerns regarding its constitutionality. The law, in pith and substance, falls within the domain of criminal law under Entries 1 and 2 of List III, a field occupied by the BNS, which criminalises act of injuring/defiling places of worship and outraging religious feelings, thereby giving rise to repugnancy under Article 254 of the Constitution. Further, the definition of "sacrilege" is vague and prone to being misused. Although the prescribed punishment falls under the domain of the legislature, it becomes disproportionate when coupled with such a vague definition.

Skin care

regime for a beautiful skin



Rains could be synonymous with romance and reason to rejoice for some. But for others, it could be the harbinger of maladies, diseases, bad-hair days and dull skin. Try these skincare tips this monsoon for healthy and beautiful skin.

Happy feet An important area to look after during monsoons is the feet, say specialists. "Especially in between the toes - it is susceptible to fungal as well as bacterial infection because of direct contact with contaminated rain water," says dermatologist Dr Jamuna Pai. One should try and keep the feet dry at all times. Aesthetician Ritu Tanwar says, "The best way to properly clean your feet is by immersing them in lukewarm water with a few drops of antiseptic for 10 minutes. Then, scrub lightly with an

anti-bacterial soap and thoroughly dry your feet and apply a moisturising cream."

Happy hands Tisha Khurana, a beauty consultant, says, "Like any other body part, hands should also be kept clean during monsoons. Soak your hands in warm water for 15 minutes. The water should contain few drops of a liquid hand-wash and some fresh lemon juice. Complete this routine by applying a nail cream. Avoid pushing the cuticles, as nail fungal infections are very common in monsoons. Cuticle oil must be applied as cuticles become very dry."

Care for your hair Dr Sandeep Sattur, hair restorative surgeon,

says, "Wash your scalp frequently with PH-balanced mild shampoos." The idea is to cleanse the scalp gently without causing damage.

Use sunscreen always Dermatologists say our faces can get fairly oily because of humidity and we should use cleansers effective for this condition. Dr Desai cautions, "Always use a sunscreen as UV rays penetrate even through clouds."

-Wash your face two to three times a day with a mixture of green gram powder and channa powder (equal proportion) made into a paste with water. -Make a paste of papaya, honey and milk. Apply it on your face, leave for 15 minutes and then wash off. -A paste of neem leaves mixed with honey can be used as a face pack. Remove the pack before it dries up on your skin. -Use a mixture of honey and curd for body massage before shower.

QUICK TIPS

Renew Beauty

regime for monsoon

- Visit a spa or salon once in a while to rejuvenate. Here are a few tips:
- Get funky with your hair colour this monsoon. Get an ombre look or highlight your hair with full head highlights or colour stripping treatments.
 - Brighten up your gloomy day with vibrant nail art in bold colours.
 - During monsoon, the hair becomes limp and loses its sheen. Also, tame your tresses with an oil massage.
 - Keep your make-up to a bare minimum. Humidity and frequent downpours can accelerate oil-secretion, so, using non-greasy and light make-up provides a clean matte finish. Also, always opt for waterproof brands.
 - Some home remedies can also come in handy:
 - Papaya works as a great

- de-tanner; curd clears blemishes; aloe vera soothes the skin; and lavender boosts rejuvenation.
- To eliminate roughness, try this - take some almond paste, mix this with some milk to make a smooth and thick paste. You can also mix almond oil with milk cream to make a winter face pack. Apply the pack to get a smooth and flawless skin.

The monsoon season poses a challenge for many to look tip-top all the time, but you can ease your woes by following some tips for your hair and skin.

Are you using the right foundation for your skin?

A woman's vanity box is empty without a foundation which acts as a base for makeup. However, since there are many varieties of foundations which are available in the market, that come in different formulations — cream, mousse or dry ones — you need to know the one that matches your skin tone and suits your skin texture the best.

Understand your skin

Normal skin

- Even complexion.
- The surface of the skin is neither too oily nor too dry.
- Lotion-based foundations are best-suited.

Oily skin

- The face will have an all over shine.
- Prone to pimple and can easily develop pigmentation near the cheeks.
- Water-based foundations are advised for those who have oily skin. They last longer and do not make the face look greasy.

Dry skin

- The face can feel dry and parched, at times.
- Cream-based liquid foundations are advisable.
- Compact-based foundations are a no-no.

Select one based on your skin tone

Dusky

- A sheer foundation and a good concealer are musts for creating the illusion for a perfect skin.
- While applying foundation, your aim should be for a lighter coverage.
- Add a drop of water to the foundation to blend well.
- Dab compact after the foundation is applied. This will give the skin sheen and will not make it look too heavy.
- Avoid applying too much of compact powder. And dust off all the excess.
- Liquid foundation is the best one for women with a dusky complexion. Also, it is very important to keep in mind that the shade of the foundation should be very close to that of the skin tone, to avoid looking pale white.

Wheatish

- Choose a concealer and foundation which have yellow pigments.
- Earthy shades go very well with those who have wheatish

- complexion.
 - Never use a foundation which has a pinkish tone, this will make your skin look grey.
 - Apply a compact after the foundation to lend a smooth surface to your skin.
- Fair**
- Determine whether your fairness is rosy pink or yellowish.
 - Select warmer tones for an even

- Should be applied with the help of a powder brush. The bristles should be dense.
- Mineral foundation**
- Ideal for all skin types, except oily. It is specially suited for those with sensitive skin or Rosacea.
 - Lends a matte finish look.
 - Has a light to medium coverage.
 - Evens out the skin tone, moisturises, protects and absorbs the excess oil.
 - Use a brush to buff it on.
- Tinted moisturising foundation**
- Ideal for normal and dry skin.
 - It is well-suited for those who need extra hydration and just a touch of colour to pull it off.
 - Lends a sheer to light coverage.
 - Lightly evens out the skin tone, giving a nude or a natural look.
- What you must keep in mind
- Minimal application of foundation is not only good for your skin but it also does not make you look cakey.



- complexion.
 - Here are more tips on how to choose the right foundation
- Types of foundation**
- Cream foundation**
- Ideal for normal, combination and dry skin types. It is specially suited for women with uneven pigmentation, or those requiring a heavy coverage.
 - Lends medium or full coverage.
 - The best part about this foundation is that it lends a dewy finish.
 - Covers and conceals discolourations and imperfections on the skin and provides a flawless finish.
- Liquid foundation**
- Is ideal for all skin types. It is well-suited for dry or mature skin.
 - Lends a light to medium coverage.
 - Has a satin, matte or dewy finish depending on the formulation.
 - It soothes the skin and also lends an even coverage to your complexion.

- foundation, make sure that you sample it under natural light. While trying out the foundation in a store, always apply it on your jawline and not on your wrists or hands to check for the seamless blend.
- Give your musical instruments some TLC
- Always return the instrument to its protective case when not being played.
- Don't leave your musical instrument where it can be knocked or sat on by people or animals.
- Take care to store musical instruments in a place of even temperature.
- Clean your musical instrument with in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Make sure your musical instrument has an annual check-up with your retailer.
- If a wind instrument is supposed to be assembled before its usage, then ensure that all joints are cleaned before they are assembled. Apply grease in very small proportions on corks if required.
- Have your instrument professionally valued at least once every three years. Then make sure you review your insurance policy to ensure your sums insured are up to date.



Be scorching hot at Parties this summer



With Mumbai summer refusing to bow out, we are left to deal with a rather long stint of heat and humidity. But are you letting it affect your social life, or rather, 'look'? Here are a few tips to keep in mind when stepping out for a party this summer...

Keep it simple

Beauty consultant Manasi Bhakade states, "Always begin day makeup with a sunblock (at least SPF 30), followed by a light oil-free foundation or BB/CC cream. Shadow and mascara on your eyes and a nourishing lip tint later, you are good to face the day." According to senior makeup artiste Sonic Sarwate, one should choose makeup that blends well with the skin and doesn't feel heavy.

Use concealers

Dr Geeta Oberoi, dermatologist, says, "Use mineral-based makeup and keep your base to a minimum. Rather than using heavy foundation, use concealers to get a flawless face."

Do a double cleansing

Removing makeup is a must before you hit the

sack. "Do a double cleansing procedure to unclog pores — a cleanser followed by medicated face wash," says Dr Oberoi. If you have oily skin, do not work your skin too much because it will end up making your skin more oily.

Close pores

You must use an alcohol-free toner after every wash to close open pores.

If you sweat a lot...

"Use lotions containing aluminium chlorohydrate. It works as an antiperspirant. However, in some cases, it can cause skin irritation. So, ask your dermatologist first," Dr Oberoi explains.

Use the right makeup

Dr Sama Rais, dermatologist and cosmetologist, advises using makeup that is 'non-comedogenic' or 'non-acnegenic' — it won't clog pores or cause pimples.

Dr Poonam Wadhvani, cosmetic dermatologist, suggests, "Wear dark colours that hide sweat patches. For dark circles, try home remedies like applying cool tea bags on the eyes for 15 minutes or applying cucumber juice and potato juice."

Get this look

- Use a concealer and then apply a hydrating base that matches your skin tone.
- Use a light-brown or coral-toned blush.
- Apply highlighter on your brow bone, cheeks and in the inner corner of your eyes.
- A warm eye-shadow will enlarge and brighten your peepers.
- Line your eyes with smudge-proof kohl.
- Curl your lashes; apply a coat of mascara.
- Now apply a bright lipstick.



Home remedies for hair-care in

Monsoon



Here are some easy home remedies for the smooth and silky hair in monsoon.

Hair care becomes a difficult and time-consuming job in the monsoon season. But it is also important for healthy hair to stay away from chemicals and outside treatments as much as possible. Well, here are some easy home remedies that can answer your tress woes -

For dry, frizzy hair, apply a paste of two bananas and honey and leave it for about an hour. This will help moisturize hair and keep it soft.

