

MAHANAGAR METRO

VOICE OF THE CITY, PULSE OF THE NATION

Sonia Gandhi, Rahul, I Will Decide: Mallikarjun Kharge On Karnataka Leadership Change

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge emphasised that the party high command follows a structured consultative process involving senior leadership before arriving at any conclusion on key organisational and political matters.

Kalaburagi (Karnataka).(Agency) Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday clarified that any decision regarding a possible change in Karnataka Chief Minister will be taken collectively by the party's high command, comprising himself, Sonia Gandhi, and Rahul Gandhi. Speaking to the media, Kharge said, "They said there's a talk of change every day. Let me clarify, the decision will be made by all three of us together: myself as AICC President, Sonia Gandhi as CPP Chairperson, and Rahul Gandhi as Leader of the Opposition."He emphasised that the Congress high command follows a structured



consultative process involving senior leadership before arriving at any conclusion on key organisational and political matters.

"I always emphasise our collective decision-making process, yet you often spin it as if Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi aren't involved. That's not the case. Within the High Command, we hold extensive discussions and consult with other senior leaders, carefully weighing the potential outcomes before taking any action. Once we've set a date, we will reach a final decision together.

As of now, no date has been finalised, so it's premature to speculate on any changes," he added.

Kharge further stated that once a decision is taken, it will be in the best interest of Karnataka and urged everyone to respect the final call of the party leadership."I urge you to report the facts: we are committed to our word, and any decision made will prioritise the state's interests. Everyone must respect the High Command's final decision," he asserted.Earlier on Thursday, Kharge had said that the Congress high command is expected to soon resolve the leadership uncertainty in Karnataka, either by allowing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to continue in office or by approving a cabinet reshuffle, depending on the organisational assessment.

The Congress government in Karnataka has been witnessing internal differences over leadership-sharing arrangements, particularly between supporters of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar. Sections within the party have been demanding that Shivakumar be made Chief Minister for the remaining term, citing an alleged 2023 "power-sharing agreement".

Bhagwant Mann lays foundation for Rs 14.63 crore sports stadium in Sangrur

Spanning across 4.63 acres, this sports stadium will offer professional training facilities and host a wide range of sports, including badminton, handball, judo, netball, basketball, volleyball, football, gymnastics, kabaddi and karate.



New Delhi.(Agency)

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, on Thursday, laid the foundation of a modern sports stadium that will be built at a cost of Rs 14.63 crore.Spanning across 4.63 acres, this sports stadium will offer professional training facilities and host a wide range of sports, including badminton, handball, judo, netball, basketball, volleyball, football, gymnastics, kabaddi and karate, a PTI report said.

"The stadium will have a 200-metre athletic track, pavilion for spectators and players and a multipurpose indoor sports hall," Mann said "It is a historic day for the region as this stadium is coming up at a cost of Rs 14.63 crore. This stadium will be constructed over an area of 4.38 acres, and the complex will host various sporting activities," he added.

Reaffirming the Punjab government's focus on youth development, Mann said, "It is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that the Punjab government is successfully providing world-class facilities for education and sports."

MANN INAUGURATED COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

In a separate incident, Mann also inaugurated a new community health centre in the Kohriyan village of Sangrur district. After the inauguration ceremony, Mann said that the newly-opened centre would serve people from 85 villages and they would not feel the need to rush to cities for their treatment. "Now, villagers will not have to rush to cities for specialist doctors, 4 OPDs, modern operation theatres, a laboratory, and X-ray facilities. All medicines, tests, and maternal-child services will be provided completely free of charge here," Mann said through a post on X.

The Aam Aadmi Party leader further added that the hospital offers 24-hour emergency services and the facility of an Ooat centre for de-addiction."The main objective of our government is to deliver health services to every home. We deliver on what we say. Our steps continue to move forward steadily towards building a healthy Punjab," he further added.

Congress slams Amit Shah over Ladakh visit, flags silence on statehood and Sixth Schedule demands

Jairam Ramesh says Home Minister is focusing on Piprahwa relics while ignoring key issues of land, jobs and autonomy in Ladakh

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Congress on Friday took a swipe at Home Minister Amit Shah over his Ladakh visit, saying he is basking in the glory of the Piprahwa relics, while remaining silent on the demands of the people there for statehood, Sixth Schedule status, and protection of land and employment.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh recalled India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's July 1949 visit to Ladakh."The HM is in Ladakh today basking in the glory of the Piprahwa relics, while remaining silent on the demands of the people there for statehood, Sixth Schedule status, and protection of land and employment," Ramesh said



on X. Shah will be unaware of previous such displays in Ladakh, Ramesh saidOn January 14, 1949, the sacred relics of the two chief disciples of the

Buddha - Sariputta and Maha Moggallana Arahants -- taken by the British from the Sanchi Stupa in 1851 and kept in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London were received back by Nehru and handed over to the Mahabodhi Society of India in Kolkata on January 14, 1949, he recalled.

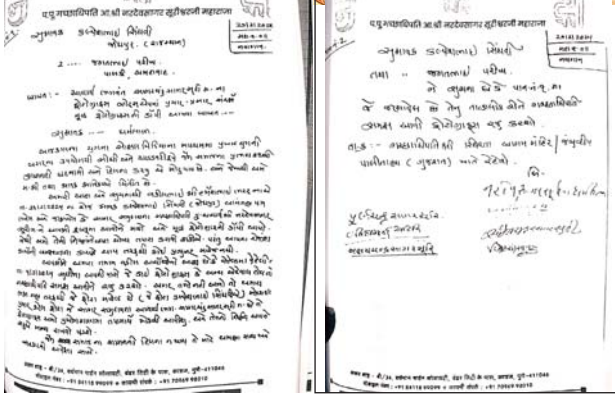
"A few months later in early July 1949 - just after the passage of the Bodhi Gaya Temple Act, 1949 by the Bihar Govt - Nehru visited Ladakh for four days. During this visit, the venerable Kushok Bakula Rinpoche requested Nehru that these relics should be sent to Ladakh as well," Ramesh said. A year later in May 1950 this materialised, and the relics were taken around Ladakh for 79 days, he said.

MAHANAGAR METRO | SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Mahanagar Metro Won't Be Intimidated by Threats from 'White-Collar' Goons; Jagat Parekh and His Disruptive Network Face Inevitable Exposure

Pawan Mekan (Group Editor)

Surat: Those dreaming of intimidating the peace-loving Jain community through fear and coercion have been put on notice. Ever since Mahanagar Metro began exposing the alleged activities of individuals like Jagat Parekh, Hardik Hudiya, and Vikram Bafna, the foundations of this network have reportedly started to shake. Now, those who once projected influence are resorting to legal threats, attempting to silence reporting through intimidation.Direct Challenge, Yet No ResponseA turning point came when a religious leader (Gadipati Maharaj) reportedly issued a written challenge to Kalpesh Sanghvi and Jagat Parekh, asking them to present any evidence or documentation supporting their claims. Weeks have passed, yet no substantiated response has emerged. Even after legal notices were served through counsel, there has been no formal reply.Mahanagar Metro raises a pointed question: those who possess truth stand firm and present it openly—those who rely on fear tactics often retreat when confronted with legal scrutiny.Response to



Threats: Reporting Will ContinueThe group is now said to be threatening defamation proceedings against the publication. Mahanagar Metro maintains that attempts to

the framework of law.Alleged Syndicate Under ScrutinyFrom Surat's Vesu Jain temple to projects in Ahmedabad, a pattern has been al-

leged:• Creating hurdles in religious construction projects• Filing complaints and invoking reputational pressure• Seeking large financial "settlements" to withdraw oppositionWith growing awareness, sections of the Jain community are beginning to resist such tactics. The publication asserts that it will continue examining all aspects, including individuals, facilitators, and any systemic links.Editorial Statement by Pawan MekanPawan Mekan, Founding Group Editor of Mahanagar Metro, stated that intimidation will not deter public-interest journalism. He emphasized that the platform will continue reporting on issues affecting society and religious institutions until accountability is established through due process.Call for Administrative ActionMahanagar Metro has urged the Gujarat Home Department and senior police authorities to examine the allegations thoroughly. It has called for appropriate legal action, including investigation into organized networks, financial activities, and any alleged honeytrap operations, in accordance with the law.

Harbhajan Singh challenges AAP-led Punjab's security withdrawal in High Court

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Rajya Sabha MP and former India cricketer Harbhajan Singh has approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court challenging the Punjab Government's decision to withdraw his security cover and seeking its immediate restoration.

In his petition, Harbhajan Singh questioned the basis on which his security was withdrawn and also sought action against the mob that allegedly attacked his residence and wrote "gaddar"



(traitor) outside his house.

The High Court, hearing the matter, issued notices to the Punjab Government and the Centre and sought their responses. The court also directed authorities to ensure the safety and security of Harbhajan Singh and his family members until further proceedings in the case.The judge asked the Punjab Government to clarify the basis of the security review and inform the court about the action taken in connection with the "gaddar" incident outside the Rajya Sabha MP's residence. The court further directed the state to place on record its official stand along with the threat assessment report.

The Punjab government withdrew Harbhajan Singh's security on Saturday, following which the Centre provided him CRPF protection. The move came after he left the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a Rajya Sabha MP, along with several others, including Raghav Chadha.The next hearing in the matter has been scheduled for

News box

Building linked to land mafia in Gurgaon razed by GMDA

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Bulldozers rolled into Budhera village on Thursday as GMDA, joined by the crime branch and district police, demolished illegal constructions linked to a local land mafia.

The action targeted an unauthorised property on agricultural land allegedly being used as an office. The structure comprised around five rooms, a kitchen and a separate toilet block, all constructed without approvals. Officials said the property is linked to Narender alias 'Pavva', son of Kamal Singh, who has multiple criminal cases registered against him.

According to GMDA, the demolition was carried out under Section 12(2) of the Punjab Scheduled Roads and Controlled Areas Restriction of Unregulated Development Act, 1963, which prohibits construction in controlled areas without permission from the authority. The drive was led by GMDA's nodal officer for encroachments and district town planner RS Batth, with officials from the enforcement wing. About 100 police personnel stood guard.

"We are committed to strict enforcement of development regulations, and any attempt to encroach upon govt land or carry out unauthorised construction will be dealt with firmly. Drives are being conducted regularly, and we will continue to dismantle illegal structures raised by land mafias. Our priority is to safeguard public land and ensure planned urban development," Batth said.

Woman returning home dies in hit-and-run accident in Gurgaon

Noida.(Agency)

A 30-year-old woman died after being hit by an unidentified speeding vehicle near Sector 35 on Wednesday evening. The deceased, Rashmi Devi, was living in Begampur Khatola village for the past two months. Around 4pm on April 29, she was returning home from a nearby shop when the incident took place near the Sector 35 flight simulation technique centre.

"A vehicle struck her at high speed and fled the spot, leaving her critically injured," an officer said. She was rushed to the Civil Hospital in Sector 10, where doctors declared her dead.

Police said they received information about the accident and reached the hospital, where the body was shifted to the mortuary for autopsy. Rashmi's brother, Balram, who came from UP, submitted a written complaint seeking legal action against the driver. Based on the complaint, a case was registered at Badshahpur police station under sections 281 (rash driving) and 106 (death by negligence) of BNS. An officer said, "We are scanning CCTV footage from nearby areas to identify the vehicle involved and trace the accused driver."

In a separate accident, a 30-year-old woman died after being hit by an unidentified speeding vehicle while crossing Sohna Road on Thursday.

The woman, Geeta Kumari, was employed as a security guard at Lemon Tree Hotel on Sohna Road. The incident occurred around 10am outside the hotel. Police said a call was received around 10.30am, after which a team reached the spot, where they learnt that the injured woman had been taken to a nearby private hospital.

Aqua Line's Botanical Garden extension work set to begin next month

Noida.(Agency)

Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) is set to push ahead with the Aqua Line extension, with tenders likely next month for two corridors — an 11.56-km Botanical Garden-Sector 142 stretch and a 2.6-km Depot-Boraki link. The extensions are aimed at improving the last-mile connectivity across Noida and Greater Noida. It will enable seamless travel to IGI Airport via the Magenta Line interchange at Botanical Garden. The Botanical Garden-Sector 142 corridor received approval from the Centre in Feb this year, while the Depot-Boraki stretch was cleared in July last year, paving the way for execution of the two key infrastructure projects.

According to project details, the Botanical Garden-Sector 142 corridor will span 11.56 km and include eight elevated stations — Botanical Garden, Sector 44, Sector 96 (Noida Authority Office), Sector 97, Sector 105, Sector 108 (police commissionerate), Sector 93 and Panchsheel Balak Inter College in Sector 91. The project, estimated at Rs 2,254 crore, is expected to be completed within three years.

The corridor is strategically significant as it will directly connect Botanical Garden — a major interchange for the Blue Line and Magenta Line — with key sectors and further improve access towards Greater Noida and Jewar. This will also help people take the metro to Indira Gandhi International Airport. The shorter Depot-Boraki route, estimated at Rs 416 crore, will include two stations — Junpat and Boraki. This stretch assumes importance as it will link the proposed Multimodal Transport Hub (MMTH) at Boraki village, which will also house an Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) and a railway passenger terminal, making the metro extension crucial for seamless multimodal transport integration.

Kranti Shekhar, OSD, Noida Authority, and executive director, NMRC, said that the tenders to hire developers will be issued next month. "Recently, NMRC issued a tender to hire a general consultant for the two projects. The general consultant (GC) will be tasked with supporting NMRC in delivering two elevated metro corridors," he said.

Haryana records near-perfect ICSE and 100% ISC results

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana students shone brightly as the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) announced the 2026 ICSE (Class X) and ISC (Class XII) results on Thursday afternoon. Both classes showed year-on-year improvement — Class X results saw a marginal rise, while Class XII achieved a 100% pass rate.