Apply lemon juice on your scalp for 15 minutes and then wash it off. This will ensure an oil-free scalp.

Soak fenugreek (methi) seeds in water overnight. Strain the water the next day and use this water to wash your hair. Methi is effective for many hair problems like hairfall, dandruff and dryness.

The rains and sweatiness due to the humid weather results in an itchy scalp. Add a spoon of vinegar to water and rinse your hair with this at the end after you shampoo it. This will help you get rid of the itchiness.

Mix two spoons of curd with an egg and apply it on your hair for 15-20 minutes. Use this mixture as a conditioner after you shampoo your hair. It will make your hair soft and shiny.



Dry skin is a horrible problem to have. People suffer from stretchy, white looking skin that may even crack and bleed. Not only that, dry skin causes itchiness and discomfort too. Here are a few home remedies you can use to solve the problem.

Home remedies to cure dry, Flaky skin

Banana pack -

Mash one ripe or over ripe banana until it forms a paste and mix one teaspoon of honey with it. Apply a thick layer of this mixture on face and leave it on for 20-30 minutes. Wash it off with cold water and repeat the process twice a week to get moist fresh skin.

Almond pack -

Grind soaked almonds to make a paste. Add some cold milk, lemon juice and besan (gram flour) to this mix and apply a thick layer on the face and other dry areas. Scrub it off once dry and wash face with lukewarm water.

Yogurt pack -

Make a pack by mixing cold yogurt, lemon juice and honey and apply on face. Leave it on for 20 minutes and wash it off with cold water.

Aloe Vera Gel -

Apply a generous amount of Aloe Vera gel all over the face and leave it on until it dries. Wash it off with cold water. This not only provides moisture to the skin but also prevents ageing and acne.



A dropped phone call and a dream shattered; 2 cousins killed in Parliament Street road accident

Yagya (20) and Abhav (14) were returning home after DC vs RCB match when their motorcycle was hit by a truck near Bangla Sahib; driver fled, police probe on

New Delhi.(Agency)
 "We will be back home in half an hour," Abhav told his father over a call but never returned. Yagya, 20, and Abhav, 14, went to watch an IPL match between Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) on Monday night. While returning home, a truck is said to have hit them near Bangla Sahib in central Delhi's Parliament Street area. Police said the accident was between their motorcycle and a goods carrier. They suffered head injuries, and family members said that they lay there for 15 minutes before help arrived. When the victims were rushed to hospital, where they were declared brought-dead. Yagya was a BSc student, a passionate guitarist and a cricket enthusiast who aspired to represent India some day. His

father, Shailendra, said that he practised the sport every morning. He also participated regularly in cultural events at his college.

Abhav, a Class 10 student, was talking to his father, Sumit, on the phone when the phone suddenly dropped. Abhav's 15th birthday was just three days away. Sumit had bought him a new cricket bat as a surprise gift, and preparations for a party were underway.

Their uncle Ravi Bhatia said, "Someone picked up the phone after the accident and informed my brother that his kids had met with an accident. Both of them were very close to

me. We hope that the person responsible is caught soon and punished." Eyewitnesses stated that the impact of the

lives could not be saved, said one. The truck driver had fled the scene immediately after the accident along with his vehicle.

Shailendra and Sumit run a dry fruit business in Chandni Chowk. The victims were their only children. On Tuesday morning, all the relatives had gathered at their house, mourning the loss and seeking justice. A case has been registered under relevant sections of the BNS and on the basis of the statement of an eyewitness. The offending vehicle has been identified, and efforts are on to apprehend the driver of the vehicle, a police officer said.

The bodies were shifted to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, and the postmortem examination report is awaited.



accident was very severe. People nearby immediately informed the police and helped take them to the hospital, but their

Delhi court jails 2 CBI officers in 25-year-old case, finds illegal raid on IRS officer was mala fide



New Delhi.(Agency)

A Delhi court on Tuesday sentenced two CBI officers to three months in jail for assaulting an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer and trespassing into his residence during a raid more than two decades ago. Judicial Magistrate Shashank Nandan Bhatt awarded the sentence to Ramneesh, now a joint director in the CBI, and V K Pandey, a retired ACP of Delhi Police. Both were also fined Rs 50,000 each.

The court had convicted the two on April 18, rejecting their claim that their actions were part of official duties. It held that the search and arrest of Ashok Kumar Aggarwal, a 1985-batch IRS officer, were carried out on October 19, 2000, with mala fide intent and constituted an abuse of power beyond their authority.

Aggarwal had alleged the raid was retaliatory, linked to disputes with senior officials. He claimed it was meant to undermine a Central Administrative Tribunal order directing a review of his suspension.

The judge found that the officers forcibly entered Aggarwal's house by breaking open the door without sufficient justification. Their actions, conducted in a mala fide manner, bore no reasonable nexus with lawful discharge of duty.

Dr Reddy's Wins Nod to Sell Generic Ozempic, Check Cost Of Weight-Loss Drug

New Delhi.(Agency)

Indian pharma major Dr Reddy's Laboratories has received regulatory approval from Health Canada to sell the first generic version of Novo Nordisk's blockbuster diabetes-cum-weight-loss drug Ozempic (semaglutide).

Health Canada said it authorised a semaglutide injection developed by Dr Reddy's after a full review of safety, efficacy and quality.

The approval covers the same once-weekly treatment for Type-2 diabetes as the branded Ozempic. Follow Markets Live Update

Canada becomes the first G7 country to clear a generic semaglutide product, marking a milestone in efforts to make GLP-1 therapies affordable. The generic launch comes after patent protections on semaglutide expired earlier this year in Canada, opening the door for competition. Analysts say this is a key test case for how generics might challenge branded peptides.

Dr Reddy's is expected to supply millions of doses once commercialised. Following the approval, Dr Reddy's stock came in focus. At the time of publishing this report, Dr Reddy's stock was trading at Rs 1,339.90, down by 0.8 per cent. The move follows earlier generic approvals in India and other emerging markets.

Fierce Price War Brewing Over Ozempic Generics

The entry of Dr Reddy's generic is triggering a price battle among pharmaceutical companies worldwide. In Canada, generic semaglutide prices are expected to be 45-90 per cent cheaper than the original Ozempic, according to Health Canada norms. More generic applications are under review, suggesting a crowded market ahead.

Globally, several drugmakers are racing to offer lower-cost versions of semaglutide and other GLP-1 therapies. Analysts expect some generics in certain markets to drive costs down to \$14 (about Rs 1,323) per month in competitive scenarios.

Delhi continues to bake at 40 degrees Celsius amid rain alert

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi remained under a yellow alert for rain and thunderstorms in isolated places on Tuesday morning even as it recorded its first 'warm night' conditions of the year, with minimum temperatures rising sharply above normal levels. Such warm conditions are recorded when the minimum temperature remains 4.5 to 6.4 degrees Celsius above normal while the maximum touches or exceeds 40 degrees Celsius.

People are likely to see a respite from searing heat that pushed temperatures beyond the 40-degree mark as rain, thunderstorms and gusty winds are expected to hit the capital from Tuesday night and continue for the next few days, said the weather department.

The city saw a slight dip in

temperatures on Tuesday as the maximum settled at 39.2 degrees Celsius. On Monday, Delhi recorded its second-hottest day in



April with a high of 42.3 degrees Celsius. Some parts of the capital also witnessed light precipitation during the day, with Palam and Lodi Road recording trace rainfall between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm.

The India Meteorological Department has issued 'orange' and 'yellow' alerts for thunderstorm,

dust storms and rain in different parts of Delhi on Tuesday. An 'orange' alert, which means "be prepared", has been sounded for southwest Delhi, with authorities warning of thunderstorms accompanied by winds reaching up to 60 kmph, along with the possibility of lightning and brief spells of rain.

A 'yellow' alert has been issued for parts of northwest Delhi, west Delhi, north Delhi, south Delhi and southeast Delhi, signalling the likelihood of thunderstorms and gusty winds in several parts. Experts said the national capital should also brace for dust storms in the coming days, attributing the changing conditions to a cyclonic circulation prevailing over central Pakistan and adjoining regions of Rajasthan.

Delhi-NCR wakes up to heavy rain, thunderstorms; bringing relief from intense heat

New Delhi.(Agency)

Residents across Delhi-NCR woke up to heavy rain and thunderstorms on Wednesday morning, bringing much-needed relief from the sweltering heat that had gripped the region over the past few days. The city also experienced gusty winds reaching speeds of 30-40 km/h amid intense thundershowers, which further brought down the mercury.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had issued a yellow alert for Wednesday, predicting that a western disturbance would trigger a sharp change in weather across the national capital and neighbouring regions.

On Tuesday, Delhi recorded a maximum temperature of 39.2 degrees Celsius, a slight dip from Monday, which was the second-hottest day of April with a high of 42.3 degrees Celsius.

A cyclonic circulation over adjoining areas of central

Pakistan, northwest Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana is currently active and moving towards northeast India, driving the change in weather. According to weather experts, as the system advances from Rajasthan, it may trigger dust storms along with moderate rain and thunderstorms, conditions typical of the pre-monsoon period. The maximum and minimum temperatures for Wednesday are likely to hover around 38 degrees Celsius and 27 degrees Celsius, respectively, amid continued alerts for thunderstorms and gusty winds, according to the weather department.



The sharp rise in night temperatures over the past few days had led to the season's first "warm night" conditions in the capital. Such conditions are recorded when the minimum temperature remains 4.5 to 6.4 degrees Celsius above normal while the maximum touches or exceeds 40 degrees Celsius.

Atishi questions BJP over Rs 2,500 women's promise, says 'not even 25 paise received'

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi LoP attacks ruling party over unfulfilled "Modi ki guarantee", alleges delay in cash transfer scheme while BJP defends governance record and counters in Assembly debate

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Atishi on Tuesday questioned the BJP-led Delhi government over its poll promise of providing Rs 2,500 per month to women, alleging that not even "25 paise" has reached beneficiaries.

Addressing a press conference, Atishi said that ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections in January 2025, PM Narendra Modi had promised that women in the national capital would start receiving Rs 2,500 in their bank accounts from March 8, calling it "Modi Ki Guarantee".

"Before the one-day session of the Delhi Assembly begins, we want to ask the BJP-led Delhi government one question: when will Delhi's women receive the '2,500 promised to



them?" she said. "8 March 2025 has passed and now even 8 March 2026 has passed. Forget Rs 2,500, not even 25 paise has reached the accounts of Delhi's women." Targeting Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Atishi said, "She goes to campaign in West Bengal and promises money to women there. I want to

ask her, you have already deceived the women of Delhi." Raising other issues, Atishi alleged that women now have to queue for Pink Cards for DTC buses and are facing difficulties accessing free healthcare services earlier available at Mohalla Clinics. Meanwhile, Burari MLA Sanjeev Jha said, "The BJP is using the Delhi Assembly for petty politics. Women will truly be empowered only when they receive their rights. The government must fulfil its promise of Rs 2,500."

Accepting merger is unlawful

Leader of Opposition Atishi on Tuesday criticised the Rajya Sabha Secretariat's notification accepting the merger of seven AAP MPs with the BJP, calling it "unlawful and unconstitutional", and said the Constitution does not permit such mergers under anti-defection provisions.

SBI calls for structural measures to manage rupee depreciation, inflation risks and BoP deficit

New Delhi.(Agency)

India needs a comprehensive and structural policy response to manage rising risks from rupee depreciation, imported inflation and a widening balance of payments (BoP) deficit, according to a report by the State Bank of India.

The report highlighted that the key concern at present is the "second-round effect" of external shocks, particularly through the exchange rate channel. It noted that depreciation in the rupee leads to higher imported inflation, while continued capital outflows further put pressure on the currency.

It stated, "The current Rupee depreciation is not in line with India's macro fundamentals! It is therefore imperative to control the second-round effects... hence ensuring that inflationary expectations does not get de-anchored...we need a structural solution to India's BOP deficit".

Second-round effects refer to the indirect impact of an initial economic shock spreading through the wider economy. In this context, a depreciation of the rupee increases the cost of imports like oil and raw materials (first-round effect). Over time, businesses pass on these higher costs to consumers, leading to a broader rise in prices and inflation (second-round effect). This can also push up inflation expectations, making it harder for policymakers to control price stability. Data in the report showed that the rupee has depreciated 6.39 per cent between April 2025 and February 2026, with an additional 3.63 per cent depreciation observed post the West Asia conflict. At the same time, cumulative foreign institutional investor (FII) outflows of USD 6.4 billion have added to pressure on the currency.

Aviation industry SOS as jet fuel prices zoom

New Delhi.(Agency)

Alarmed by the steep rise in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet have warned of shutting down operations unless the government intervenes to save the aviation sector, which is already bleeding due to the frequent airspace closures amid the war in West Asia. The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents the three airlines, have written to the civil aviation ministry seeking its urgent intervention to set the same fuel pricing mechanism uniformly across both domestic and international operations.

The letter pointed out that this was done in 2022 through the establishment of the 'crack band' mechanism (pricing framework linked to fair refining margins, or 'crack spread', between crude oil and ATF). This was set at \$12-22/barrel in 2022. As global jet ATF prices more than doubled to \$180-190/barrel since the war broke out in West Asia on February 28, the Indian government last month limited the hike to '15 per litre for domestic operations. However, for international operations, the price rose by '73 per litre.

ATF prices account for 30-40% of an airline's overall operating cost. Following the April hike, this percentage band increased to 55-60%. The letter said the 'irrational increase' in ATF prices will result in 'insurmountable losses' for airlines, grounding of aircraft and cancellation of flights. "In order to survive, sustain and continue operation, we request your urgent intervention for immediate and meaningful financial support to tide over the current situation," said the letter dated April 26.

The airlines are also seeking a temporary suspension of excise duty (currently set at 11%) on ATF and VAT rates in key states.

FIA has called for a pricing framework based on the 'crack band mechanism' (\$12-22/bbl), which was implemented in October 2022, claiming this leaves room for a reasonable and fair margin for oil marketing companies

United Arab Emirates says it will leave OPEC, OPEC+, a blow to the oil cartel

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

The United Arab Emirates said Tuesday it will leave OPEC effective May 1, stripping the oil cartel of its third-largest producer and further weakening its leverage over global oil supplies and prices.

The UAE's decision had been rumored as a possibility for some time, as it pushed back in recent years against OPEC production quotas it felt had been too low, meaning it wasn't able to sell as much oil to the world as it had wanted. "Having invested heavily in expanding energy production capacity in recent years, the bigger picture is that the UAE has been itching to pump more oil," Capital Economics wrote in an analysis. "The ties binding OPEC members together have loosened," it said, particularly after Qatar withdrew from the cartel in 2019.

Regional politics are also likely at play. The UAE has had increasingly frosty relations with Saudi Arabia, OPEC's largest producer, over political and economic matters in the Mideast, even after both came under attack by fellow OPEC member Iran during the war.

No immediate impact likely for world oil markets
The UAE's withdrawal from OPEC won't necessarily have any immediate effects in markets. That's because world oil supplies are sharply constrained by the war in Iran, which has closed off the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which one-fifth of global oil supplies, including much of the UAE's — is transported. On Tuesday, Brent crude, the international benchmark, traded above \$111 a barrel, or more than 50% above its prewar price. OPEC accounts for roughly 40% of the world's oil output, but its market power had been waning in recent years as the United States ramped up production. While Saudi Arabia had been producing more than 10 million barrels of oil a day before the war, the U.S. pumps more than 13 million barrels a day.

Health claim denied for late filing? Here's what you need to know

New Delhi.(Agency)

Missing a deadline while filing a health insurance claim has often meant losing out on money. But a recent ruling by the Bombay High Court may change that for many policyholders. The court has made it clear that a genuine claim cannot be rejected simply because it was filed late, reported The Economic Times.

The Bombay High Court said that insurance companies cannot deny hospitalisation claims only on the ground that they were submitted after the time limit mentioned in the policy. The court held that such restrictions cannot override a policyholder's right to receive benefits they are otherwise entitled to.

A bench of Justices Bharati Dangre and Manjusha Deshpande passed the order on April 20. It directed the insurer to reimburse the claim amount within eight weeks, along with 6% annual interest from the date the payment became due.

THE CASE BEHIND THE RULING

According to the report, the matter came up after CP Ravindranath Menon filed a petition seeking reimbursement for medical expenses. He was covered under a group health insurance policy provided through his employer, Export-Import Bank of India.

The policy was valid from April 2021 to March 2022. Menon submitted claims in May 2022 for expenses incurred during the policy period. However, the insurance company rejected a claim worth 1.13 lakh, saying it was filed beyond the 90-day limit specified in the policy.

The insurer argued that since the policy clearly mentioned this deadline, the claim was not valid.

WHY THE COURT DISAGREED

The court did not accept this reasoning. It observed that such time-limit clauses restrict the policyholder's ability to

access benefits that they are otherwise eligible for.

In its observation, the court said that these kinds of conditions cannot be sustained in law and must be treated as void. In simple



terms, the court made it clear that a delay alone cannot be used as a reason to deny a rightful claim.

It directed the insurer to reimburse the claim amount within eight weeks, along with 6% annual interest from the date the payment

became due.

WHAT EXPERTS SAY

Legal experts believe this judgment could have a wider impact on the insurance sector. They say the ruling makes it clear that insurers cannot reject valid claims merely due to procedural delays. The court has treated such time-limit clauses as invalid under Section 28(b) of the Indian Contract Act. Moreover, they see this as a significant shift, noting that companies can no longer rely on technical conditions to deny genuine claims. Instead, the focus should be on whether the claim itself is valid and justified.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR POLICYHOLDERS

For policyholders, this decision offers a sense of relief. Many people have faced claim rejections simply because they missed a filing deadline, even when their expenses were genuine.

Can India handle oil over 100? What it means for growth, inflation, markets

New Delhi.(Agency)

With total uncertainty becoming the new normal, economists and institutions are projecting growth under different scenarios; and market experts, following suit, are projecting various return scenarios under different West Asia conflict situations.

One thing can be said with certainty at this point in time: Globally, growth will be lower and inflation higher this year. Among large economies, the US, a net energy exporter, will be less affected by the crisis.

Countries like India, which are major energy importers, will be more impacted by the energy shock triggered by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The IMF has projected global growth to decline to 3.1% in 2026, assuming a short-duration war. Global inflation is projected to rise to 4.8%. In an adverse

scenario of persistent energy shock and tight financial conditions, global growth is projected at 2.5%. In a severely adverse scenario characterised by deeper and long-lasting conflict, IMF warns global growth to dip to 2%.



The third scenario appears a remote possibility now; but the concern is whether the second scenario might emerge impacting economies and markets.

INDIAN ECONOMY: FROM GOLDILOCKS TO VULNERABLE
At the beginning of 2026, the Indian

economy was in a Goldilocks setting: GDP growth was decent with FY26 growth projection at 7.6%; CPI inflation was running at 2.75%; fiscal deficit and current account deficits were well within targets of 4.4% and 1% respectively; forex reserves at around \$720 billion were comfortable, and Brent crude was trading at around \$62.