In Class X, 2,554 students from 29 schools appeared in 2026, compared with 2,582 students in 2025. The overall pass percentage stood at 99.8, a marginal improvement from the past year. While girls recorded a pass percentage of 99.9%, boys scored equally well with a pass percentage of 99.8%.

In Class XII, the state performed exceptionally well, giving a 100% result as all 1,068 students from 14 schools passed. While 560 of them are boys, 508 are girls. Last year, 1,050 students from 15 schools had a pass percentage of 99.9%.

Meanwhile, a wave of joy swept through ICSE and ISC schools in the city as students soared high with flying colors.



Vansh Rakesh Jagtiani, a student of Shriram School, Mousari, scored a perfect 100% in the Class XII examinations by scoring full marks in Mathematics, English, Physics, Computer Science and Psychology and is now set to pursue higher education in the United States, where he will study computer science at Cornell College.

Sharing his preparation strategy, Vansh

said he never believed in studying long hours but followed a balanced schedule, maintaining consistency in his studies. He credited his success to the guidance of his teachers and timely preparation. He said he enjoys cycling and reading books.

Among the Class X top scorers, Adway Agrawal, a student of Scottish High School, achieved an outstanding 99.8%.

Murder convict out on parole, shot dead by son of man he killed

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 55-year-old man out on parole in a murder case was shot dead on Thursday morning in Kasan village in a revenge attack allegedly carried out by the son of the man he had killed eight years ago.

Sunder Fauji, a former NSG commando serving a life term for a 2018 murder, was on 70 days' parole to attend his niece's wedding scheduled on April 20 and had reached the village on March 29.

One of the two attackers has been identified as Rohan, the son of Bahadur Singh Sarpanch, whose murder led to Sunder's conviction. The second accused has also been identified, but police have not disclosed his name as the investigation is



ongoing.

The incident occurred at 8.40am and Sunder suffered four gunshot wounds. IMT Manesar SHO Sunil Beniwal said police received a call at 8.53am, after which teams reached the spot and examined CCTV footage. "Forensic and fingerprint experts were called to examine the crime

scene. Police recovered a country-made weapon and a pistol from the site," police spokesperson Sandeep Turan said. CCTV footage shows Sunder sitting near the Moni Baba shrine with two others when two armed men approached. Rohan fired multiple shots, while his associate's weapon malfunctioned during the attack. After being hit, Sunder fell off the platform and lost consciousness, while the two men with him ran to safety. Panic spread in the area as residents gathered, and both assailants fled. "According to the probe so far, Rohan avenged his father's murder. We have recovered three empty cartridges and three live cartridges at the spot," the SHO said.

Stressed over family dispute, woman climbs Sector 63 tower, rescued

Noida.(Agency)

A high-voltage rescue operation ensued in Sector 63 after a 19-year-old woman climbed a mobile tower on Thursday morning after allegedly getting upset over an argument with her mother. Prompt action by the police and fire department ensured her safe rescue in an operation that lasted around 30 minutes.

According to police, the young woman, a native of Maharajganj's Chowk Bazaar, has been living in Chotpur Colony for the past three years. She was previously employed at a factory but recently quit her job. On Thursday morning, an argument with her mother reportedly led to her becoming distressed, following which she climbed a tower located in Block J of Sector 63.

Upon receiving information, police and fire department teams rushed to the spot



and immediately launched a rescue operation. Personnel from the fire department first tried to communicate with the woman to calm her down and persuade her to cooperate. Using a hydraulic platform, the team carefully brought her down to safety without any injuries.

Officials stated that during initial questioning, the woman appeared to be under mental stress due to ongoing family

issues. Her family members have been informed, and she is currently undergoing counselling.

Chief fire officer Pradeep Chaubey said that the team prioritised communication to ensure the woman remained calm before initiating the rescue. "Our personnel first engaged in conversation with her and reassured her. Once she was stable, we used the hydraulic platform to bring her down safely," he said. Chief fire officer Pradeep Chaubey said that the team prioritised communication to ensure the woman remained calm before initiating the rescue. "Our personnel first engaged in conversation with her and reassured her. Once she was stable, we used the hydraulic platform to bring her down safely," he said. Senior officials, including the sub-divisional magistrate and assistant commissioner of police, were present at the scene and supervised the entire operation.

‘Traffic adds to response time’: Residents seek fire engines closer to home

Noida.(Agency)

A day after a highrise fire in neighbouring Ghaziabad exposed the vulnerability of firefighting equipment in NCR, residents of 7x sectors — among the dozens of densely packed residential areas in the city that have risen, floor by floor, over the past two decades — on Thursday demanded that fire engines be stationed closer to home to reduce emergency response time and drone technology to supplement traditional firefighting.

Amit Gupta, a resident of Sector 77, wrote to the chief fire officer (CFO), district magistrate and Noida Authority CEO, urging that a single fire tender be stationed at Sector 116 water department compound during the summer months, close enough to meaningfully serve sectors 112 through 122 and 7x, as the nearest fire station in Sector 71 was more than 6 km away.

In a city where traffic can congeal without warning, that distance could

easily translate to 20 to 30 minutes, long enough for a manageable emergency to become an irreversible one. "Significant damage occurs even before help can arrive," Gupta said.

Gupta also called for drone technology to supplement traditional firefighting. He highlighted that highrise towers in the 7x sectors climb well past the reach of standard equipment and that no fire engine, however quickly deployed, could do much when a fire breaks out on the 20th or 30th floor, as the hydraulic cranes and jet hose that arrive cannot reach beyond the 14th storey. "Drones can provide invaluable assistance in such critical moments," he said.

Noida currently has nine fire stations at Ecotech-1 (Kasana), Ecotech-3, Expressway (Sector 126), Greater Noida (Surajpur), Knowledge Park, Noida Phases 1, 2 and 3 (sectors 71 and 67), and Sector 58, supplemented by temporary deployments at Gaur



City, Rabupura in Jewar, Dadri and NSEZ.

CFO Pradeep Kumar Chaubey said the stations are positioned to meet a 15-minute stipulated response time.

For example, a 15-minute radius from the Sector 71 fire station covers areas including sectors 70, 71, and 72, with

He scored a perfect 100 in Hindi, Mathematics, Computer Science and Science, while narrowly missing a full score in English with 99 marks.

He credited his success to focusing on understanding concepts deeply and said he often engaged in group study sessions with friends to tackle difficult subjects. He is now pursuing the science stream and aims to build a career in physics. Beyond academics, he keeps active interests in sports and music and enjoys playing football and guitar.

In city's Lt Atul Katarya Memorial School, 17 Class XII students scored 90% and above, while 44 students out of 48 secured distinction. Out of the 48 students in Class XII, 24 pursued science, while 20 chose commerce, and 4 were from humanities.

Similarly, out of 101 students who appeared for the Class X exam, 53 students secured 90% and above, and 97 students obtained distinctions. In English, Aditya Rajput and Siddhi Gupta topped the subject with 98 marks. In Hindi, Siddhi Gupta, Aditya Rajput and Pratistha scored a perfect 100.

9 years on, Gurgaon's Tower of Justice incomplete, HC sets May 15 deadline

GURGAON.(Agency)

Tower of Justice, planned as a large modern judicial complex spread over seven acres, was intended to house multiple courtrooms and judicial facilities. Construction began in 2017 with a three-year deadline, but nine years later, the project remains incomplete.

Taking serious note of the repeated delays and slow progress, Punjab and Haryana high court described the prolonged wait as "administrative inefficiency" and issued a notice to the state govt. On Wednesday, the court set May 15 as the final deadline and warned that if the project is not completed by then, it may initiate action against the chief secretary and other officials responsible for the delay.

When TOI contacted the public works department, which is the executing agency, officials declined to comment, saying the matter was sub judice. "The matter is before the court. We are not in a position to say anything at this point," an official said.

Expressing frustration over repeated extensions and the authorities' lack of urgency, the High Court (HC) gave a two-week deadline to complete the project or face action.

"The delay in completing such an important judicial infrastructure project is a matter of grave concern. Despite several opportunities and longer timelines being given earlier, the work remains unfinished," HC said.

The court said responsibility would be fixed and action could be taken against officials if the deadline was missed again. The tower will consist of two blocks of eight and seven floors, accommodating 55 district and sessions courts. At present, the city has 45 courts handling around 65,000 pending cases. The cost has now risen to Rs 295 crore from the initial estimate of Rs 113 crore.

the station also serving major commercial and IT hubs in Sectors 62 and 63. Residential sectors such as 50, 51, and 75 fall within the response window, as do the Sector 52 and Sector 51 Metro stations on the Aqua Line. However, peak-hour congestion on Vishwakarma Road and near the Sector 71 intersection can significantly narrow this coverage, reducing the distance firemen can cover within the 15-minute threshold.

The nine stations, the CFO said, together operate approximately 22 to 30 fire tenders, averaging three to four per station, though the number varies by location.

The department has four hydraulic platforms with a maximum reach of 42 metres, or roughly 14 storeys. Fire hoses can reach up to 60-75 metres, while the water stream from a hydraulic ladder tops out at 10-15 metres above the platform, adding approximately three more floors to effective reach.

We raised alarm, crew paid no heed: Jabalpur boat tragedy survivor recounts horror

A boat carrying 30 people capsized at Bargi Dam in Jabalpur amid sudden strong winds, killing nine and leaving several missing, despite an earlier weather alert warning of hazardous conditions.

Bhopal . (Agency)

After nine people died in a cruise capsize incident in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur, survivors have called out serious lapses in safety protocols and apathy on the part of the crew members. One of the survivors alleged that the crew did not pay heed to the passengers' request to take the vessel to safety, despite being alerted and alarmed by them amid adverse weather.

On Thursday evening, a leisure trip turned tragic at Bargi Dam after a state tourism department cruise, carrying 30 people, capsized in the Narmada River backwaters, leaving nine people dead and several others missing. The incident happened amid sudden strong winds despite a prior weather alert.

Pradeep Kumar, a Delhi resident who survived the tragedy, recounted the chaos and fear that unfolded within minutes. "There was no arrangement. Not all of us were given life jackets and had no option but share them among ourselves," he said, highlighting the absence of basic safety measures on board.

According to him, the vessel was carrying nearly 30 passengers but had only two crew members, neither of whom effectively guided or assisted the tourists during the emergency. Kumar described how the situation deteriorated rapidly once the cruise reached the middle of the dam.



"Strong winds picked up suddenly, turning the water choppy. As soon as I wore the jacket, the accident happened. In just 2-3 minutes, everything was destroyed," he said. He added that passengers had to distribute life jackets among themselves in panic, as the crew failed to intervene.

"They didn't come down. They should have taken care of the tourists," he remarked, accusing the crew of abandoning responsibility at a critical moment.

The bodies of Pradeep Kumar's wife and four-year-old son, who were earlier reported missing, were later recovered. Eyewitness accounts further suggest that people on the shore had warned the operator to steer the vessel back to safety as the weather worsened.

However, the operator allegedly ignored repeated pleas and continued along the original route.

Kumar echoed this concern, stating that the crew "did not pay heed" to requests to move the boat to the bank, a decision that

may have contributed to the disaster.

The cruise eventually lost balance and overturned, throwing passengers into the water.

Local residents rushed to help, rescuing some individuals with ropes, particularly those who had managed to secure life jackets. Authorities confirmed that 15 passengers were rescued and shifted to nearby hospitals, while search operations continued to locate the missing.

ADMINISTRATIVE LAPSES?

The tragedy has also raised questions about administrative oversight, as the cruise was reportedly allowed to operate despite a yellow alert issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) warning of strong winds in the region.

Short news

Ujjain wedding turns violent, chairs hurled in clash; viral video surfaces

Ujjain. (Agency)

A wedding ceremony in Ujjain turned chaotic after a minor argument escalated into a violent clash, with a video of the incident now going viral on social media.

The incident occurred late on the night of the 27th in the Rajiv Nagar area under Chimanganj police station limits. According to eyewitnesses, the dispute began during a photography session when a photographer asked a woman to step aside from the frame. What started as a brief argument quickly spiralled into a confrontation between members of both the bride's and groom's families.

The situation soon turned violent, with people seen in the viral video throwing chairs, utensils and other items at each other. Kicks and punches were also exchanged, creating panic at the venue and disrupting the function entirely.

The wedding reportedly involved families from the Ahirwar community, and the clash broke out while the baraat was present. Following the circulation of the video online, police have launched an investigation. No official confirmation of injuries or arrests has been made so far, but authorities are working to identify those involved based on the footage.

The incident once again highlights how minor disagreements can quickly escalate into major confrontations, even during celebratory events.

Bareilly assault caught on camera, woman slapped repeatedly over wage dispute



Bareilly. (Agency)

A shocking video from Bareilly has gone viral, showing a woman repeatedly slapping another woman during a dispute over unpaid wages. According to reports, the incident took place in the Subhash Nagar area, where a domestic worker's mother was allegedly assaulted by her employer when she went to ask for pending payment. The video circulating on social media shows the accused woman slapping the victim multiple times in quick succession.

The victim, identified as Vimla Devi, has filed a complaint with the police. She told authorities that her daughter had been working at the accused woman's house for the past eight months but had not been paid. The daughter, who is currently unwell and undergoing treatment in Delhi, had asked her mother to collect the dues to cover medical expenses.

However, when Vimla Devi approached the employer to ask for the money, she was allegedly abused and assaulted. She further claimed that despite an agreement of Rs 5,000 per month, no payment had been made for eight months, and she was instead threatened. Police officials said a complaint has been received and an investigation is underway.

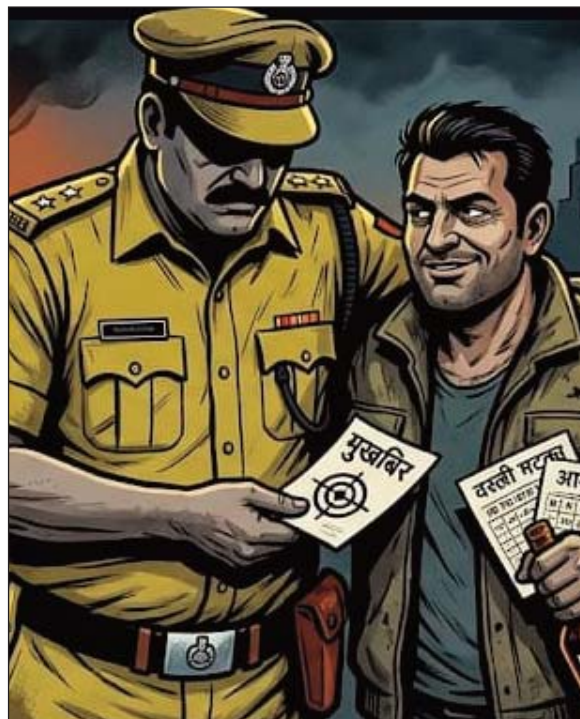
Allegations of Nexus in Ankleshwar: Is the City Being Pushed Toward a Brewing Hooch Tragedy? Chhota Bazaar emerges as a hub of illegal activity; serious questions raised over policing and informant safety.

Mahanagar Metro Beuro

Bharuch/Ankleshwar: Gujarat's

prohibition policy is facing serious challenges on the ground, and one of the most concerning situations is being reported from the industrial town of Ankleshwar. Allegations are surfacing of illegal liquor trade and gambling operations continuing openly, raising questions about enforcement and accountability.

Chhota Bazaar Under Scrutiny Near the railway station, the Chhota Bazaar area has reportedly become a focal point for alleged illegal activities. Sources claim that gambling operations such as "Worli Matka" and other betting setups are active, with significant daily cash flow. Individuals from nearby regions like Vapi, Val-sad, and Surat are said to frequent the area. Allegations Regarding Informant Safety One of the most serious concerns emerging from the investigation is the alleged risk to informants. Claims suggest that individuals providing information about illegal activities may not be receiving adequate protection, and in some cases, their identities could be exposed—raising significant safety concerns. These allegations, if proven, point to a critical break-



down in trust. Questions Over Enforcement There are also claims of ineffective enforcement actions, including instances where raids reportedly yield no results despite prior intelligence inputs. Such incidents have led to speculation about possible lapses or compromise within sections of enforcement agencies. However, these claims require thorough and impartial investigation. Key Questions Raised Are intelligence and enforcement mechanisms functioning effectively in

the region? Are preventive measures sufficient to avoid potential tragedies linked to illicit liquor? Is there a need for intervention by higher-level agencies to ensure transparency and accountability? Concerns Over Public Safety Reports of potentially adulterated liquor being sold in the area have heightened fears of a possible hooch tragedy. Past incidents in different regions have shown the devastating impact of such situations, making timely intervention critical. Call for Oversight Given the seriousness of the allegations, there are increasing calls for intervention by higher authorities, including specialized monitoring units, to independently assess the situation and take corrective measures if required. Mahanagar Metro will continue to follow this developing story, focusing on verified facts and public interest, as authorities are expected to respond to the concerns raised.

Prices of essential commodities go up steeply in Andhra

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

The severe summer heatwave has triggered a sharp surge in prices of essential commodities across the State, posing a big challenge to households to cope with monthly expenses. Intense heatwave conditions, coupled with water scarcity, have damaged crops and reduced yields, severely affecting the farm output. Vegetable prices have risen by nearly 50% overall, while in open markets the increase has touched up to 100%, making basic produce increasingly unaffordable.

The prices of tomato, okra, brinjal, chilli, ridge gourd and beans have almost doubled over the past month, while leafy vegetables have also recorded steep price rise. Except onions, most vegetables have become costlier. The impact is clearly visible in Rythu Bazaars and local markets with the decline in consumers.

Vendors attribute the price rise to low crop arrivals caused by crop damage and reduced yields due to extreme heat. Transportation costs have also increased, further adding to the burden on consumers.

People say the sudden price spike has disrupted their household budgets. S Ankal Rao of Machilipatnam said he has been feeling the pinch in recent weeks. "I used to visit Rythu Bazaar and buy vegetables for a week with around Rs 250. Now, I have to spend about Rs 400 to Rs 450 for the same quantity of vegetables. Vendors say prices may increase further in the coming days," he said.

Popular rice varieties see price hike

Several other consumers echoed similar concerns, stating that managing daily expenses has become increasingly difficult now. Adding to the burden, consumers are also facing rising prices of the staple food rice.

Millers and traders seem to have increased the prices at will with the prices going up by Rs 400 to Rs 500 per 26 kg bag of rice between February and April. Popular varieties such as HMT, BPT and Sona Masuri have witnessed significant price rise, further straining household finances.

Man Visited Odisha Bank With Sister's Skeleton After He Was Told 'No' 4 Times

CCTV footage shows that Jitu Munda met the bank manager twice and other officials, seeking to withdraw money, before he brought his sister's body.

Bhubaneswar. (Agency)

Jitu Munda, a tribal man who carried his sister's skeleton to a local Odisha bank to withdraw over Rs 19,000 from her account, was forced to do so because of the "bank's fault," an investigation has found. The bank allegedly did not cooperate with the 42-year-old man and was negligent of his needs. According to the initial investigation, Munda visited the Odisha Grameen Bank in Keonjhar district on April 27. He spent 32 minutes, met four people, including bank manager. When his requests went unheard, he brought the exhumed skeleton to prove his sister's death and claim money deposited under her name.

Sangram Keshari Mohapatra, the revenue divisional commissioner (RDC) of Northern Division, along with Keonjhar

District Collector Vishal Singh and other officials, visited the Maliposi branch of Odisha Grameen Bank on Thursday. Mohapatra reviewed the CCTV footage and questioned the bank officials.

April 27: Jitu Munda's 32-Minute-Visit To Bank

CCTV footage shows that Munda entered the bank at 11:26 am and left at 11:58 am. During the 32 minutes he spent at the bank, Munda met the bank manager twice and returned aggrieved. He met other officials as well. "As there is no audio version of the CCTV footage, we are not able to ascertain what exactly the bank staff told him," Mohapatra said.

Munda wanted to withdraw money from the account of his sister, Kalara Munda, who died in February without any legal heirs. Bank officials reportedly refused, asking



for a death certificate and a legal heir certificate. "Eventually, the bank manager asked him to leave," Mohapatra said. Agitated, Munda exhumed his sister's body and carried it to the bank to prove her death. The video of the incident went viral. Calling it "extremely shameful," Mohapatra said the bank staff was negligent, despite being familiar with the man and his sister who had visited the branch at least eight

times in the past.

"I spoke to the bank officials and Jitu Munda. Preliminary findings indicate that the bank was at fault. Munda and his sister had visited the bank several times in the past and withdrawn money. Munda is not illiterate, but he is ignorant of banking procedures," Mohapatra told reporters.

What The Bank Said

The Indian Overseas Bank, a sponsor of Odisha Grameen Bank, in a post on X (formerly Twitter), dated April 28, rejected the reports that Munda was asked to bring the dead for a claim settlement. "The reports circulating on various social media platforms alleging that Mr Jitu Munda carried the mortal remains of his sister to a bank branch for withdrawal from her account, purportedly due to a demand by bank officials for the physical.

LPG crunch: Chullahs in, clean cooking out

Across Indian cities, long queues outside LPG distribution centres are becoming a daily reality. For many households, securing a cooking gas refill now means multiple visits, uncertainty, and rising costs. Inside homes, the steady blue flame of clean cooking is flickering, replaced in some cases by smoky chullahs burning firewood, charcoal, and dung cakes. What appears to be a temporary supply disruption is, in fact, a deeper crisis, one that risks reversing years of progress in public health, environmental protection, and energy access. India is facing a significant disruption in its clean cooking transition as a shortage of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) forces households to revert to traditional biomass fuels. This shift has reignited concerns over air pollution and public health, particularly among vulnerable populations. The crisis has been triggered largely by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, which have disrupted key global energy supply routes, especially through the Strait of Hormuz—a critical transit corridor for LPG shipments. With India importing nearly 60–65 percent of its LPG requirements, such disruptions expose the country's heavy dependence on external supply chains. 130 per cylinder. Industrial consumption was curtailed to prioritise household use. Yet, shortages persist. Reports from major urban centres point to long waiting periods, panic-driven booking, and, in some cases, black-market purchases at significantly inflated prices. For low- and middle-income households, this has translated into both financial strain and energy insecurity.

The impact extends far beyond households. Commercial establishments, especially small hotels, eateries, and street vendors, are struggling to cope with erratic LPG supply. Many have scaled down operations or temporarily shut down, while others have shifted to coal or biomass to stay afloat. This disruption is not just a business concern; it has ripple effects on the broader economy, including the tourism sector, where food services are integral to visitor experience. What begins as a fuel shortage quickly cascades into lost livelihoods and reduced economic activity. Perhaps the most alarming consequence, however, is the reversal in household energy use. In the absence of reliable and affordable LPG, many families, particularly in peri-urban and low-income areas, are reverting to traditional biomass fuels. This has led to a surge in demand for firewood, charcoal, and dung cakes in local markets. While these fuels provide short-term relief, they come at a steep cost. The health and environmental implications of a return to biomass are severe. Burning traditional fuels releases high levels of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), carbon monoxide, and other toxic pollutants, significantly degrading both indoor and outdoor air quality. In households using such fuels, indoor pollution levels can be 10 to 20 times higher than in those relying on clean energy, increasing the risk of respiratory diseases, cardiovascular conditions, and other chronic illnesses. In India, indoor air pollution already contributes to hundreds of thousands of premature deaths annually, this crisis threatens to worsen that burden. At the same time, household fuel combustion is a major source of ambient air pollution, accounting for a substantial share of PM_{2.5} emissions. A widespread, even temporary, shift back to biomass could lead to measurable deterioration in air quality, particularly in densely populated regions such as Delhi NCR, where residential emissions already play a significant role in seasonal pollution levels.

Debunking the ‘destitute Bangladesh’ myth

Bangladesh has overtaken India twice in IMF per capita GDP calculations, including in the latest projections for 2026

THE idea of Bangladesh is a major polarising factor in India. We expect the entire nation to be grateful to us because our Army liberated them in 1971. And if some among them speak against India and in favour of Pakistan, we are incensed. For those in the Hindutva camp, Bangladesh's turn towards Islamic fundamentalism is a sign that religion can never be separated from nationalism and that India truly only belongs to Hindus. The fact that Bangladesh has twice overtaken us in IMF per capita GDP calculations, including in the latest projections for 2026, is a matter of great shame for people on both sides of the political divide. For those who oppose the BJP government, it is a sign that India's economy has floundered during the Modi era. For those who support the BJP, it is an embarrassing data point which has to be explained away through technical arguments about currency fluctuations. But behind these intense, and often acerbic, disputations over Bangladesh lies one common assumption — that Bangladesh represents the worst economic and social conditions in the Indian subcontinent. In fact, Bangladeshis are derisively called 'kanglu' on social media — a variation of the word kangaal or destitute, and there are thousands of reels and memes about how the 'kanglu' is still living in the age of bullock carts and mud huts. Of course, there is a flipside to this: of scholars and activists who point to Bangladesh's achievements in reducing infant mortality, extending life expectancy, improving access to health and education and even setting up radical systems to enable rural women to get easy loans. But, even here, the starting point is the belief that Bangladesh was far poorer than India, and depending on which side of the political divide you are, it has now crossed us, or else, is still a destitute nation. Let us interrogate the point of immediate contention: that the IMF says Bangladesh will cross India in terms of per capita GDP this year. This is not the first time; it happened in 2020 as well, during the Covid recession. However, this comparison is based on a direct conversion of per capita GDP in local currencies to US dollars, using the current 'market' exchange rate. This tells us nothing about the actual purchasing power of the money people earn in their local currencies. So, the IMF has a tool called the International Dollar, which adjusts for local inflation and recalculates all data in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). When we compare our per capita GDP with that of Bangladesh in PPP terms, we find that an average Bangladeshi will earn 17% less than an average Indian in IMF's projections for 2026. Now you could say that this reflects badly on us, given that Bangladesh is a 'kanglu' nation and India is one of the world's largest economies. That is a misconception. A



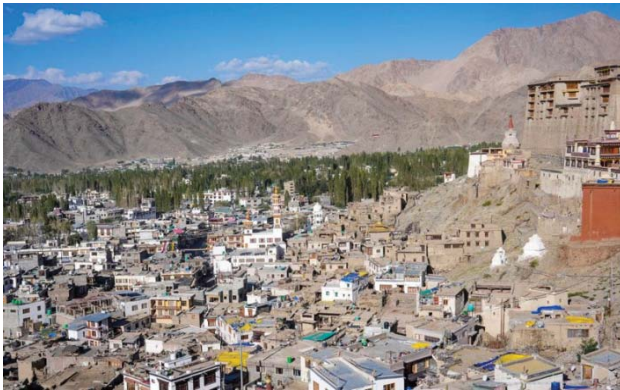
look at the IMF's PPP per capita income data shows us that Bangladesh was actually above us from 1980 to 1993. India moved ahead only in 1994, and it wasn't till 1999 that the gap between our per capita GDP (PPP) and Bangladesh's crossed 10%. In the UPA period (2004-24), our average purchasing power maintained a roughly 18% gap with that of an average Bangladeshi. This trend continued till 2019, and then India's per capita purchasing power collapsed in the first year of Covid, while Bangladesh's increased sharply. Once the lockdowns were over, the gap gradually returned to the normal trend. The IMF projects that by 2030, India's per capita GDP, in purchasing power parity terms, will be 24% higher than that of Bangladesh. This shows that an average Indian continues to have more or less the same purchasing power advantage over an average Bangladeshi as it had during the time when Manmohan Singh was Prime Minister. The Modi government has neither done better, nor has it fared any worse. More importantly, it also tells us that our idea of the 'kanglu' Bangladeshi is entirely false. Bangladesh's per capita purchasing power might have trailed that of India's, but it has been consistently higher than that of large Indian states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and also West Bengal. So, where does this image of the destitute 'kanglu' stereotype come from? It originates in the Bengali bhadralok 'imaginary' that the Muslims of East Bengal, who stayed on in East Pakistan after the