The fiscal stimulus provided by the government and the monetary stimulus by the RBI in 2025 had boosted the earnings growth prospects for FY27 and Nifty appeared to be resilient, trading around 26,000 levels. Then on February 28th, all hell broke loose with the US and Israel attacking Iran, triggering a major energy crisis with Brent crude spiking above \$100 and unleashing supply shocks in LPG and LNG. India's Goldilocks macro setting started moving towards a slippery zone and is now vulnerable to the energy shock, if the conflict lasts long.

India's gold jewellery demand falls 19% in Q1 2026: World Gold Council

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

India's gold jewellery consumption fell sharply by 19% year-on-year to 66.1 tonnes in the first quarter of 2026 due to high domestic gold prices that were 81% higher compared to the same period last year, according to the World Gold Council's Gold Demand Trends report for Q1 2026. In value terms, jewellery demand hit a first-quarter record of \$10 billion, underscoring a market that is buying less but spending more.

The volume decline reflects a broad shift in purchasing behaviour. Mass-market consumers cut back on purchases or switched to lighter-weight, lower-carat, and studded jewellery to offset the price impact, while high-income



buyers continued purchasing heavier pieces regardless of price. Exchange of old jewellery for new remained a dominant feature of the market during the quarter. Gold-backed borrowing also saw a dramatic rise — outstanding retail bank loans secured against gold jewellery stood at INR 4.3 trillion at end-February, up 124% year-on-year,

pointing to gold's deepening role as financial collateral in Indian households.

Where jewellery faltered, investment stepped in. Bar and coin demand in India jumped 34% year-on-year to 62.3 tonnes — the highest first quarter since 2013 — nearly matching jewellery consumption in tonnage terms. This is a significant structural shift in a market where jewellery has historically been a multiple of investment demand. Gold ETF inflows also continued through the quarter, supported by dip-buying as prices corrected in February and March. The WGC noted that some buyers who would ordinarily have purchased jewellery switched to bars and coins, which carry lower premiums.

This new form replaces 15G, 15H as PF rules get simpler. What it means for you

For years, EPF subscribers have been used to filing Forms 15G and 15H. That process has now changed. A single new form has replaced both, making PF rules simpler, but what does it mean for you?

New Delhi.(Agency)

If you've ever been confused about whether to fill Form 15G or 15H while withdrawing your EPF money, that confusion has now ended. From April 2026 onwards, there's just one form to remember, i.e., Form 121. The change may look small on paper, but for many taxpayers, it could make the process far

simpler and less error-prone.

AS SINGLE FORM FOR EVERYONE

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has introduced Form 121 as part of a new compliance system under the Income Tax Act, 2025. This new form replaces both Form 15G and Form 15H, which were earlier used based on age. Until now, individuals below 60 years had to submit Form 15G to avoid TDS, while senior citizens used Form 15H. From the financial year 2026-27 onwards, this distinction disappears. Form 121 will be used by all eligible taxpayers, regardless of age.

The EPFO also confirmed this update on X. It posted, "Form 15G/15H is no longer valid for claiming EPF TDS exemptions. Tax year 2026-27 onwards TDS Exemption is to be claimed by submitting Form 121 (as per the Income

Tax Act, 2025)."

WHAT EXACTLY IS FORM 121?

Form 121 is a self-declaration. By submitting it, you are stating that your total income for the year is below the



taxable limit and that no tax is payable by you.

This form can be used to avoid TDS not just on EPF withdrawals, but also on interest income, dividends and similar earnings where tax is usually deducted

at source.

WHO CAN USE THIS FORM?

Form 121 is open to resident individuals, including senior citizens. It can also be filed by Hindu Undivided Families and certain other eligible entities like trusts, as long as their total income is within the non-taxable limit.

The key condition remains the same: your total tax liability for the year should be zero.

WHAT CHANGES FOR EPF SUBSCRIBERS?

From April 1, 2026, EPF members will need to submit Form 121 every financial year if they want to avoid TDS on withdrawals beyond the specified limit.

If the form is not submitted, TDS will be deducted automatically on EPF withdrawals that cross the threshold. This makes timely submission important for those who want to avoid unnecessary deductions.

Short news

Power cuts return as demand soars in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.(Agency) Amid skyrocketing electricity demand due to soaring temperatures, the state government has decided to impose power curbs of less than 30 minutes between 6pm and midnight to maintain grid stability.

A high-level meeting, chaired by Additional Chief Secretary (Power) Puneet Kumar on Tuesday, evaluated the power consumption trend in the state, following which the State Load Despatch Centre chief engineer was instructed to implement short-duration restrictions. A daily evaluation of the developments will be done by the high-level officials.

The meeting evaluated that the average increase in power usage this year is much higher than the annual growth rate over the years. The daily power consumption touched an all-time high of 118.26 million units on Monday. While the demand after 6pm touched 6,033MW for the first time in the state's history, the need level rose further to 6,195 MW at 10.30pm on April 23, according to a statement issued by the electricity department.

The officials assessed that power restrictions are essential to avert serious issues in the transmission distribution network due to the increased demand, and ensure grid stability. While an unexpected summer heat surge remains the key issue for the current power crisis, increased charging of electric vehicles and use of air conditioners at night are also major contributing factors. People's shift towards induction cookers following the LPG crisis also played an important role in this.

Heat and habitat overlap drive a spike in snakebites in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.(Agency) A noticeable rise in snakebite incidents has been reported across Kerala since the onset of summer, with six deaths recorded as of April 28. While the numbers have sparked concern, experts emphasise that this seasonal increase is not unusual and is largely driven by three major factors - heat, hatching season, and the search for food.

"The heat and rising humidity, though not the only reasons, are among the main triggers. Snakes tend to move in such weather and often enter human spaces in search of cooler shelters," said Sandeep Das, research associate, department of zoology, University of Calicut. The second factor is the breeding and hatching season.

"March to May is when many species including cobras, kraits and vipers hatch. The emergence of these young snakes naturally leads to more sightings and human encounters," Das noted.

The third reason is linked to food availability. "Juvenile snakes move actively in search of prey such as frogs, lizards and rodents. As these prey species are commonly found near human habitations, snakes are also drawn closer to people," he added.

Das stressed that such trends follow a predictable pattern. "Snakebite cases typically peak between March and May, and again during the monsoon season. This is seen every year and should not be viewed as an unusual spike," he said. Experts also pointed out that many snakebite incidents are linked to preventable factors.

4 wild buffaloes from Kaziranga in Assam released at MP's Kanha

BHOPAL.(Agency) The Asiatic Wild Water Buffalo, which went locally extinct from Madhya Pradesh around a century ago, has been successfully reintroduced in the Kanha Tiger Reserve's (KTR) Supkhar forests - the dense forest area which, till some months back, had served as a safe interstate corridor-shelter for armed Naxal cadres.

Chief minister Dr Mohan Yadav inaugurated the Wild Buffalo Reintroduction Project at the Supkhar Forest Range of KTR in Balaghat district by releasing four wild buffaloes into the soft release boma on Tuesday.

The four buffaloes represented the first batch of the endangered species which was successfully translocated from Assam's Kaziranga National Park to MP's KTR on April 25 and reached the eastern MP's tiger reserve on Tuesday morning only.

While describing that the initiative marked the next chapter in the state's biodiversity conservation, the MP CM said that the initiative presents a remarkable opportunity for wildlife and ecological conservation in the state. The reintroduction will support grassland conservation and strengthen the ecosystem.

Importantly, in the first phase of the significant interstate wildlife collaborative project, at least seven sub-adult buffaloes were identified between March 19 and April 10, 2026, from the central and eastern ranges of Kaziranga. On April 25, four wild buffaloes started their 2,000 km journey from Kaziranga to Kanha Tiger Reserve.

Kanigiri railway station DEMU connectivity in Andhra set to become a reality soon

ONGOLE.(Agency) Finally, the long wait of Kanigiri area people for train connectivity is going to be a reality in a few days as the South Central Railway authorities have proposed to run a passenger train, Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU), to the newly established Kanigiri railway station through the Nadikudi-Srikalahasti line from Guntur Junction soon.

This passenger train will be operated six days a week and will cater to transport needs of the 169 km route with 17 stops, covering the distance in 3 hours and 25 minutes. Railway authorities have conducted trial runs on this new route several times and approved it. Local railway authorities received information a couple of days back regarding the DEMU train operations and

said they will inform the exact timings and halting stations soon.

As per the tentative schedule, this DEMU train will start from Guntur Junction at 7 am and

reach Kanigiri at 10.25 am, with halts at Phirangipuram, Narasaraopeta, Vinukonda, Darsi and Podili railway stations. After a brief

halt, the passenger train will start its return journey from Kanigiri via the same route and reach Guntur Junction on the same day.

To make the train journey a reality for Kanigiri area people, Ongole MP Magunta Srinivasulu

Reddy along with Kanigiri MLA Ugra Narasimha Reddy and district authorities submitted request letters to the railway ministry, higher authorities and Central and State governments several times.

The MP and MLA met with the concerned authorities and explained the necessity of this railway facility for the Kanigiri area. Accordingly, the Union railway ministry and SC Railway authorities approved the proposals and conducted feasibility surveys and other measures. The new railway station, platforms, ticket counters, passenger waiting rooms, water facility and staff quarters have also been completed.



No bulk supply of diesel at retail price for Amaravati works

The Ministry emphasised that OMCs already have Direct Sales mechanisms designed to meet the needs of bulk consumers, such as infrastructure and construction projects.

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency) Preparations for the Hemkund Sahib Yatra 2026 are in full swing as the revered Sikh shrine in Chamoli district gears up to welcome thousands of devotees. Located at an altitude of 4,633 meters, Hemkund Sahib is surrounded by seven snow-clad peaks and sits beside a glacial lake, making it one of the most spiritually significant and visually stunning pilgrimage sites in India.

To ensure the route is safe and accessible, the Indian Army has taken on the challenging tradition. On Sunday, Narendra Jeet Singh Bindra, President of the Gurdwara Hemkund Sahib Management Trust, met with Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhani to discuss preparations. He invited the Chief Minister to attend the farewell ceremony of the first batch of pilgrims.

State government is fully committed to the convenience

Chief Minister Dhani assured that the state government is fully committed to the



convenience and safety of devotees. He emphasised that arrangements are being continuously monitored and that every possible assistance will be provided to make the yatra successful, smooth, and organized. The government is focusing on avoiding any inconvenience to pilgrims and is coordinating with local authorities to strengthen facilities along the route.

Earlier, following the request from the CRDA, the State Civil Supplies Commissioner had written

to OMCs seeking facilitation of 27,566 KL of diesel between April and July 2026 for Amaravati works. The monthly requirement was detailed as 4,239 KL for April, 8,880 KL for May, 7,528 KL for June, and 6,920 KL for July. The request was made to ensure an uninterrupted fuel supply for ongoing construction activities in the capital region.

Mittal's letter underscored that any diversion of bulk fuel sourcing to retail outlets could raise safety, licensing, and operational concerns, apart from contravening statutory provisions. He requested the State government to ensure adherence to the regulatory framework 'in the interest of safety and uniformity in fuel distribution.'

Efforts to contact Civil Supplies Commissioner K Kanna Babu for his response on the matter were unsuccessful. The Centre's communication makes it clear that while Amaravati's construction requirements are significant, fuel supply must be routed through authorised channels.

Chintaki sees Karnataka's highest ever of 46 degrees Celsius

BENGALURU.(Agency) Chintaki in Aurad taluk of Bidar district on Monday recorded a maximum temperature of 46 degrees Celsius. Ever since the weather records have been kept, this is the highest maximum temperature recorded by a region in Karnataka, said Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) Director MS Divakara on Tuesday. On Tuesday, too, Chintaki recorded 46 degrees Celsius.

Raichur's Lingasguru recorded a maximum of 44 degrees Celsius and Bengaluru Urban 38 degrees Celsius. While the maximum peak temperatures are a concern, what is more important is how long these maximums stay, he said.

"The maximum peaks in Bidar and Raichur were recorded around 2.15 pm. It remained constant for sometime and then dipped slightly. For over seven hours, these two regions and many other parts of the state experienced over 40 degrees Celsius. This is now



becoming a growing concern," he said. Divakara said prolonged high temperatures impact minimum temperatures. This increases night temperatures, which are above normal by over 2-3 degrees Celsius. In Bengaluru, the minimum temperature on Monday was 25 degrees Celsius. For the last 29 days, the minimum temperature had been around 24 degrees Celsius. There is no cooling during night hours, which is impacting people, he said.

Heat staying longer; '27 set to be 10C hotter than '26

"We are now scientifically analysing the data. We are doing a correlation

assessment of temperatures, with their duration and impact. We are studying at what time it was hot and how long it stayed that way. Along with this, the humidity levels are also being noted. This prolonged heat is impacting human and animal health," Divakara said.

Speaking at a day-long workshop on "Extreme heat and its impact on Bengaluru", he said this trend of prolonged heat is rising and is worrying. District administrations have been given detailed guidelines of precautionary measures to be taken, but citizens too must exercise caution, he said. "As 2026 is the end of an El Nino year, historic data and scientific analysis shows that 2027 will be hotter by 1 degree Celsius compared to 2026. Citizens are advised to act now. A heat action plan has been prepared for many urban areas, but now there is a need to focus on small towns, hobbis and villages where temperatures are changing," he added. There has been a delay in the onset of pre-monsoon showers and the systems for the onset.

No specific direction to register FIR against Nehru in job scam case, says Madras HC

KURNOOL.(Agency) Alleging legal infirmities in the Madras High Court order, dated February 20, 2026, directing the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) to register an FIR forthwith on the alleged cash-for-jobs scam involving the TN Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MAWS) Department, minister for the department KN Nehru urged the court to suspend the order and give him protection from any such action by the DVAC.

However, the first bench of Chief Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Justice G Arul Murugan, before whom a contempt of court petition and the review petitions came up for hearing on Tuesday, adjourned the hearing to the fourth week of June.

Further, it noted that there was no specific direction in the February 20 order to register an FIR against the minister, when senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Nehru, pressed for suspending the order and not registering the FIR until the review plea is heard.

"There is no specific direction to register the FIR against the fifth respondent (Nehru). See the order, it only says the second respondent vigilance department is directed to register a case on the information shared by the ED and conduct detailed expeditious investigation," the bench said.

Recording the undertaking given by senior counsel V Raghavachari, appearing for the contempt petitioner IS Inbadurai MP, that he would not pursue the case until the court's summer vacation, the bench adjourned the hearing.

Karnataka clears recruitment for 56,432 posts after approving SC internal quota

BENGALURU.(Agency) With the state cabinet approving internal quota for Scheduled Castes, the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms has issued an order to proceed with the recruitment for 56,432 posts that have been okayed by the finance department.

The special cabinet on Friday decided to implement the temporary internal quota and split it up with 5.25% each for the SC 'right' and 'left' and 4.5% for others under the existing 15% quota for SCs even as it awaits legal clarity on 17% quota.

The government order issued by the DPAR under secretary on Tuesday stated that following an interim order of the High Court on Writ Petition No. 200448/2025,

the Karnataka government has decided to proceed with the recruitment and admissions under an interim reservation framework, subject to the court's final verdict. The 15% reservation will be implemented as 5.25% for Category A, 5.25% for Category B and 4.5% for Category C.

The order stated that of the quota earmarked for Category C, 20% of posts or seats will be reserved for 59 most backward sub-castes among Scs.

In case eligible candidates from these groups are unavailable, the vacancies

will be filled by other communities within Category C. If posts remain unfilled across SC categories, they will be treated under the general SC category and filled accordingly.

accordingly. The state has directed all recruiting authorities to expedite the filling of 56,432 sanctioned posts across departments.



NEWS BOX

BCCI urged to act after video of Riyan Parag vaping during IPL match sparks backlash

Mullanpur. (Agency)
The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is under increasing pressure to initiate disciplinary proceedings against Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Riyan Parag. The outcry follows a viral video allegedly capturing the cricketer vaping within the team dressing room during the clash against Punjab Kings at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium, an act that has drawn heavy fire from fans and observers alike. The controversy erupted during a match that was otherwise a celebration of Rajasthan's clinical brilliance. Chasing a massive 223, the Royals pulled off a sensational six-wicket victory with four balls to spare. While the spotlight should have remained on the blistering starts provided by Yashasvi Jaiswal (51) and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (43), and the cold-blooded finish by Donovan Ferreira (52), it was Parag's off-field conduct that dominated the post-match headlines.

The backlash centres on the message such behaviour sends to a dressing room currently championed for its youth. Fans have pointed out that the squad is populated by several impressionable youngsters, most notably the 15-year-old prodigy Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. The optics of a senior professional engaging in such an act in the presence of a minor has intensified the demand for accountability.

Adding a legal dimension to the controversy, the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA) 2019 strictly bans the production, sale, distribution, and storage of e-cigarettes and vapes across India.

Social media has served as a primary outlet for the public's frustration. One viral post, which gained significant traction, scathingly critiqued Parag's lack of situational awareness:

"That's not just 'unprofessional,' it's outright careless. A dressing room isn't some roadside adda where you can do whatever you want - it's a shared team space where discipline and respect are the bare minimum. At this level, you're not just another guy chilling with friends. You're a professional cricketer representing your franchise, your teammates, and thousands of fans who look up to you. Pulling off something like this doesn't make you look bold or 'cool' - it just exposes a lack of maturity and awareness."

Old Babar Azam is back? Pakistan star makes bold claim after 2nd PSL 2026 century

New Delhi. (Agency)

Babar Azam is not just scoring runs again; he is also answering his critics. After a turbulent 2026 T20 World Cup, in which Pakistan crashed out in the Super 8s and Babar came under intense scrutiny for a Powerplay strike rate that dipped below 100, the batter has found form again in the yellow of Peshawar Zalmi. On Tuesday night at the National Stadium in Karachi, he dismantled Islamabad United in the Qualifier to send his side into the final of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2026. The Zalmi captain's second century of the season was a much-improved display of T20 pacing. His 103 off 59 deliveries, which included 12 fours and four sixes, carried Peshawar to 221/7. In the process,



Babar moved to 588 runs for the tournament, equalling the all-time record for the most runs in a single PSL edition. He also became only the second batter after Usman Khan to score two centuries in the same PSL season. With his fourth century in the league, Babar now stands alone at the top of the all-time list of centuries. However, it was his post-match reflection that stood out.

"I'm starting to feel like I'm getting back to my best," Babar said, with a quiet confidence that had seemed absent during his recent international struggles.

"I'm trying to keep things simple and trust my skills, and just execute my game according to the situation - what the pitch demands, how to handle different bowlers, and when to attack," he added, shedding light on his improved form. The contrast with his World Cup form is sharp. Earlier this year, Babar managed only 91 runs in six matches during Pakistan's disappointing campaign, which led to his temporary removal from the ODI set-up and renewed questions about his fitness and relevance in T20 cricket.