Partition, were mostly poor peasants. This, as the political scientist Partha Chatterjee showed 45 years ago, was largely a myth. In the Muslim-majority divisions of Bengal in 1911, there were more Muslims who earned a living from agricultural rent than there were Hindus. While the share-cropping peasantry was largely Muslim, many from the Muslim community were also big rent receivers. The real difference between the Bengali 'bhadralok' upper-caste Hindu and their affluent Muslim peers lay in access to higher education, professional employment and jobs in the colonial government. It is here that Hindus had a clear advantage, and by the early 20th century, they had become more urbanised, and 'modernised' than their Muslim counterparts. So, the old 'rustic' cultural and aesthetic practices, from which the bhadralok Hindu had gradually deviated, continued among the Muslim elite of East Bengal. This continues today in terms of language and attire. In the post-Partition West Bengal, the Hindu refugees progressively gave up the eastern dialect or 'Bangaal bhasha' and the customary lungi. These were seen as 'plebeian' symbols not compatible with bhadralok society. Both of these are normal in Bangladesh. It is these cultural practices of the Bangladeshi, identified as 'low-class' on this side of the border, that has fed into the image of the 'kanglu' Bangladeshi. The truth is that Bangladesh has never really been a destitute nation, despite its poverty, and there should be no shame if it catches up with us

Ladakh outreach: UT gets new districts, but key issues in limbo

The optimism surrounding the creation of five new districts will be justified if it leads to inclusive growth, better governance and meaningful political

LADAKH has got five new districts ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the Union Territory. The expansion from two districts — Leh and Kargil — to seven is a significant step that was overdue in the vast but sparsely populated region. Remote areas like Nubra, Zaskar and Changthang have been facing problems in accessing basic public services. Smaller administrative units can bring the authorities closer to the people and facilitate quicker delivery of welfare schemes. The prompt appointment of deputy commissioners and police chiefs signals an encouraging intent to ensure governance without delay. However, this restructuring alone will not satisfy local residents. Ladakh's challenges are not merely bureaucratic; they are deeply political, economic and environmental. Local groups, including the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance, continue to demand statehood and constitutional safeguards under the Sixth Schedule



of the Constitution. They have sought direct, “decision-level” talks with Shah later this week, describing the scheduled May 22 sub-committee meeting as “inadequate” for resolving the region's long-pending issues. Ladakhi activist Sonam

Wangchuk, who was released last month by the Union government after a nearly six-month-long detention, is also keen that a constructive dialogue should be held during Shah's visit. The Centre has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to Ladakh's development, even though it has remained non-committal on the key demands of statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule. Reforms such as easing regulations in the tourism sector and boosting employment opportunities are part of a vigorous economic push. The optimism surrounding the latest administrative exercise will be justified if it leads to inclusive growth, better governance and meaningful political engagement. However, the government cannot afford to miss the big picture — the strategic importance of Ladakh makes it critical to maintain peace and strengthen law and order. The violent protests in September 2025 were an eye-opener. The aspirations of the Ladakhi people must be fulfilled in a time-bound manner.

The incredible Internet of Things

The marriage of IoT and AI is a transition that dwarfs the original Internet's impact

A person awakens not to an alarm clock but to a wearable band that has monitored the entire sleep architecture — tracking REM (rapid eye movement) cycles, heart rate variability and nocturnal peripheral oxygen saturation levels. Through a cloud-hosted machine learning model, it has chosen the lightest sleep phase within a predetermined window to trigger a gentle haptic pulse. The bedroom lights slowly shift from a dim amber to a cool white, mimicking the arc of dawn, as soon as a tiny passive infrared sensor in the corner registers the first stirring of motion under the blanket.

The refrigerator has already detected that the milk carton's weight, measured by a strain gauge embedded in the shelf, has fallen below a threshold, and it generates a grocery reminder that appears on the mobile phone screen, routed through a cloud service maintained in a data centre in some other part of the world. The smart kettle, triggered by a proximity tag in the owner's slippers, heats water for tea; an ultrasonic sensor ensures that the water does not boil dry. All this unfolds before a single conscious choice has been made.

Welcome to the Internet of Things (IoT) — a network of physical objects embedded with sensors, software and communication technologies, enabling them to connect to the Internet and exchange data automatically without direct human involvement. The term “Internet of Things” was coined in 1999 by Kevin Ashton, a British technologist then working on supply-chain optimisation at Procter & Gamble, during a presentation linking Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) tags to the Internet. The insight was deceptively simple: if everyday objects could sense their environment and communicate without human intermediation, inventory management would cease to be reactive and become self-aware. Yet, the primordial object was even older: a hacked vending machine, wired to purchase food

supplies through a computer terminal, report its inventory on its own, and chill. The machine, Prancing Pony, named after an inn in JRR Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, also sold beer but only on credit and only to people over 21, since it knew everyone's age. If a youngster attempted to buy beer, it responded “Sorry, kid.” From that quirky beginning, the field mutated through embedded systems, wireless sensor networks and machine-to-machine protocols. Every IoT device now embodies sensing, networking, processing and actuation. This convergence of operational technology with information technology dissolved the air gap that once insulated, say, a factory's robotic arm from the Internet. That dissolution represents the single most consequential architectural change in the history of digital infrastructure because it transforms every sensor into a potential entry point for malicious code, every actuator into a weapon that can manipulate the physical world. Ashton's original substrate contained the entire genetic code of IoT: physically embedded constraints, low-power silicon and a wireless link to a networked database. The real ignition for IoT came from the collision of three exponential curves: the plummeting cost of micro-electromechanical systems (MEMS) sensors, the planetary spread of IPv6 (Internet Protocol version 6) and the emergence of low-power WAN (Wide Area Network) protocols that whisper tiny packets of data across kilometres on a single coin-cell battery.

The current state of affairs is simultaneously a staggering engineering triumph and a policy quagmire. On the one hand, IoT has moved beyond wearables and smart speakers into the hard infrastructure of civilisation. In healthcare, for instance, continuous glucose monitors and implantable cardiac loop recorders that transmit medication adherence data have already transitioned to

standard care protocols. These devices fuse the patient's physiology with clinical decision-support algorithms, effectively turning every individual into their own digital twin. On the other hand, the very ubiquity that makes IoT revolutionary also makes it terrifying. Unlike the Internet of human-to-human communication, where



the worst-case breach often means stolen credit-card numbers or embarrassing email leaks, an IoT compromise is a kinetic threat. For example, insulin pumps can be remotely reprogrammed to deliver a lethal dose, or the CAN (Controller Area Network) bus of connected vehicles can be injected with malicious frames from the infotainment unit. The marriage of IoT and AI is a transition that dwarfs the original Internet's impact. The first Internet revolution was one of information: it indexed the world's explicit knowledge and compressed the cost of sharing it to near zero. The IoT-plus-AI revolution is one of action — it indexes the world's physical behaviour and compresses the time

between signal and response to near zero.

IoT is a system of five layers: perception, network, middleware, application and business; but that model is static until AI becomes the brain across all layers. Edge-deployed TinyML models running on Arm Cortex-M microcontrollers fundamentally re-architect the Internet from a human-centric request-response system to a world where objects negotiate, learn and act long before a human ever joins the loop. No case study exemplifies the breathtaking promise and the apocalyptic risk clearer than the saga of Claude Mythos, an AI tool capable of probing any system — desktop software, cloud infrastructure, embedded firmware — and rapidly surfacing zero-day vulnerabilities that a human reverse engineering expert might overlook for years.

Simply put, it could crash any machine it touched. The statement is not about mere software instability; it is about the fundamental brittleness of a world where AI, even with benign intent, can issue a physical command — such as opening a valve in a chemical plant or cutting power to a neonatal incubator — that cascades into a catastrophe because the AI's mental model of the environment is imperfect. This is the ultimate caution: in an IoT-saturated world, an AI agent is not just a disembodied text generator; it is a poltergeist with a wrench, a screwdriver and access to a billion actuators.

The future is one where entire cities will become soft-real-time control loops. Streetlights with LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) sensors will not only adjust brightness but also detect the micro-Doppler signatures of a pedestrian who has stumbled, instantly altering the signal timing of surrounding intersections while ping-ponging the nearest autonomous ambulance. This is about turning the planet into a closed-loop metabolism — a form of geocybernetics — where every sensor-to-actuator chain is a potential attack vector.



A perfect summer getaway, Andaman and Nicobar, is an archipelago at the confluence of the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. With an array of thrilling water sports, leisure facilities, and a host of activities, a vacation in Andaman and Nicobar can be as relaxed or filled with adventure as you'd like it to be. The weather is temperate most of the year and the best time to visit is between December-May. If you're planning to head here in this summer break then here's a pick of outdoorsy things which will keep you busy.

Radhanagar Beach, Havelock Island



Beach number 7 (or more commonly known as Radhanagar Beach) was bestowed with the title of 'Asia's Best Beach' in 2004 by the TIME magazine. Known for its picturesque sunset, white sand and turquoise blue waters, the beach is a very popular hub lying on the western coast of Havelock Island. There's a watersports centre at the beach where visitors can hire snorkelling and scuba equipment and boats.

Havelock Island, the Andamans



Havelock Island at the Andamans is the most popular spot for scuba diving. Home to one of the richest coral reef ecosystem in the world, the waters here are pristine, and teeming with diverse marine life. There are two diving operators on Havelock—Barefoot Scuba and Dive India—which provide wannabe divers with training and all the requisite equipment. Both the operators are PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) certified dive centres.

►North Bay Beach, Port Blair

Located just 15 minutes away from the Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex, the North Bay Beach offers one of the easiest water sports—Sea-walking—in Andaman and Nicobar. Walking barefoot on the base of the sea offers you an exquisite view of rich marine-life and the corals. If you're heading to Andaman and Nicobar, don't miss this. Skilled life guards accompany you underwater, to ensure maximum safety.



Must-visits in

Andaman and Nicobar

■ Mangrove creek, Baratang Island



Baratang Island is located about 100 kilometres away from the Port Blair city and offers a boat-safari, amidst the nature-made tunnel of thick mangrove plantations. A variety of exotic birds can be spotted along the lush trail of dense tree knots and canopies. This mangrove creek leads to the magnificent Lime Stone Caves, for which you must carry a torch with you. Baratang Island is located about 100 kilometres away from the Port Blair city and offers a boat-safari, amidst the nature-made tunnel of thick mangrove plantations. A variety of exotic birds can be spotted along the lush trail of dense tree knots and canopies. This mangrove creek leads to the magnificent Lime Stone Caves, for which you must carry a torch with you.

Best time of the day to visit:
Morning and afternoon.

Required equipment: A transparent helmet, which pumps the oxygen in from an oxygen cylinder kept in the pontoon.

Mt. Harriet, the Andamans

This trek stretches up 16 kilometres starting from Mt. Harriet to Madhuban, winding across a picturesque terrain. Expect to see exotic birds and rare plants along the lush trail. Taking a guide along is highly recommended. Tents and all the trekking equipment are available on hire from the Andaman Teal House. Do not forget to acquire food, water, torch, and first aid, before you start. The best time to go hiking here is November-April.

Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex,

Port Blair

Located in the heart of Port Blair, the Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex offers an array of aqua-sports: banana rides, jet skiing, parasailing, speed boat rides, rowboat paddling, you name it! This ought to be your first pit-stop in the Andamans. The Centre is well-equipped with changing rooms, and trained staff to ensure safety. The State Theatre of Opera and Ballet is yet another lavish construction, made of marble and gold trimmings. The tickets can get very expensive, but if you want to see a good Kazakh, Russian or Italian opera this is the place to be. You might not think of Kazakhstan as a prime place to experience such European culture, but the productions at the State Theatre of Opera and Ballet are as good as any you'll find in the old cities of Europe. This opera house can easily rival those of Vienna and Budapest. Apart from shows, the building in itself is worth the visit—filled to the brim with interesting pieces of art. The staff is very polite and helpful.



48 hours in Milan

Known for fashion and design, Milan is located in northern Italy and is the country's second largest and most cosmopolitan city. Offering top-notch art, culture, history and food, Milan is the perfect spot for a weekend of urban exploration.

collection, Pinacoteca di Brera, which houses Giovanni Bellini's 'Madonna and Child' and Francesco Hayez's 'The Kiss'. The gallery closes at 7:15 pm, so you'll have plenty of time to browse.

Parco Sempione

For an afternoon stroll, head over to Parco Sempione, a beautiful city park ornamented by the Porta Sempione (Arch of Peace) and the 14th-century Castello Sforzesco (Sforza Castle). The castle's fountain, nicknamed the 'Torta degli Sposi' (wedding cake) for its design, is a magnet for children in need of a quick splash in the summertime.

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II is home to a number of luxury shops, including Prada, Gucci and Louis Vuitton—and some of Milan's oldest bars and restaurants. Scope out a lunch spot in the Galleria and stop by Zucca in Galleria afterwards for a cup of coffee or an aperitif.

Opened in 1867 along with the inauguration of the Galleria, Zucca was the first to offer Campari, a popular brand of Italian bitters.

Piazza del Duomo

No trip to Milan is complete without a visit to Piazza del Duomo (Cathedral Square), the city's main square. There you'll find the city's Gothic cathedral, the Duomo—it is the largest cathedral in Italy and the fourth largest in the world. The architecture inside and out is worth a close look. Ladies, make sure you cover your shoulders and legs (above your knees), or you won't be permitted to enter the cathedral. If you happen to be wearing a sleeveless shirt, there are a number of vendors in the piazza taking advantage of the opportunity by selling scarves and shawls.

Ristorante Pizzeria

If you're staying in Navigli, end your day with dinner at Ristorante Pizzeria Sant'Eustorgio, a restaurant and pizzeria that features simple dishes, a wide wine selection and terrace seating overlooking Piazza Sant'Eustorgio.