Time for change? Why KKR should sack Rahane and appoint Rinku Singh as captain

IPL 2026: jinkya Rahane's time as KKR

captain seems to slowly coming to a halt and the three-time IPL champions need to put all their stock in Rinku Singh. With a change in direction needed, will Kolkata be brave to pull the plug on Rahane?

New Delhi. (Agency)

The captaincy role at Kolkata Knight Riders has never been an easy job in the IPL. Throughout their storied history, KKR have found major success under just one name - Gautam Gambhir. But even before the Gambhir era, the foundation was shaky. The early years under Sourav Ganguly were defined more by off-field friction than on-field results. The 'Dada' era was marred by a public power struggle with coach John

Buchanan and the infamous 'multiple captains' experiment, leaving the franchise in a state of constant turbulence.

It wasn't until 2011, when the team moved on from the local hero to appoint Gambhir, that the revolving door finally stopped. After Gambhir left, the search resumed. Dinesh Karthik, Eoin Morgan, and Shreyas Iyer all came through that door and eventually moved on - though Iyer, now leading PBKS, left the biggest mark by guiding KKR to their third star in 2024.

Since then, however, KKR have struggled to find an effective leader. Ajinkya Rahane's era has been underwhelming. An eighth-place finish last season hasn't been followed by any real improvement this time around, with Kolkata still stuck in the same spot - living on the edge.

Now, every game feels like a final. One more loss, and it could be curtains for them in IPL 2026. Usually, in such a situation, franchises look towards the future and identify players

around whom they can build for the next five years. In that list, Rahane is a name that doesn't quite fit.

At 37 and in the twilight of his career, the Mumbai batter's powers seem to be fading,



suggesting that a change of guard may be needed. KKR already have an ideal batting replacement for Rahane in Angkrish Raghuvanshi. But who takes the armband and runs with it?

ENTER RINKU SINGH

The 28-year-old has been with KKR since

2018 and has made himself synonymous with the franchise over the last few years. He was handed the vice-captaincy ahead of the season and even donned the skipper's cap during the second half of the match against MI.

Although he looked a bit flustered in that game, the last two matches showed his character and his hunger to win as he kept egging the players along. He played a crucial role in the wins against RR and LSG, and it seems like he has got his mojo back. He has also captained his state side, Uttar Pradesh, in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, and that was enough to convince Mohammed Kaif to vouch for him as the next KKR skipper.

"KKR should groom Rinku Singh as a future captain. Rinku Singh is an all-format player. Although he is not part of the Test team, he can bat well in all formats. I come from UP, and I know what he does for UP. A lot of batters score runs, but his runs come in a winning cause. So, that guy is ready and captains UP," Kaif said on his YouTube channel.

Sri Lanka Cricket shake-up: Why did its president and entire board

New Delhi. (Agency)

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) is undergoing a major overhaul following mass resignations from its board and executive committee, initiated by president Shammi Silva on Wednesday. The move comes after Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake insisted on a change in leadership within the national cricket body amid public pressure and ongoing allegations of financial irregularities.

The government is now likely to appoint an interim committee to take over the administration of the country's beleaguered cricket operations.

"The president of Sri Lanka Cricket, Mr Shammi Silva, has tendered his resignation from the post, effective today," an SLC media release said. "Along with him, the office bearers and members of the



Executive Committee of SLC have also submitted their resignations."

The statement added that the decision to resign was formally communicated to President Dissanayake and the Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Sunil Kumara Gamage. Reportedly, the resignations followed a meeting of the SLC executive committee on Tuesday, where the decision to step down en

masse was taken.

Silva first became SLC president in February 2019, replacing Thilanga Sumathipala, who also faced corruption-related allegations during his tenure. Although Silva was initially seen as close to Sumathipala, he gradually consolidated his position, serving four consecutive terms, with three elections going unopposed.

During his seven-year tenure, consistent global success remained elusive for Sri Lanka, despite the men's and women's teams winning Asia Cup titles. The men's team suffered a decline in rankings and endured disappointing exits at the 2023 ODI World Cup (finishing ninth) and the 2024 and 2026 T20 World Cups, the latter co-hosted by Sri Lanka. Even the recent appointment of Gary Kirsten as head coach of the men's team has failed to ease calls for a leadership overhaul.

FIFA World Cup: Red cards for covering mouth, yellow card suspension rules eased

Ahead of the FIFA World Cup, the governing body has announced a couple of major changes in rules. The revisions target concealed abuse, protests and time-wasting while reducing yellow-card suspensions in knockout matches.

New Delhi. (Agency)

In a landmark move to clean up on-field conduct and ensure the presence of star players in the latter stages of the tournament, FIFA and the International Football Association Board have announced significant amendments to the Laws of the Game ahead of the 2026 World Cup.

The new regulations introduce a strict crackdown on "concealed communication" while also offering a

double amnesty for yellow-card accumulations.

The most striking addition to the disciplinary code is the introduction of a straight red card for players who cover their mouths during on-field confrontations. This measure comes in



response to a series of high-profile incidents in which players were accused of using discriminatory or abusive language while hiding their lips to avoid lip-reading or VAR detection.

Lawmakers pointed to the controversial UEFA Champions League clash earlier

this year between Real Madrid and Benfica. Vincius Junior alleged he was racially abused by Gianluca Prestianni, but because the latter covered his mouth during the exchange, evidence was deemed insufficient for a full sanction. Prestianni was eventually handed a six-match ban on April 24, but the incident highlighted a loophole in officiating.

Similarly, the 2026 Africa Cup of Nations final saw chaotic scenes, with hidden insults allegedly prompting a temporary pitch walk-off by the Senegal national football team. Under the new mandate, any player who covers their mouth while confronting an opponent may be sent off at the referee's discretion. The IFAB said the aim is to "eliminate the cloak of invisibility" that has allowed such behaviour to persist on the pitch. Additionally, players who leave the field in protest of a referee's decision - as seen in the AFCON final - will now face an immediate red card.

Luis Enrique, Kompany share laugh after PSG-Bayern thriller

PSG edged Bayern Munich 5-4 in a thrilling Champions League semi-final first leg at the Parc des Princes, taking a narrow lead into the return fixture. Post-match, Luis Enrique and Vincent Kompany's light-hearted exchange went viral, highlighting rare camaraderie amid high-stakes action.

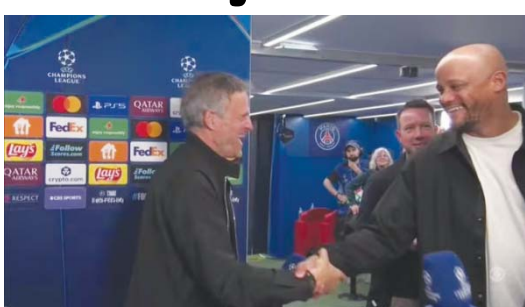
NEW DELHI. (Agency)

The UEFA Champions League produced a thrilling spectacle on Tuesday night as Paris Saint-Germain hosted Bayern Munich at the Parc des Princes in a high-scoring, end-to-end encounter that lived up to its billing. PSG edged the first leg 5-4, taking a slender

one-goal advantage into the return fixture. Remarkably, five of the nine goals came in a breathless first half, setting the tone for a night dominated by attacking football, defensive lapses, and constant momentum swings. Both sides looked capable of scoring at will, underlining the quality and firepower on display.

The entertainment, however, did not end with the final whistle. PSG head coach Luis Enrique was seen sharing a light-hearted moment with Bayern's Vincent Kompany, a gesture that quickly went viral across social media platforms. Fans widely praised the exchange as a refreshing display of camaraderie in a high-pressure semi-final setting.

After the match, Enrique spotted Kompany and jokingly asked whether he had watched the game from the stands and if he had



enjoyed it. Kompany responded with a playful "No" before breaking into laughter, a moment that quickly resonated with fans online. Kompany had been absent from the touchline due to suspension after accumulating three yellow cards earlier in the competition. His most recent booking came during Bayern's quarter-final second leg against Real Madrid at the Allianz Arena,

where he protested a refereeing decision following a heavy challenge on defender Josip Stanisic. With Kompany serving his suspension, assistant coach Aaron Danks oversaw proceedings from the sideline in Paris.

ATLETICO MADRID VS ARSENAL TO BRING OUT SIMILAR EMOTIONS?

Enrique's reaction told the story of a night where the margins were as thin as the quality was high. "We're really happy, and I think we deserved to win, but we also deserved a draw, and we would have even deserved to lose, because this game was that incredible," he said.

"I've never seen a game with that rhythm before. You have to congratulate the opponents, the players. When you hold a 5-2 lead like that, the opponents take so many risks - they're a top-level side. It was difficult, and the second leg will be too."

Rashmika Mandanna

To Return As Presenter At Anime Awards 2026 Alongside The Weeknd

Actress Rashmika Mandanna will be returning to the 10th Global Anime Awards as a presenter, set to be held in Tokyo, Japan on May 23, 2026. She made history as the first Indian to present an award at the 2024 Anime Awards in Tokyo on March 2, 2024. The global ceremony, which honours excellence in anime across categories, will see Rashmika join an esteemed lineup of international presenters, including global music sensation The Weeknd. Her presence marks a significant moment for Indian representation at a platform that celebrates storytelling, creativity, and the ever-growing global influence of anime culture.

It will be especially exciting to see Rashmika Mandanna and The Weeknd



share the stage as presenters, bringing together two massive global fan bases. Their combined presence is expected to add a unique energy to the ceremony, blending the worlds of cinema and music on an international platform and creating a memorable moment for audiences worldwide. Needless to say, Rashmika's fans were thrilled after she was announced as one of the presenters.

Rashmika Mandanna has carved a unique space for herself as a true pan-India phenomenon. With a career spanning multiple industries including Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Hindi cinema, she has consistently delivered performances that resonate with audiences across regions. Rashmika's growing global footprint is a testament to her versatility, relatability, and massive fan following that extends far beyond Indian

borders. Beyond cinema, Rashmika has often expressed her fondness for anime and its imaginative storytelling. From admiring iconic characters to appreciating the depth and emotion that anime narratives bring to life, her interest in the genre aligns seamlessly with the spirit of the Anime Awards. Her association with the event not only reflects her personal passion but also highlights the increasing crossover between global entertainment industries, where artists and audiences are united by shared creative influences.



Ranveer Allahbadia Makes Relationship Official With GF Juhi Bhatt | Samay Raina, Ashish Chanchlani React



Ranveer Allahbadia has finally made his relationship official with girlfriend Juhi Bhatt, sharing a series of romantic pictures from their Kenya holiday that have quickly gone viral. Posting the photos, Ranveer wrote, "Sun, moon, stars & everything in between Ever met someone whose light can burn away all of the world's negatives? I have ♥️," clearly confirming the relationship.

The photos capture intimate, candid moments — from a sunset shot where he lifts Juhi against a dramatic sky to a close-up selfie of the two smiling inside a safari vehicle. The post drew attention from fellow creators, with Ashish Chanchlani dropping a comment that read, "Jaldi ab kar shaadi." Actress kajalagarwalofficial dropped a red heart. Meanwhile, Samay Raina didn't comment but did like the post. This confirmation comes weeks after the two were spotted together at an IPL match in Mumbai — Mumbai Indians vs Royal Challengers Bangalore — in early April. A video from outside Wankhede Stadium had gone viral at the time, showing Ranveer and Juhi walking briskly when a fan approached him for a selfie. He declined and was heard saying, "girlfriend ke saath hoon." Later, several glimpses of the duo enjoying the MI vs RCB match from the stands surfaced on social media. Their coordinated outfits also drew attention from fans online. Who is Ranveer Allahbadia's girlfriend Juhi Bhatt?

Juhi Bhatt is a Mumbai-based actor, dancer and digital content creator with a growing presence in fashion and lifestyle content. She has over 468K followers on Instagram. Trained in Kathak and contemporary dance, she later transitioned into acting after working in film marketing. She has appeared in the web series Tumse Na Ho Paayega, collaborated with FilterCopy and made a special appearance in the song Ve Fukrey from Fukrey 3. She was also seen in the paranormal series Bhay: The Gaurav Tiwari Mystery, starring Karan Tacker and Kalki Koechlin.

Ranveer Allahbadia India's Got Latent Controversy
Ranveer Allahbadia faced a major controversy in 2025 after an episode of India's Got Latent, where he asked a contestant an offensive question: "Would you rather watch your parents have sex every day for the rest of your life or join in once to make it stop forever?" While the panel, including Apoorva Mukhija and Ashish Chanchlani, laughed it off, the remark sparked massive backlash online and led to multiple FIRs against him and the show's makers.

'Stay Honest': Ranbir Kapoor Said THIS To Sister Riddhima Kapoor Sahni Ahead Of Her Debut In Daadi Ki Shaadi



Kapil Sharma and Neetu Kapoor have teamed up for the first time for a film titled Daadi Ki Shaadi. The film has become the talk of the town ever since the first look dropped. It revolves around second chances and relationships. While audiences are eager to see Kapil Sharma and Neetu Kapoor in action, there is equal excitement around Riddhima Kapoor Sahni. The daughter of Neetu and the legendary actor, late Rishi Kapoor, is making her much-awaited debut in a pivotal role. She will be seen adding a unique layer to the emotional family dynamics, keeping people hooked.

Ahead of the film's release, Riddhima Kapoor Sahni revealed that she received important advice from her brother and actor Ranbir Kapoor. She shared, "I spoke to Ranbir before starting. His biggest advice was to stay honest in front of the camera. He told me to trust my instincts and just live the character rather than perform it—and that really stayed with me."

The audience has watched Riddhima before in Netflix's Fabulose Lives vs Bollywood Wives. The series also featured Maheep Kapoor, Bhavana Pandey, Neelam Kothari Soni, Seema Sajdeh, Shalini Passi, and Kalyani Saha Chawla. Her debut film now marks an exciting new chapter as she steps into the world of cinema, with fans keen to see how she translates her on-screen presence from reality television to the big screen.

Produced by Rtake Studios, BeingU Studios, and Shimla Talkies, Daadi Ki Shaadi, also starring Sadia Khateeb, is written and directed by Ashish R Mohan. It is set to release on 8th May 2026.

Meanwhile, Ranbir Kapoor is currently busy promoting his film, Ramayana. The Nitesh Tiwari directorial will feature him as Lord Rama. The film also stars Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravana, and Sunny Deol as Hanuman. It is one of the most awaited films of 2026. Backed by Namit Malhotra, the mythological saga will arrive in theatres on Diwali 2026.

Aneet Padda's

School Girl Look From Shakti Shalini Set Goes Viral, Fans React

Actress Aneet Padda made her big Bollywood debut in 2025 with Mohit Suri's Saiyaara. She was seen alongside Ahaan Panday, and the fresh pairing quickly grabbed attention for their on-screen chemistry. Marking a promising start to her film career, Aneet impressed audiences with her performance, establishing herself as a talent to watch out for in the industry. The actress is now all set to be seen in Maddock Films' Shakti Shalini, and she has already started shooting for it. A video of her from the sets has gone viral now, upping the excitement around the film. In the viral video, Aneet Padda can be seen donning a green school uniform. The look is completed with a braided hairstyle. She is seen walking on the set with her team. The clip is reportedly shot in Gwalior, reflecting film's grounded setting. It has sparked curiosity amongst her fans.



Soon after the clip was shared online, fans were seen gushing over it. One fan commented, "I hope ss work for her people are already out there ready to pounce on her." Another fan wrote, "Maddock better be making this one good. All the best to aneet and team." One of the comments also read, "this is most probably flashback. She is not playing a role of schl girl."

Aneet's entry to Maddock Films' horror-comedy universe was announced in Ayushmann Khurrana and Rashmika Mandanna's Thamma. In the end credits, Aneet was introduced as Shakti Shalini along with a message that read, "The protector. The destroyer. The mother of all. Aneet Padda in Shakti Shalini. Shakti unleashed Dec 24, 2026."

Meanwhile, Aneet Padda has also reunited with Ahaan and Mohit for another intense love story. Backed by YRF, the yet-to-be-titled film promises a cinematic experience that blends heartfelt storytelling with unforgettable melodies. It is set to go on floors later this year and will be eyeing a 2027 theatrical release worldwide.



NEWS BOX

Donald Trump's face to feature on limited edition US passports

World. (Agency)

After President Donald Trump's signature on all US currency, a commemorative gold coin bearing his image, the United States is now set to produce a limited number of commemorative passports bearing his portrait as part of plans to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence. The US State Department said the passports will be released as part of celebrations for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in July. Renderings shared by the department show Trump's portrait on an inside page, opposite an image depicting the signing of the Declaration in 1776.

"These passports will feature customised artwork and enhanced imagery while maintaining the same security features that make the US passport among the most secure documents in the world," State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott said.

Officials did not clarify whether citizens can opt out of receiving the commemorative version, but said there would be no additional fee for those issued the limited-edition passports. The move is part of a broader set of initiatives tied to the anniversary. The United States Department of the Treasury has announced that new US paper currency will carry Trump's signature—marking the first time a sitting president's signature will appear on American money. The US Mint is also planning a commemorative gold coin bearing his image.

Since returning to office, the administration has increasingly linked Trump's name and likeness to official projects, including federal programmes, public infrastructure and proposed naval assets, reflecting a wider effort to brand government initiatives with the president's identity.

Sri Lanka to resume Chemmani mass grave excavation tied to LTTE conflict under diplomatic presence

World. (Agency)

A Sri Lankan court has ordered the resumption of excavation work at a mass grave in Chemmani, on the outskirts of Jaffna, seven months after it was halted. The site first came into focus during the civil war with the LTTE in the 1990s. The court has allowed diplomatic representatives from the EU, France, Germany, Italy and Romania to be present as observers at the excavation site.

Work in Chemmani, in the Northern Province, had been suspended in September last year due to delays in fresh funding from the Ministry of Justice. The Jaffna magistrate's court was told on Tuesday that an allocation of LKR 2.1 million has now been made available to resume the process.

Before the halt, 240 skeletal remains had been recovered during 45 days of excavation. Investigators also uncovered 14 piles of bones and items including infant feeding bottles, a doll, toys, and children's bags and shoes.

According to a report submitted by Jaffna's judicial medical officer on August 14, the work was expected to continue for a further eight weeks.

During routine development work in Chemmani on February 13, 2025, skeletal remains had been discovered. The court a week later ordered a judicial examination of them. On May 15, the excavations began under judicial supervision. Chemmani came under focus in 1998 at the height of the conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and government troops for an alleged mass grave.

Young Palestinian artists in Gaza exhibit their impressions of war as a fragile ceasefire holds

BUREIJ. (Agency)

Young Palestinian artists in Gaza staged an impromptu exhibit on Tuesday, seeking another way to show the world what has happened during the war and the fragile ceasefire.

The row of paintings, like much of Gaza life itself, was displayed outdoors, open to the weather and curious stares. There was a painting of a dove, a bullet hole, a person's silhouette in a territory where the war between Israel and the militant Hamas group has killed well over 70,000 people.

It was a sunny day in Bureij in central Gaza. Children shouted and played as admirers of the paintings took photos and reflected. "They painted their feelings, their ambitions, their hopes, their visions, over four months during a continuous workshop in my studio," said Ghanem Al-Din, who organized the exhibit of dozens of paintings.