Pasticceria Marchesi

While in the Magenta neighbourhood, stop by Pasticceria Marchesi for the best sugar-coated croissants (called brioche) in the city. Circa 1824, Pasticceria



Marchesi is one of the oldest pastry shops in Milan. Don't forget to spend a few hours exploring on your own—after all, that's when the most exciting discoveries can take place.

Santa Maria delle Grazie

Make time to visit Santa Maria delle Grazie, a church and former monastery with a beautiful facade and interior. The church is home to Leonardo da Vinci's 15th-century masterpiece—The Last Supper. In order to see the painting, you will need to book a tour at least a few days in advance, as it is only shown to small guided tours for its protection.

Rinomata Gelateria

Stop by retro-styled Rinomata Gelateria (Ripa di Porta Ticinese, 1) for crepes or ice cream and continue your stroll along Naviglio Grande, as Gelateria doesn't offer seating. Navigli is worth a second look, as its beauty isn't limited to the night hours and it offers a completely different vibe during the daytime. Strolling along the canals in the afternoon, you'll encounter specialty boutiques and shops, rather than neon-lit bars.

Colonne di San Lorenzo

In front of the church stands the Colonne di San Lorenzo, Milan's best-known Roman ruin. Dating from the 2nd century, the columns were moved to their current location during the 4th century.

Navigli

After visiting the art gallery, make your way towards Milan's trendy Navigli neighborhood, noted for its charming canals and vibrant nightlife. The oldest canal, Naviglio Grande, is lined with restaurants and pubs, as well as old barges fitted out as bars. You'll be able to find dinner and drinks in the area, a great way to wrap up your first night in Milan.

Pinacoteca di Brera

Just a few blocks from the castle is Milan's largest art



summer by the British, Ooty is a visual delight filled with pretty cottages, fenced flower gardens, thatched-roof churches and terraced botanical gardens. Venture a few kilometres out and find yourself surrounded by greener, quieter areas dotted with an abundance of pine trees.

Darjeeling, West Bengal

Surrounded by emerald-green tea plantations and set against a backdrop of jagged white Himalayan peaks, Darjeeling is nestled away in the northern regions of West Bengal. A journey on the 'Toy train,' which meanders up the hills to Darjeeling

from New Jalpaiguri in the plains is a great way to explore and soak in the magnificent surroundings of this hill station.

Munnar, Kerala

Sprawling tea plantations, picture-perfect towns and winding lanes make Munnar a perfect destination for those looking for respite from the summer heat. Although the town itself is forever buzzing with activity, wander a few kilometres out and you'll be engulfed in a thousand shades of green.

Perfect summer destinations in India

Perfect summer destinations in India

Planning a vacation in India is a challenging task with the country's incredible diversity throwing up a long list of names. From tropical islands and tea plantations to lush valleys overlooking the mighty Himalayas, there is no dearth of options when it comes to planning the perfect summer getaway in India.

Coorg (Kodagu), Karnataka

Spread out across the Western Ghats, the misty valley of Coorg offers the perfect getaway from the scorching summer heat. Fondly referred to as the 'Scotland of India' due to its verdant beauty and pleasant weather conditions, Coorg has a special place among all hill stations in India. A place where you can just sit around and watch the fog roll by.

Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

Styling itself as the 'Yoga Capital of the World', Rishikesh is a magnet for spiritual seekers. Surrounded by the fast-flowing Ganga and forested hills, the setting is definitely conducive for relaxing and meditation. Rishikesh is also a popular white-water rafting centre and backpacking hang-out.

Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

A heady mix of religion, history and nature, Tawang is one of the least discovered towns in Arunachal Pradesh. Dotted with Buddhist monasteries and mystical gompas on one end and a war memorial on another, the valley begins to work its magic on travellers the moment they start descending the hills.

Ooty, Tamil Nadu

Established as a retreat from the scorching heat of the



Pahalgam, Kashmir

Known as the 'Valley of Shepherds,' Pahalgam is a low-rise town that stands at the confluence of Lidder River and Sheshnag Lake. The surrounding mountains contain many picturesque spots and over 20

lakes to which countless guides and horsemen and more than eager to take you to.

Manali, Himachal Pradesh

With mountain adventures beckoning from all directions, Manali is the perfect destination for those looking to unwind during the summer months. Backpackers come to hang around in the villages near the main town and adventure tourists come for trekking, paragliding, rafting and skiing. About 53 km away from Manali is the famous Rohtang Pass offering up breathtaking sights of glaciers, peaks and valleys.

Nainital, Uttarakhand

A welcome relief from the heat of Delhi, Nainital is a small town in Kumaon which encircles the picturesque Naini Lake. There's a busy town bazaar and a web of walking tracks around the forested hillsides, which have enticed travellers since pre-independence days to retreat to Nainital during the summer months.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The perfect summer getaway, Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer tourists a relaxed tropical ambience and an array of thrilling adventure activities. Tourists from all over the world visit this tropical paradise for its rich and diverse marine life which is best seen while snorkelling and scuba diving around its many pristine beaches.

Row over Rs 10,000 airfare hike for Haj pilgrims, govt cites Iran war impact

The Haj Committee has raised airfare by Rs 10,000 amid a surge in ATF prices linked to the Iran conflict. The move has triggered anger among pilgrims and prompted opposition demands for a rollback.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A decision by the Haj Committee, which functions under the Minority Affairs Ministry, to raise the Haj airfare by Rs 10,000 amid a sharp rise in ATF (Aviation Turbine Fuel) prices due to the Iran conflict has sparked outrage among pilgrims and invited demands from the opposition for a rollback. A government circular said the one-time airfare revision was necessary due to the prevailing situation in the Middle East. Global ATF prices have more than doubled since the Iran war began on February 28. Now, ATF prices normally account for 30-40% of an airline's operating cost. The rise in prices has hit the operations of several airlines.

"The revised airfare entails an additional amount of USD 100 per pilgrim,



irrespective of embarkation point, to be borne by the pilgrims," the Haj Committee circular said. It further said that all pilgrims embarking on Haj this year must deposit Rs 10,000 towards the differential airfare by May 15.

Haj is the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The airfare increase, however, has not gone down well with the

pilgrims. The opposition, too, has lent its weight behind them, calling the increase an "injustice".

Leading the charge, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi urged the Centre to revoke the circular, calling the extra Rs 10,000 charge nothing but exploitation. "This is despite collecting Rs 90,844 per pilgrim a couple of months ago, departing from Mumbai Embarkation Point. This is almost double the prevalent rates for individual travellers," Owaisi tweeted.

"Are pilgrims being punished for going through the Haj Committee? Most pilgrims are not wealthy; they save money for years to be able to go to Haj. This is not a luxury for them," he further said. Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi questioned the need for the government to

hike the airfare right before the Haj pilgrimage.

"When the full fare was already fixed in advance, why was this increase imposed at the very last moment?" Pratapgarhi said.

'PROTECTED FROM LARGER BURDEN'

As the row escalated, Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju stepped in to clarify the government's move. Rijiju said airlines had initially demanded \$300-\$400 extra per pilgrim due to the spike in ATF prices. However, the government negotiated the increase to just \$100. "We also can't blame airlines for the rise in ATF price... The decision was taken transparently, in good faith, to ensure no disruption in the Haj operations," Rijiju tweeted.

Delivery worker dies after scooter hits car, falls off Dabri flyover in west Delhi

New Delhi.(Agency)

A 25-year-old food delivery worker was killed early Thursday morning after his scooter was involved in an accident with a car on the Dabri flyover in west Delhi, an official said. Initial probe suggested that he fell off the flyover during the accident, he further said.

The incident took place around 6.30 am. The deceased has been identified as Rajkumar, a resident of Godda



district in Jharkhand, who was working as a food delivery worker. The offending vehicle was registered in the name of Shankar, a resident of Dabri Part 2, the official said. "Police at Janakpuri police station were informed around 7.35 am after a caller reported that a person had fallen from the flyover. On reaching the spot, police found a scooter and a red car in an accidental condition," a senior officer said.

The driver fled the spot, leaving the car behind, and efforts are on to apprehend him. The injured was taken to hospital, where he was declared brought dead. A case has been registered, and CCTV footage is being examined.

Sailing soon: Delhi ready for Yamuna cruise launch

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi government will announce the launch date of the Yamuna cruise service within 15 days and is all set to start operations next month, sources have said. The cruise will operate on the Yamuna, offering hour-long round trips designed to provide a unique recreational experience within the city.

This newspaper was the first to report on the cruise service. The cruise will operate on a 6-7 km stretch between Sonia Vihar and Jagatpur, upstream of Wazirabad Barrage. The 40-seater vessel, built in Mumbai and transported to Delhi in January, has undergone interior work and is now ready for operations. It will include onboard facilities such as music, entertainment and food services for passengers. The cruise is part of the government's riverfront tourism and recreation plan and will operate on a stretch under development at an estimated cost of '20 crore. The project is likely to offer a new green-tourism experience and enhance connectivity through eco-friendly river travel.

A recent visit to the area witnessed activities in full swing. But several tasks are still unfinished, related to finalisation of rooms for ticketing, charging station, sitting/waiting facilities, parking lot, and recreational spaces, drinking water facility and public convenience place.

Onshore facilities like a floating jetty have been built by agencies. "The agencies have been making necessary arrangements so work could be completed as soon as possible," said a staff member deployed there.

The government had earlier said: "We are bringing this in accordance with international safety standards. A MoU was signed between the Centre, DDA and the Delhi government.

The Yamuna has two phases in Delhi: upstream and downstream Wazirabad. For upstream Wazirabad, we are working to connect people with the Yamuna. Downstream Wazirabad, the sewage is being tapped first. Systems are being built to treat it. Treatment systems for the drains are being constructed so that clean water flows downstream."

To Lam's Delhi visit may seal Rs 5,800 crore BrahMos deal with Vietnam

New Delhi.(Agency)

Vietnam's President To Lam is set to make New Delhi his first major foreign stop after taking office, with a BrahMos missile deal likely to be a key outcome. If finalised, Vietnam could become the third Southeast Asian nation to induct the Indo-Russian supersonic cruise missile.

Sources told India Today that the proposed package includes shore-based BrahMos batteries for coastal defence, along with training, logistics and an initial batch of missiles. Valued at around Rs 5,800 crore, it would be one of Vietnam's largest defence purchases in recent years, signalling Hanoi's push to modernise its maritime deterrence in the South China Sea.

Following the Philippines' deal in 2022 and Indonesia's ongoing negotiations, Vietnam's entry would further position BrahMos as a preferred supersonic anti-ship system in Southeast Asia. The



agreement would also mark a boost for India's "Make in India" defence export push.

Moscow has cleared the transfer, underlining continued cooperation between India, Russia and Vietnam

despite global supply chain pressures. For Russia, it sustains the BrahMos programme, while for India it reflects growing strategic autonomy in defence diplomacy.

To Lam's visit is being seen as more than symbolic. With China's expanding naval presence, Vietnam has been exploring long-range sea-denial capabilities. BrahMos, with its high speed, extended range variants and sea-skimming profile, aligns with Hanoi's requirement to secure its long coastline and offshore interests. Beyond the deal, the move highlights India's

emergence as a credible security partner in the Indo-Pacific, with Vietnam's interest reinforcing the appeal of Indian defence platforms in the region.

9 drown after cruise boat with 30 onboard sinks in Madhya Pradesh dam; rescue on

New Delhi.(Agency)

A festive outing turned into a major disaster at Bargi Dam after a Madhya Pradesh state tourism department cruise, carrying 30 tourists, capsized in the Narmada River backwaters. According to initial reports, the vessel was navigating the water when it was suddenly struck by powerful winds, causing it to lose balance and sink, leading to the loss of nine lives. The authorities said that the vessel sank as a sudden change in the weather was witnessed. The change led to windy conditions, and as a result, the vessel drowned. However, it has come to light that the cruise was allowed to remain on the water even though the IMD had issued a yellow alert for Jabalpur. The forecast had predicted strong winds of 40-50 kilometres/hour, signalling a clear potential risk to the city and its



waterways.

AUTHORITIES TOOK SWIFT ACTION

Following the accident, the emergency response teams were swiftly dispatched to the spot, and they rescued 15 people from the water. The teams worked under the supervision of the Jabalpur collector, Raghvendra Singh, and a senior police officer.

The officials confirmed to India Today that all the people who were rescued have been moved to local hospitals for treatment. The state authorities also dispatched the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) along with other specialised rescue units, who are presently working hard to trace the other passengers who were onboard the vessel from the reservoir's backwaters. The search is underway to locate the remaining nine people.

3 children drown in Dwarka golf course pond

Two brothers among victims; DDA orders probe as bodies found floating in 15-foot-deep pond

New Delhi.(Agency)

Three children, including two brothers aged between eight and 11, drowned in a 15-foot-deep pond of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) after scaling the boundary wall of a golf course in Dwarka's Sector 24, police said on Thursday.

Police have identified the deceased as Ravi Jaiswal (8), his brother Veer Jaiswal (11)—both residents of the Goyla Dairy area near the Kikar Chowk, and Harsh (11), a vagabond. The victims had reportedly entered the golf course premises to have a bath as their clothes were found outside the pond.

It was at 7.07 am on Thursday that police were alerted about the drowning incident, following which a team of cops rushed to the spot, an official said. Other agencies concerned were also informed at the time.

"While a security guard noticed some clothes lying on the ground around 7:30 pm on Wednesday, he failed to locate the children. He didn't alert anyone else either," a police officer said. He said in the early hours of Thursday, bodies started floating in the water, which staff noticed, and the police were alerted.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Kushal Pal Singh said the bodies of the children were retrieved with the assistance of a fire brigade team. An investigation is under way.

Meanwhile, jumping into action, the DDA has set up a three-member committee under its director to probe the incident, with its due in a week. Strict action, as warranted, will be taken, based on the findings of the inquiry, the DDA stated.

In a statement, the DDA said, "Our heartfelt condolences go out to the bereaved families during this difficult time. A committee has been constituted to inquire into the incident." It further described the incident as unfortunate.

Victims had entered pond to take a bath

The victims had reportedly entered the golf course premises to have a bath as their clothes were found outside the pond. The matter came to light on Thursday when their bodies started floating in the pond water.

Self-enumeration in MCD wards from May 1, one login per household in portal given

New Delhi.(Agency)

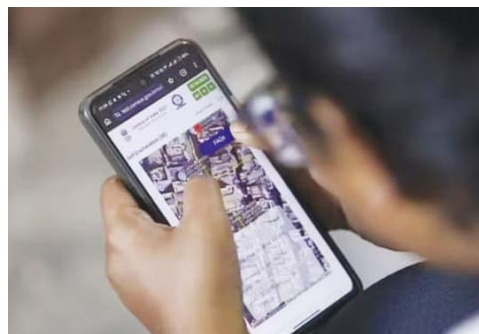
The self-enumeration exercise under Census 2027 will begin across the national capital, barring NDMC and Delhi Cantonment areas, on Friday, with residents recording their details over the next 15 days.

The exercise has already been conducted in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and Delhi Cantonment areas, where a door-to-door survey is currently underway.

Teams of Census officials are likely to visit the residences and offices of the lieutenant governor, CM, and other dignitaries in the city to assist them in the self-enumeration process, officials said. All residents of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) wards, irrespective of domicile status, can participate in the voluntary exercise.

Under self-enumeration, residents will log on to the census portal and fill in information about their households. Only one login per

household will be required, and the head of the family or any other member can complete the process using a mobile number.



Officials said users will have to select a language at the time of first login, which cannot be changed later. The process will also require respondents to provide the geo-

coordinates of their residence, either by selecting the location on a satellite map, searching the address on the portal, or manually entering latitude and longitude, they said. An 11-digit self-enumeration ID will be generated after details submission, which will be produced by the people to the census enumerators who will visit households door to door for recording under Houselisting and Housing operations from May 16 to June 14. There are 250 wards of the MCD in which self-enumeration will take place from May 1 to May 15.

'Toll-free helpline (1855) has been provided'

A government officer said that self-enumeration is a voluntary exercise and people can take part in it of their own accord as aware citizens. A toll-free helpline (1855) has been provided for assistance related to the census exercise, officials said.

International jet fuel prices rise 5 per cent, second straight monthly increase

New Delhi.(Agency)

International prices of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), or jet fuel, for foreign carriers were raised by 5 per cent on Friday, registering a second consecutive monthly increase as oil companies continue to pass on higher global energy costs in a measured manner. There has been no revision in ATF prices for domestic airlines.

ATF prices have been increased by USD 76.55 per kilolitre, or 5.33 per cent, to USD 1511.86 per kl in Delhi, home to India's busiest airport, according to



state-owned oil firms. This follows the doubling of rates on April 1. On that day, rates for domestic airlines were hiked by 25 per cent to Rs 104,927.18 per kl.

Jet fuel prices were deregulated more than two decades ago, and since then, the rates have been aligned with benchmark international prices, as per a written understanding with the airlines.

But since the West Asia crisis-induced surge in global energy prices warranted the steepest increase ever to be made in the ATF prices, the government and state-owned oil companies decided to adopt a calibrated approach, industry sources said. While foreign airlines and other carriers would pay market rates, prices for domestic airlines have been moderated, they said.

GST collection in April rose by 8.7% to Rs 2.42 lakh crore

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in April rose 8.7% year-on-year to Rs 2.42 lakh crore, primarily driven by the surge in import revenue reveals the data released by the Finance Ministry on Friday.

The total collection from the CGST stood at Rs 52.14 thousand crore, while SGST and Import GST stood at Rs. 61.3 thousand crore and Rs 1.29 lakh crore respectively. The gross import revenue rose by nearly 26% to Rs 57.58 thousand crore in April.

After accounting for all refunds, the total net GST revenue for the month stood at Rs 2.1 lakh crore, reflecting a 7.3% increase over Rs 1.96 lakh crore collected in the same month of the previous year. The total refunds in April also went up by more than 19% reaching Rs 31.79 thousand crores.

Most large states saw double-digit increases in GST collection with Punjab and Chandigarh accounting for the highest growth rate of 65% and more. However, the annual collection of GST for FY 26 has gone down significantly for most of the states. Sikkim accounted for the highest fall in the annual collection as it went down by nearly 45%, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Despite GST 2.0 implementation, the annual collection went up significantly with Karnataka accounting for the highest growth of 14% in collection.

RBI moves 104 tonnes of gold to domestic vaults in H2 Fy26

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shifted a substantial portion of its gold reserves to domestic vaults during the second half of FY26, increasing locally held gold by 104 tonnes, according to its latest half-yearly report on foreign exchange reserves.

Gold held within India rose to 680.05 tonnes as of end-March 2026 from 575.82 tonnes at end-September 2025—an increase of about 104 metric tonnes in six months. Correspondingly, gold held overseas declined sharply. Holdings with the Bank of England and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) fell to 197.67 tonnes at end-March 2026 from 290.37 metric tonnes six months earlier, while gold deposits dropped to 2.8 tonnes from 13.99 tonnes.

Overall gold holdings remained largely stable at 880.52 tonnes at end-March 2026 compared with 880.18 tonnes at end-September 2025, indicating that the change was primarily a relocation rather than fresh accumulation.

The shift has pushed the share of domestically held gold to over 77% of total reserves from about 65% earlier, underscoring a strategic move towards greater onshore custody of bullion.

In value terms, gold's share in India's foreign exchange reserves rose significantly to 16.7% at end-March 2026 from 13.92% at end-September 2025 and 11.7% at end-March 2025, reflecting both valuation gains and portfolio rebalancing.

Meanwhile, India's overall foreign exchange reserves declined to \$691.1 billion at end-March 2026 from \$700.1 billion at end-September 2025. Despite the decline, reserves remain comfortable. Import cover stood at 10.8 months as of end-December 2025, slightly lower than 11.3 months at end-September 2025.

GST at record Rs 2.43 lakh crore in April, but domestic demand growth slows

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's GST collections touched a new peak in April 2026, offering a positive headline number. However, a closer look shows that much of this growth is being driven by imports, while domestic demand appears to be growing at a slower pace.

RECORD NUMBERS, STEADY RISE

Gross GST collections stood at Rs 2.43 lakh crore in April, up from Rs 2 lakh crore in March. Compared to April last year, this marks a growth of 8.7%. Net collections, after adjusting for refunds, came in at Rs 2.11 lakh crore, showing a 7.3% rise year-on-year. Over the past few years, GST revenues have steadily climbed, from Rs 1.67 lakh crore in April 2022 to the current record level, highlighting improved compliance and a broader tax base.

IMPORTS DRIVE THE SURGE

A major part of April's growth came from import-related revenues. GST collected on imports rose sharply by 25.8% to Rs

57,580 crore.

This spike is linked to rising global prices and supply disruptions, particularly due to geopolitical tensions in West Asia. Higher crude prices also played a role in pushing up import values.

DOMESTIC DEMAND SHOWS MILD SIGNS OF SLOWING

While overall collections are strong, domestic GST growth was more modest. Gross domestic revenue grew 4.3% to Rs 1.85 lakh crore.

At the same time, refunds increased significantly, especially on the domestic side. Total refunds rose 19.3%, with domestic refunds jumping over 50%. This reduced the net gains from domestic collections.

EXPERT VIEW: WHAT'S BEHIND THE NUMBERS

Vivek Jalan, Partner at Tax Connect Advisory Services LLP, explained the

trend: "India's GST collections in April 2026 once again crossed the Rs 2 lakh crore milestone, with net revenues rising 7.3% year-on-year to Rs 2.11 lakh crore. The surge was powered by a 42.9% jump



in net customs GST collections, reflecting higher import costs amid global supply chain disruptions and war-driven commodity movements."

He also pointed out that domestic numbers

need a closer look: "Gross domestic GST revenues stood at Rs 1.85 lakh crore, up 4.3% from April 2025, underscoring wider compliance coverage. However, net domestic collections remained flat as

refunds, primarily under the inverted duty structure, spiked by 54%."

COMPLIANCE CHANGES AND ONE-OFF FACTORS

Jalan highlighted that policy and compliance changes also played a role in April's numbers. "A major compliance shift also shaped April's inflows:

the recalibration of ITC set off sequencing on the GST portal," he said, referring to changes in how tax credits are adjusted. He added that some collections were supported by

advance payments linked to tax disputes. "Additional support to domestic collections came from pre-deposits linked to Section 74 orders for FY 2019-20 issued before March 31, 2026."

Commercial LPG up by nearly Rs 1,000: Why have prices increased?

New Delhi.(Agency)

Commercial LPG cylinder prices have seen a sharp increase again, with a 19-kg cylinder in Delhi now costing Rs 3,071.50. The latest hike, which comes close on the heels of last month's increase, is being driven by a mix of global oil tensions and India's pricing strategy. At the heart of the price hike is the steady rise in global crude oil prices. Brent crude is hovering around \$111 per barrel, while WTI crude is above \$105, reflecting continued tightness in supply.

This surge is linked to the ongoing US-Iran deadlock, which has raised concerns over disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz — a key global oil route through which nearly a fifth of the world's oil passes. With tensions escalating and the possibility of supply disruptions increasing, global oil markets have turned volatile. Even the

risk of reduced flows through Hormuz has been enough to push prices higher, which directly impacts LPG pricing.

Another factor adding to the pressure is uncertainty within OPEC, especially after the UAE's decision to exit the



grouping.

The UAE, one of the larger oil producers, stepping away from coordinated production controls could weaken supply discipline over time. This creates further uncertainty in already

tight global markets, keeping oil prices elevated.

WHY ONLY COMMERCIAL LPG PRICES ARE RISING

Despite rising global fuel costs, the government has chosen to shield retail consumers. Prices of petrol, diesel and domestic LPG cylinders (14.2 kg) have been kept unchanged. These segments account for nearly 80-90% of consumption, and keeping them stable helps control inflation and protect household budgets.

However, this also means oil marketing companies cannot absorb the entire cost burden. To balance this, price revisions are being passed on to smaller segments like commercial LPG, which accounts for less than 1% of total consumption.

This is why restaurants, hotels and small businesses are seeing the impact, while household consumers are not — at least for now.

Petrol, diesel, ATF and domestic LPG prices unchanged despite global fuel price rise

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices for domestic airlines remained unchanged on Friday as state-owned oil companies decided to absorb the rise in global fuel prices to protect airlines and consumers, IndianOil said.

Retail prices of petrol, diesel and domestic LPG cylinders have also been kept steady, insulating consumers from international fuel price volatility.

In a statement, IOC said there has been no rate revision in key fuels affecting the general public. ATF prices are, as per practice, revised on the 1st of every month based on input cost. While no change has been made in rates for domestic airlines, there has been an



increase in prices for international carriers. IOC said retail prices of petrol and diesel remained unchanged for consumers, who account for nearly 90 per cent of total consumption. Similarly, prices of domestic LPG (14.2-kg cylinders) for about 33 crore

consumers have not been altered. Prices of kerosene distributed under the public distribution system (PDS) also remained unchanged.

Overall, around 80 per cent of petroleum products have seen no change in prices, ensuring stability for the majority of consumers, the statement said.

Price revisions have been limited to select industrial segments, which account for a relatively small share of consumption and are subject to routine monthly adjustments based on global benchmarks, IOC said. Prices of bulk and commercial LPG cylinders (less than 1 per cent of total consumption) have been revised, while bulk diesel.

Commercial, mini LPG prices hiked by Rs 993 and Rs 261, no change in domestic rates

Commercial LPG cylinder prices have surged by Rs 993 to Rs 3,071.50 in Delhi, while domestic LPG, petrol, diesel, and kerosene rates remain unchanged to shield consumers.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prices of 19-kg commercial LPG cylinders and five-kg Free Trade LPG cylinders (popularly known as chotu or mini cylinders) were increased by Rs 993 and Rs 261 respectively on Friday, news agency ANI reported. Confirming the prices of bulk and commercial LPG cylinders, the Indian Oil Corporation noted that these cylinders make up 1%

of their network's total consumption.

In Delhi, a 19 kg commercial LPG cylinder will now cost Rs 3,071.50 while in Mumbai it will cost Rs 3,024.

Mini (5 kg) domestic cylinders are priced at around Rs 339 in Delhi, with similar small-cylinder pricing trends in Mumbai.

The increase in prices follows a similar hike last month, when state-owned oil companies increased prices of both 19-kg commercial cylinders and 5-kg mini cylinders.

The sharp increase in the 19 kg cylinder will directly impact restaurants, hotels, bakeries and other establishments that rely on commercial LPG for daily operations. Industry players often pass on part of the increased cost to consumers, which could reflect in food and dining prices in the coming weeks.

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Short news

3 illegal religious structures demolished in Dwarka; govt land worth Rs 2.27 cr freed

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

The Devbhumi Dwarka district administration on Thursday demolished three religious structures including a mazaar, a temple and a mosque, resulting in approximately 2,400 square metres of government land valued at Rs 2.27 crore getting cleared, officials said.

The demolition is part of a drive called "Operation Clean" in which at least 10 various illegal religious buildings will be demolished in the next three days.

Devbhumi Dwarka Assistant Collector Lt Col Amol Awate told The Indian Express, "We demolished three religious structures today. One structure (mazaar) was in Dwarka, the temple was in Rupen area of Dwarka, and a mosque was in Aramda near Mithapur."

All illegal structures were located about 200 to 400 metres from the coastline, while one structure was as close as 50 metres, Awate said.

On the demolitions to be held in the coming days, Awate said that the administration will seek police protection to carry out the next phase of demolitions on May 1 and 2. He said the administration did not face any resistance during their demolition drive on Thursday. DySP Sagar Rathod also confirmed the same.