One artist was displaced seven times
Obay Al-Qarshali, 21, was one of the artists. He said he fled his home in Gaza City in late 2023 after the war began, sparked by the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack on southern Israel. He took only what he could in his hurry, leaving over 30 of his paintings behind. They are now lost in the bombing and destruction, he said.

His painting on display showed broken glass, cars topped with mattresses and other belongings and the debris of buildings. All are too familiar for him and hundreds of thousands of fellow Palestinians who have been displaced, often more than once.

Al-Qarshali said he had changed locations at least seven times in the war. "Because of how much we were displaced and suffered in moving and carrying our belongings, the tents, the crowds, and so much more, I wanted to express something that deeply troubled me: that we left our homes and our safe places, forced to flee, scatter, and change our location."

You'd be speaking French without us: King Charles roasts Trump with history jab

Blending humour with history, King Charles III turned a White House toast into a witty reminder of Anglo-American ties.

New York. (Agency)

King Charles III delivered a light-hearted yet sharp-witted history lesson at the White House dinner on Tuesday, playfully roasting US President Donald Trump by suggesting that, without British intervention in North America, Americans might well be speaking French. The exchange unfolded as the two leaders struck a warm tone on the "special relationship" between the UK and the US, despite underlying tensions over the war in Iran. The British monarch used the moment to refer to Trump's earlier remarks on

European allies and defence spending. "You recently commented, Mr President, that if it were not for the United States, European countries would be speaking German. Dare I say that if it wasn't for us, you'd be speaking French," King Charles said, drawing loud laughter from the audience.

He was referring to the colonial-era rivalry between Britain and France in North America, long before US independence, when the two powers battled for territorial dominance across the continent.

The quip also nodded to Trump's remarks at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in January, where he said that without American intervention in World War II, Europeans would be "speaking German and a little Japanese".

Charles continued with a series of self-

deprecating jokes, including a reference to British troops burning down parts of the White House during the Burning of Washington in 1814. "We British, of course, made our own attempt at real estate

Boston Tea Party," referencing the historic protest against British taxation.

Trump, known for his admiration of the British royal family, responded with humour of his own, largely aimed at domestic politics. He congratulated the king on his earlier address to Congress, joking, "He got the Democrats to stand — I've never been able to do that."

The British King marked the 250th anniversary of American independence from Britain with gratitude that the two countries united to build "one of the most consequential alliances in human history" while urging "that we ignore the clarion calls to become ever more inward-looking." Addressing the joint session of the US Congress, Charles repeatedly highlighted the historical and cultural ties that he said have cemented an enduring bond between the United States and the United Kingdom.



Iran to run out of space to store oil in weeks? What happens then?

World. (Agency)

Amid the war with the US and Israel, Iran is heading towards a critical oil storage crunch as its crude exports remain choked by the US naval blockade near the Strait of Hormuz. With shipments collapsing and oil continuing to flow from its fields, storage tanks and floating facilities are filling up quickly. As there is a looming storage space runout, Iran might have to scale back its oil production. Analysts warn that this could force deeper output cuts in the coming weeks, potentially shutting its oil wells and disrupting long-term production capacity, as excess crude has nowhere to go amid the export blockade.

According to a report by the research firm Kpler, Iran has just 12 to 22 days of unused storage capacity left, raising the risk of forced production shutdowns. The storage crunch is a direct result of the sharp fall in Iran's crude exports. The report reveals Iran's oil exports were unaffected as the Strait of Hormuz was under the control



of Iran's armed forces, the IRGC. The exports of Iran have drastically dipped after the US President Donald Trump imposed a naval blockade targeting Iranian ports and shipping near the Strait of Hormuz on April 13.

The blockade has disrupted tanker movements and effectively curtailed Iran's ability to ship oil to global markets. To counter the growing oil storage crisis, Iran has also revived its 30-year-old oil tanker Nasha.

As exports plunged, oil that would typically be shipped abroad by Iran is now being diverted into domestic storage tanks and floating storage on vessels. However, this temporary

solution is reaching its limits quickly. The report by Kpler notes that loadings of Iranian crude onto tankers have dropped sharply, significantly reducing outbound flows.

Iran has reduced its crude oil production by as much as 2.5 million barrels per day, reflecting the pressure from collapsing exports, while regional producers, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have also been forced to curb output since the conflict erupted on February 28, according to Bloomberg News, citing a report by Investment banking company, Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Tuesday warned that Iran's oil production will be shut down soon and cited the US naval blockade as the reason behind this. "While the surviving IRGC Leaders are trapped like drowning rats in a sewage pipe, Iran's creaking oil industry is starting to shut in production thanks to the US blockade," Bessent posted on X.

89-Year-Old Gunman Arrested After Mass Shooting In Athens, At Least 4 Wounded

World. (Agency)

An 89-year-old man opened fire at a social security office and courthouse in central Athens, Greece, wounding several people on Tuesday. Law enforcement authorities said the suspect was arrested near the city of Patra, some 210 kilometres west of the Greek capital.

The suspect who was armed with a shotgun wounded an employee at the social security office. By the time police officers arrived at the scene, the gunman was gone.

The suspect first went to the fourth floor of the social security fund's offices in the Kerameikos area of central Athens and opened fire after he called at an employee "to duck". His

shot hit another employee who was wounded in the leg. Alexandros Varveris, head of the National Social Security Fund, said that the gunman



was wearing a trench coat under which he had hidden the shotgun. The same gunman later opened fire again on the ground floor of a court building in another part of the city and wounded

several people there, the police said. At least three female court employees were slightly wounded by ricocheting shotgun pellets, while media reports said that a fourth female employee was transported to a hospital without physical injuries.

The motive for the attack is still unclear at the moment. However, state broadcaster ERT reported that the gunman had thrown envelopes with documents on the floor of the courthouse before shooting, saying that those were the reasons for his actions.

"He went in, went up to the fourth floor, raised his shotgun, told an employee to duck and hit another one," Varveris told ERT radio. He said the gunman didn't appear to specifically target the employee he hit.

Fox News host caught on mic questioning security before White House event shooting



World. (Agency)

What began as a throwaway red carpet remark is now being replayed as a chilling prelude. Fox News host Jimmy Failla was caught on a hot mic criticising security arrangements at the White House Correspondents' Dinner — just minutes before chaos unfolded inside the venue. According to the New York Post, Failla was unknowingly livestreamed as he spoke candidly while interviewing attendees on the red carpet.

"Looks like they have like two random chicks holding the front door open," he said, apparently unaware his mic was live. Failla didn't stop there. "They're not even trying anymore. I just mean like they're not even like Secret Service people, it's like the girls who work here are holding the door. Even if it was the guys, it wouldn't even make it better. "They might as well put a doorstop in. They put up a doorstop and a scarecrow: Don't f**k with this guy," he added. At the time, it sounded like classic comic exaggeration. Within an hour, it didn't.

FROM JOKE TO FLASHPOINT

The remarks came shortly before a gunman, identified as Cole Allen, allegedly breached security inside the venue and opened fire. Authorities said the suspect was attempting to target US President Donald Trump and senior officials before being neutralised by the Secret Service. Failla later told Fox News he had just left the red carpet when the shooting began.

The sequence of events, offhand criticism followed by a real breach, has since fuelled intense scrutiny of security arrangements at one of Washington's most high-profile gatherings. In the aftermath, the Secret Service said the overall security model had worked but acknowledged that improvements would be made.

CHAOTIC SCENE UNFOLDED MINUTES AFTER GALA BEGAN

The shooting at the security barricades happened minutes after the event got underway.

Resolve seen after 9/11 attacks needed for Ukraine: King Charles tells US Congress

Addressing lawmakers in Washington, King Charles said the "unyielding resolve" seen after 9/11 was "needed for the defense of Ukraine and her most courageous people ... in order to secure a truly just and lasting peace."

World. (Agency)

Britain's King Charles III addressed a joint session of the US Congress on Tuesday during his state visit, delivering a clear message that the same determination

shown by the United States after the September 11 attacks is now needed to support Ukraine. He framed the moment as one of global uncertainty, where unity and resolve could shape the course of ongoing conflicts.

Addressing lawmakers in Washington, he said the "unyielding resolve" seen after 9/11 was "needed for the defense of Ukraine and her most courageous people ... in order to secure a truly just and lasting peace." The King emphasised that cooperation between Europe and the United States remains critical in the current global climate. He described the transatlantic alliance as "more important today than it has ever been", pointing to shared security challenges and the need for coordinated action. He also stressed that the UK is stepping up its role. "The United Kingdom recognises that the threats we face demand a transformation in British defence," he said, noting that Britain is increasing

defence spending to meet emerging risks. Referencing history, he reminded lawmakers how the UK stood alongside the US after 9/11, including support under Nato's



collective defence clause. "We stood with you then and we stand with you now in solemn remembrance of a day that shall never be forgotten," he said, prompting a standing ovation.

NATO, SECURITY AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The King also highlighted the importance of Nato, noting that the alliance invoked its Article 5 defence clause only once — in response to the 2001 attacks on the

US. Drawing on remarks by Henry Kissinger, he spoke of the enduring "Atlantic partnership" and the need to strengthen it further. He pointed to defence and intelligence cooperation as key pillars of that partnership, referencing his own experience serving in the Royal Navy. His comments came at a time when questions have been raised about burden-sharing and military commitments among allies.

KING CHARLES CONDEMNS WHCD SHOOTING

He also condemned recent violence in Washington, including the attempted attack at the White House Correspondents' Dinner. "Whatever our differences, whatever disagreements we may have, we stand united in our commitment to uphold democracy, to protect all our people from harm," he said.