Awate said that the demolitions had been carried out "in the interest of national security near coastal areas and near the highways, as per guidelines from the High Court and Supreme Court". He said that all structures had been given notices two months prior to the action seeking documents to prove land ownership.

Fire destroys 10 acres of maize crop in Nirmal

ADILABAD. (Agency)

A fire broke out in maize fields and destroyed around 10 acres of standing crop in Pemi mandal of Nirmal district on Wednesday. According to farmers, sparks caused by friction between two high-tension electric wires triggered the blaze, which



quickly spread to the crop. The maize, which was in the harvest stage, was completely gutted. On noticing the fire, nearby farmers alerted authorities and informed the fire department. Fire personnel rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control.

Affected farmers, including Gosukula Ramulu and Kanne Mallesh, said their livelihoods had been devastated, with crops worth approximately Rs 10-12 lakh destroyed.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy took note of the incident and directed officials to examine the details and provide appropriate financial assistance to the affected farmers. Following this, the district collector and other officials have initiated steps to ensure relief.

Summer blues: Veggie prices go north in Chennai markets as supply dips

CHENNAI.(Agency)

The prices of vegetables, especially that of tomatoes, have gone up at Koyambedu wholesale markets and retail outlets in the city, as the vegetable supply has dropped in the recent days. Tomatoes, which were selling at Rs 35/kg in retail markets, are now priced between Rs 50 and Rs 70. The traders at Koyambedu said prices are likely to remain high until the end of summer.

M Thiagarajan, a member of the Koyambedu Vegetable, Fruit and Flower Sellers Welfare Association, said the inflow of tomatoes has declined to 500 tonnes a day from 700 tonnes.

"The inflow is expected to remain low till the end of summer and the prices may stay around Rs 50 or rise further unless there is a significant harvest in supply areas," he said, adding the tomatoes mainly arrive from Karnataka and AP. On Thursday, the wholesale price was Rs 40 per kg, he said.

The prices of several other vegetables, including carrot, beans, chow chow, cabbage and bitter gourd, have also increased. Carrot price has risen from Rs 40 per kg to Rs 60, beans from Rs 50 to Rs 60-70, and radish from Rs 20 to Rs 30 at Koyambedu retail market.

However, prices of onion, potato, mango and drumstick are relatively low. Onion is priced at around Rs 30 per kg, while potato costs Rs 15-20 per kg. "The increase in prices of these vegetables has been moderate as demand from hotels has dropped significantly due to the LPG shortage," another trader said.

With ICSE and ISC results out, three students from Mumbai score 100%

Mumbai.(Agency)

Three students from Mumbai, one in ICSE (Class X) and two in ISC (Class XII), scored a perfect 100 per cent as the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) declared results on Thursday. Maharashtra has recorded pass percentages above 99 in both exams.

In ICSE, 30,393 students appeared from the state, including 16,181 boys and 14,212 girls. The overall pass percentage stood at 99.93 with girls and boys recording identical pass rates. In ISC, 4,061 students appeared — 1,935 boys and 2,126 girls — with an overall pass percentage of 99.95 for girls and 99.79 for boys.

Most CISCE-affiliated schools in the city reported 100 per cent results, with a continued trend of high scorers. Principal of Bombay Scottish School, Mahim, Sunita George said over 70 per cent of students scored above 90 per cent. "Many students have scored perfect



marks in various subjects, especially in Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is a very new subject in our curriculum," she said.

Bhushan Bonde, principal of Podar International School, Nerul, attributed consistent high scores to better familiarity with competency-based questions. "The Council introduced competency-based questions last year... This year schools have been successful in helping students learn and prepare for such questions. As a result,

students who have scored 90 percent and above continue to remain high," he said.

Among top scorers, Sanchay Jain of Podar International School secured 99.8 per cent in ICSE. "As the syllabus was completed well in advance, we had almost 3 to 4 months for revision... this really helped in preparing well for the final board exam," he said.

In ISC, Aarav More of Bombay Scottish School scored 99.5 per cent. "Consistency helps... the last three months of self-study really helped me,"

he said. Sanay Chhapparwal from Arya Vidya Mandir in Bandra, who scored 99.8 per cent in ICSE and aspires to join IIT Bombay, said in addition to support from the schools, self-study is also very important. "Ensuring self-study for one hour a day has really helped me to maintain consistency in preparing for the board exam. Additionally, the format of question-papers is such that we are able to pre-empt important topics to study thoroughly," he noted.

Centre clean chit on green clearance for twin-hydel projects in Parvati Valley

Shimla. (Agency)

Two small hydropower projects coming up in Kasol in Parvati Valley fall under the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of Kanwar Wildlife Sanctuary but do not need environment clearance, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) has informed the National Green Tribunal.

As per the submission by the MoEFCC, projects above 25MW capacity need to procure green clearance from the standing committee of National Board of Wild Life (SC-NBWL), while the projects in Kasol are of 5 MW each.

The NGT is hearing petition filed by residents of two villages — Thunja and Grahani — against the two hydel projects. The petitioners have alleged that the two projects on Grahani Nullah poses a threat to the existence of their villages and the flora, and fauna of Parvati Valley. It says that the projects also pose threat to their only natural source of drinking water and are coming up on fragile slope which was once declared unfit for any hydro-power project. The



petitioners have also alleged that the two projects essentially function as a single unit, and operate from a single Palampur-based address. They further allege that to avoid NBWL scrutiny, the owners followed a "textbook case of project splitting" by using different names for the same water source, one calling it Grahani Nullah and the other Kasol river.

The projects in question are Kasol small hydro

project, owned by Beena Butail, and the Grahani-Kasol hydro project, owned by tea grower Dinesh Butail.

Beena Butail is wife of veteran Congress leader Brij Bihari Butail and mother of Palampur MLA Ashish Butail, who is also a chief parliamentary secretary. Dinesh Butail is father of Gokul Butail, principal adviser (IT, Innovation and Governance) to Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu.

During the resumed hearing on August 27, Gokul Butail filed an affidavit submitting that his father has sold the project to another entity. He also dismissed the allegations "project splitting". "The Kasol SHEP and Grahani Kasol SHEP are independent projects having separate approvals, separate project reports and separate implementation frameworks. The replying respondent is the sole proprietor of Grahani-Kasol SHEP," read the affidavit submitted by Gokul on behalf of his father.

4 Chhattisgarh Cops Detained In Guwahati For Taking Bribe From Accused

Shimla.(Agency)

In a dramatic turn of events surrounding the controversial housing project Chester Hills in Solan, Himachal DGP Ashok Tewari instructed DC Solan to initiate disciplinary and vigilance action against Solan SDM Poonam Bansal, following allegations of misconduct, conflict of interest, and suspected benami transactions Thursday.

SDM Bansal is the same officer who, in her earlier capacity, had established violations of Section 118 of the Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972, along with suspected benami transactions by the promoters of the Chester Hills project.

When asked, SDM Bansal said, "Let them carry out the investigation."

According to information, the development comes following a complaint against SDM Bansal and her husband Sunil Kumar Bansal, who is a BSNL employee, moved by a



Chandigarh-based Advocate Sanjeev Kumar Birla.

In his complaint, Birla alleged that the couple were indirectly involved in the purchase of two properties in Solan registered on the names of Aarti Nirmohi and Raksha Manta. Birla alleged that Sunil transferred around Rs 40 lakh in the account of Nirmohi

when the land deals were being executed.

In his communication to the DC Solan, DGP Ashok Tewari stated, "The material on record... reveals serious and prima facie misuse of official position, conflict of interest, and possible involvement in benami transactions."

Firing at Rohit Shetty residence chargesheet: Act carried out to establish gang supremacy

Mumbai. (Agency)

Giving no specific reason for the firing outside the Juhu residence of Bollywood director Rohit Shetty on February 1, the Mumbai Police in a 1624-page chargesheet filed on Thursday, said that the firing was carried out by a group linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang in order to "establish the supremacy of the gang".

The chargesheet has been filed against 17 accused in a special Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court on Thursday, after sections of the stringent law had been applied in the case. While there were certain indications regarding the motive,



they have not found evidence to establish the same due to which the motive was not mentioned, sources in the police said.

At least five rounds were fired at the first floor of Shetty's nine-storey house in the Juhu area at 12.45 am on February 1.

While 15 persons have been arrested in the case, Shubham Lonkar and Arzoo Bishnoi, part of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, were shown as wanted accused, the official said adding that Lonkar and Arzoo Bishnoi had taken responsibility for the incident through a social media post.

Lonkar, whose brother Pravin is an arrested accused in the case, is also wanted in NCP leader Baba Siddique murder case as well as the firing at actor Salman Khan's residence in Bandra.

The chargesheet mentioned that the accused who carried out the firing were working on the directions of Lonkar and had examined Shetty's house on three occasions before the firing.

Alleged shooter Deepak Sharma and another three accused had come to Juhu on the day of the incident, and fled in an autorickshaw to Kalyan in neighbouring Thane district after the firing, the official said. From there the accused took a train for UP and fled to several hideouts after having a meeting at the accused's residence in Kalyan.

The accused were hiding in a place in Haryana that had been provided by one Ritik Yadav, who too has been arrested. Besides Sharma and Yadav, others held so far are Sunny Thakur, Sonu, Jatin Bharadwaj, Vishal Thakur and Vishnu Kushwah, Aditya Gayaki, Siddharth Yenpure, Samarth Pomaji, Swapnil Sakat, and Asaram Fasale, the official added.

Hardeep Puri, Patil expected at 1st South Gujarat Vibrant Gujarat in Surat

Surat.(Agency)

UNION Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri and Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil are expected to attend the third edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference focussing on the south Gujarat region on Friday. Spanning over 12,000 sq metres, at AURO University, the exhibitions alongside the conference will feature a Japan country pavilion, a technology pavilion, a tribal haat and over 30 start-up stalls, a government statement said.

Surat will host the first of the 2-day VGRC while the exhibition will be on till May 5. A special reverse buyer-seller meet will be convened at the VGRC (South Gujarat), set to be organised by the state government in association with the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO). The conference will focus on the state's progress and investment opportunities in areas like infrastructure, transportation and modern technology, a statement issued on Thursday said.

As part of this initiative, FIEO has invited over 45 foreign buyers from 15 countries, including the UK, Australia, UAE, Singapore, Japan, Rwanda, Russia, Romania, Germany, Ukraine, Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius, and Sweden, to connect with Gujarat-based MSME exporters. This RBSM (Reverse Buyer Seller Meet) will facilitate special trade meetings, thereby creating meaningful trade relations and export opportunities for regional industries spread in South Gujarat (Surat, Bharuch, Valsad, Navsari, Tapi and Dangs). At the VGRC, RBSM will showcase Surat's industrial strength in sectors like textiles and garments, chemicals and petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, food and agro products as well as engineering. Two editions of the VGRC have been successfully held in Mehsana.

Seven roads to link ORR with Musi corridor in Hyderabad, ease traffic

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

Hyderabad is set to witness a major leap in urban connectivity as the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Limited (MRDCL) rolls out an ambitious plan to reshape the road network across Budvel, Kothwalguda and Gandipet, three of the city's fastest-growing areas.

The move aims to improve connectivity between the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and key urban stretches, easing traffic and supporting future growth. MRDCL has initiated development of master plan roads integrated with the proposed East-West Corridor along River Musi to reduce congestion in these high-growth areas. Seven such roads have been proposed.

The master plan roads include Osmansagar to Narsingi (5.4 km length, Right of Way 30 metres), Osmansagar to ORR Service Road (2.3 km, RoW 30 metres), Kismatpur Bridge to HMDA Budvel Rangareddy Layout (L-M1) (1.1 km, RoW 30 metres), HMDA Budvel Layout to Rangareddy Shivam Road (3.5 km, RoW 30 metres), NIRD Road, Police Quarters, Rajendranagar to SS Convention, Airport Road, Sathamrai Colony, Shamshabad (5 km, RoW 36 metres), Kismatpur Bridge to HMDA Budvel Rangareddy Layout (L-N) (3 km, RoW 36 metres) and Isthana villas to

NEWS BOX

After CSK jibe, Shubman Gill makes play bold dig at RCB with Virat Kohli picture



New Delhi. (Agency)

Shubman Gill is known for taking digs at teams his Gujarat Titans side beats in the IPL. He did the same after GT crushed Chennai Super Kings at the Chepauk, with a picture of him posing with a whistle. Now he has done the same with RCB, with a post on Instagram, which includes an image of Virat Kohli.

GT defeated RCB by four wickets in Ahmedabad on Thursday, April 30 in what turned out to be a tricky chase for the home team. Gill set up the platform for the win with his fearless batting at the top with 43 off 18 balls. Jason Holder was the star of the show for GT, as he picked two wickets, took three catches and scored 12 off 10 balls. Holder was the one who got all the praise from Gill in his post, where he also praised his side for his team's performance, a suspected dig at RCB's tagline.

GILL'S BANTER WITH KOHLI

There was some banter between Gill and Kohli during the match in Ahmedabad. The GT skipper was dismissed thanks to a sharp catch from the RCB star.

In typical Kohli fashion, he gave a death stare and backed it up with an aggressive send-off for his India teammate.

However, it was all fun and games between Gill and Kohli, who engaged in some banter during the course of the second innings. Kohli had some choice words for Gill while he was in the middle and then poked fun at him as he was sitting in the dugout. In the end, both men hugged it out after the match to show the fans that all was fine between the duo.

GT will now turn their focus towards PBKS, who they will face on May 3 in Ahmedabad. RCB will travel to Lucknow next to face LSG on May 7.

RR vs DC Preview: Time for Riyan Parag to step up amidst myriad of controversies

New Delhi. (Agency)

Rajasthan Royals return to Jaipur under growing pressure, and even victory in their previous outing has done little to ease the scrutiny surrounding the franchise. As they prepare to host Delhi Capitals at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, the Royals find themselves dealing with far more than just the demands of another crucial IPL fixture.

The spotlight will fall firmly on stand-in captain Riyan Parag, who heads into the contest under mounting pressure after being caught on camera using an e-cigarette in the dugout during Rajasthan's recent game. The incident, which quickly spread across social media, led to Parag being sanctioned by the IPL Governing Council and has placed both the player and the franchise under uncomfortable public scrutiny ahead of Friday's clash.

For Parag, the pressure is no longer limited to captaincy alone. The controversy has only sharpened attention on a season that has already been underwhelming with the bat. Tasked with leading Rajasthan in a crucial stretch of the campaign, Parag has yet to deliver the sort of innings expected of a senior batter carrying added responsibility.

His returns reflect that struggle. Parag has managed just 117 runs this season at a strike-rate of 124, and is yet to register a score of 30 or more. For a player entrusted with leadership and expected to anchor Rajasthan's middle order, those numbers have only added to the scrutiny.

Against a Delhi Capitals side still searching for momentum and consistency, Parag now walks into a fixture where the pressure is personal as much as tactical. In Jaipur, Rajasthan need a captain who can steady the noise around them. Parag needs an innings that can do the same.

RR vs DC: DELHI IN NEED OF INSPIRATION

Delhi Capitals arrive in Jaipur searching for answers. Their last two defeats have not just hurt their position in the table, but also raised uncomfortable questions about their direction at a crucial stage of the season. The first was a defeat that should never have happened.

KL Rahul produced one of the innings of the tournament, smashing 150 in a T20 innings, only for Delhi to still end up on the losing side.

Homework hero: Why Ian Bishop goes beyond stats in IPL commentary

IPL 2026: Long before he steps into

the IPL commentary box, Ian

Bishop is already at work, piecing

together stories from research and

reportage to bring out the human

journeys behind cricket's brightest

talents.

New Delhi. (Agency)

When Ian Bishop thundered those three words as Carlos Brathwaite cleared the Eden Gardens ropes in 2016, the moment demanded a command—and he delivered it. Bishop has always had a flair for the theatre, a knack for meeting the game's loudest moments with a voice that matches their scale. But while the world remembers the name, Bishop is usually the only one in the booth who remembers the secondary school,

the bus route to training, and the name of the coach who first handed the kid a ball. The theatricality we hear on air is merely the tip of a very deep, very deliberate iceberg.

Long before he was the voice of the Caribbean, Ian Bishop was a man who could not sit still in his own success. There is a telling vignette from his playing days that neatly captures the restless, meticulous mind of the Trinidadian. After a gruelling spell that yielded a five-wicket haul, the typical fast bowler's ritual involves a cold beverage and a moment of self-congratulation. Not Bishop. "My wife used to get very upset with me," Bishop, ESPNcricinfo Expert, recalled on Thursday.

"I would get a five-wicket haul and, instead of celebrating, I would start thinking about how I could get the next one. She'd say, 'You don't take time to celebrate what you have just done. You are always thinking about the next thing.'"

That relentless forward motion did not retire when he hung up his boots. It simply found a

new direction. The man who once obsessed over the next wicket now concerns himself with the next generation. In the modern landscape of the IPL, where reputations can



be forged in a single over, Bishop has quietly become one of the game's most diligent custodians of cricketing stories.

MR. STUDIOUS

In an era of sports broadcasting that often leans towards spectacle and quick-fire banter, Bishop stands apart. While many others may embrace the theatre of the commentary box,

he is the first to acknowledge that he is not there to deliver punchlines.

"I don't know if I have found that balance between entertainment and education because I am not a funny guy," he says.

"My wife always says I have no sense of humour. So, that's why you have different commentators in the commentary box who bring a different perspective. That's why you have a mix. For instance, my good friend Danny Morrison is a funny guy. I leave the jokes to him."

The self-awareness is disarming, but it also reflects a deeper professional clarity outside the spotlight. Bishop understands that commentary is a collective craft; where some provide

levity, he provides context. His warmth is not performative, it stems from a genuine respect for the game's newest entrants. It is why he has become something of a cult favourite among fans — the running joke being that by the time a young uncapped player hits his first six, Bishop has already finished reading the lad's primary school reports.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi turns weakness into strength when bowlers err: Ian Bishop

New Delhi. (Agency)

When you are just a 15-year-old in a professional sport, you need to be extraordinarily brilliant with your skill sets to take on the world's best, and Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is doing exactly that. The teenage sensation's fearless approach to tackle top-quality bowling has drawn widespread attention, including praise from former players.

In a tournament known for its intensity and global talent, Sooryavanshi's rapid rise highlights the growing impact of young players in elite franchise cricket. Former West Indies fast bowler and commentator Ian Bishop believes the youngster's mindset sets him apart at the highest level. "I think psychologically, or from a character standpoint, he is very tough because he is taking on many of the world's best bowlers," Bishop, ESPNcricinfo Expert,



spoke to the media. "So, his psychological make-up is efficient to take on the best in the world. He took on Jasprit Bumrah. Technically, he is unique, with his bat swing more like a baseball-style swing."

Bishop also pointed out that while Sooryavanshi may have technical vulnerabilities, his ability to counterattack often neutralises them. "It is very hard to say what exactly his weakness is because the

back-of-the-length delivery worked against him in the U19 World Cup and against Sunrisers Hyderabad. But if you don't get it right, those same deliveries are disappearing out of the park," he added.

INDIA DEBUT ON HORIZON?

Sooryavanshi's performances underline both his natural talent and adaptability. The Bihar-born batter has already taken on elite bowlers such as Jasprit Bumrah, Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, and Arshdeep Singh with remarkable confidence, even scoring first-ball sixes against some of them. He also became the fastest player in IPL history to reach 400 runs in a single season, getting there in just nine innings at a staggering strike rate of 238.10. One of the standout performers of the season, Sooryavanshi currently sits in the top three of the Orange cap list.

Will Heinrich Klaasen make South Africa return? SRH star reacts to Pietersen remark

New Delhi. (Agency)

Heinrich Klaasen shocked everyone when he made the call to retire from international cricket in June 2025. Considered to be one of the best batters in T20 format, Klaasen was at the peak of his powers and played a big role in South Africa's run to the T20 World Cup 2024 final. Since then, Klaasen has been taking part in various leagues around the globe and continues to impress in the ongoing IPL 2026 campaign. Such has been the form of the 34-year-old, Kevin Pietersen urged Cricket South Africa to make the phone call and get him back into the fold for the 2027 ODI World Cup.

So, will Klaasen make a return? Speaking to Sports Today in an exclusive chat, the new co-owner of the Rotterdam franchise in the European T20 Premier League (ETPL) said that an international return is off the table for him and he is focused on growing the game at

the moment. Klaasen said that his focus will now be on the ETPL and getting the Rotterdam fans to rally around the new team.

"No, unfortunately not. For me, I'm looking forward to what's a new chapter in my life and it's growing the game of cricket. I'm



really looking forward to partnering up with Rotterdam and we're really pushing hard to make this thing happen and to make sure that we run a professional business and we're looking forward to

getting the community behind us and getting the right infrastructure and the right people behind us to make this a success," said Klaasen.

WHAT'S THE SECRET FOR KLAASEN'S IPL 2026 SUCCESS

Klaasen finds himself second on the list for the orange cap with 414 runs from nine matches. While someone like Nicholas Pooran, who also retired from international cricket, struggles for form, the South African batter continues to go from strength to strength.

So what's the secret behind Klaasen's success? Well, according to the SRH star there is nothing at all and just belief.

Klaasen pointed out the example of Faf du Plessis, his co-owner at Rotterdam, and how he has continued to age like fine wine after quitting international cricket and playing in T20 leagues all over the world.

Five Red Lights: F1 returns to Miami with Antonelli on rise and Verstappen's future in doubt

Miami GP: Formula 1 returns to

Miami with five pressing

questions after an unscheduled

spring break. Antonelli,

Verstappen, Norris and the FIA all

arrive under pressure in a season

still rapidly taking shape.

New Delhi. (Agency)

After an unscheduled spring break that paused the early momentum of the season, Formula 1 returns in Miami with more questions than answers. Three races in, the pecking order remains unsettled, the championship battle has taken an unexpected turn, and even the

direction of the sport itself is under scrutiny. From a new title favourite to an uncertain future for one of its biggest stars, here are five big questions as the season resumes.

IS IT ADVANTAGE ANTONELLI?

Surprise, surprise — we have a title race. Among the big stories from the first three races has been the unexpected evolution of young Kimi Antonelli from an explosive yet erratic talent into the drivers' championship leader. Critics may argue that this owes as much to George Russell's niggles in the last two races — but there is no denying that the Italian prodigy has now established himself as no number two driver, ready to seize on any mistake from the other side of the garage. As Antonelli heads to the same track where he claimed his first sprint pole a year ago, the 19-year-old holds the

advantage for perhaps the first time in his short F1 career. For Russell, the brief is urgent — reclaim the number one status within the team and the lead of the



championship, or risk serious questions over his long-term standing at Mercedes.

CAN RED BULL CONVINCE VERSTAPPEN TO STAY?

Among the names that could shape the future of Mercedes — should he choose to remain in Formula 1 — is Max Verstappen. The Dutchman increasingly finds himself at a team without the figures that once made Verstappen feel at home. Christian Horner, Adrian Newey and Jonathan Wheatley have all departed, and even long-time race engineer Gianpiero "GP" Lambiase is set to move on in the coming years.

For Verstappen, however, it ultimately comes down to one thing: winning. If the new-look Red Bull can somehow turn its fortunes around, it still has a realistic chance of retaining its talismanic driver. As the team heads to the first home race of its new partner Ford, hopes of another mid-season revival remain alive. But should that fail, Red Bull's biggest fear would not be losing Verstappen outright, but losing him to one of its rivals.



Priyanka Chopra

Says She Knew 'No One Was Going To Help' Her In Bollywood: 'I Wasn't Related To Anyone'

Priyanka Chopra has opened up about the many phases in her career, starting from being a pageant winner to becoming a global star who has conquered both Bollywood and Hollywood. Priyanka made her debut in 2002 in *Thamizhan*. In 2003, she was seen in both *The Hero: Love Story of a Spy* and *Andaaz*. She told *Vogue Arabia*, "I was thrown into the ground running." Priyanka Chopra said, "I'm the kind of person that if I have a challenge, I will choose to survive and thrive. I have always been competitive, even with myself. Either in the pageant world or cinema, I wasn't related to anyone, so there was no one who was going to help me out in this business. I had to learn really fast."

She admitted that she was "a dreadful dancer when I first started". Priyanka said, "I was not able to act and nail the choreography at the same time, plus coordinate with my co-star. It was just too many things for my 19- or 20-year-old brain!" She recalled, "I was filming with Raju Khan in South Africa and missing my marks. He got so upset with me that he threw the mic down, saying, 'You might come from a pageant, but learn how to dance before you become an actress.' He just walked away, and I was so embarrassed... We are great friends now."

Priyanka quickly adapted, honed her skills and became one of the most bankable actresses in Bollywood. However, she surprised her fans when she made a switch to Hollywood and even chose to stay in Los Angeles. After achieving massive success in India, did Priyanka expect to be treated like a superstar in Hollywood?

She said, "Just because you know you have a certain amount of fame in one country doesn't mean you should be entitled and expect to be treated a certain way in another." "An audience has to be earned wherever you go in the world. And that's true for any artist in any medium. I think you really have to work in order to command that kind of respect or love from the people who watch your movies. You can't just demand it," the actress concluded.



Ranbir Kapoor Dances With Mom Neetu Kapoor, Adorable



Bollywood actor Ranbir Kapoor joined mom, Neetu Kapoor, for an impromptu fun dance performance. On Wednesday, as these two were captured by the shutterbugs in the Andheri area of Mumbai, the mother and son duo broke into a spontaneous dance performance, flaunting their adorable coordinated moves. They recreated the hookstep for the 'Senti' track from Neetu's upcoming movie, "Daadi Ki Shaadi".

Along with showing their dancing skills, Neetu was also seen giving her son Ranbir a peck on the cheek, followed by a warm embrace. Ranbir is believed to be extremely close to her mother, Neetu, who will soon be a part of the upcoming family entertainer, "Daadi Ki Shaadi".

With comedian and actor Kapil Sharma as the lead, the project will also mark the Bollywood debut of Ranbir's sister and Neetu's daughter, Riddhima Kapoor Sahni.

Recently, Riddhima revealed the crucial advice she received from brother Ranbir before her big screen debut. "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," she shared.

The recently released trailer of the movie showed how the protagonist Kapil Sharma's wedding is put into jeopardy after the grandmother of his to-be bride decides to tie the knot herself with a mysterious man.

However, as Kapil tries to scare him off in an attempt to bring things back on track, he uncovers some secrets about this man, who might be pretending to be someone he is not. Backed by Rtake Studios, along with BeingU Studios and Shimla Talkies, "Daadi Ki Shaadi" has been written and directed by Ashish R Mohan. The movie will be reaching the cinema halls on May 8 this year.

Karan Kundra, Tejaswi Prakash Wedding Confirmed? Viral Video Leaves Fans Excited



Karan Kundra and Tejaswi Prakash's wedding rumours are not dying anytime soon. Even though the two actors have repeatedly dismissed that they aren't planning to tie the knot anytime soon, a new video has left netizens confused yet excited. In the viral video, which is reportedly from the sets of *Laughter Chefs 3*, crew members are seen holding a large banner which reads: "Karan aur Teja ko zindagi ki nayi shuruwaat ki dheron shubhkamnayein."

As reported by Free Press Journal, the video was shared on Instagram by Saas Bahu Aur Saazish and quickly grabbed fans' attention. Even though it was deleted later, the video has now gone viral on social media.

This comes days after a report by India Forums claimed that Karan and Tejaswi are 'secretly married'. An insider told the entertainment portal that the buzz regarding the couple's wedding, which ruled X (formerly Twitter) recently, was "true". However, when the news portal reached out to Karan, the actor dismissed all rumours and said, "2-4 mahine se chal raha hai ye, kahi se screenshot nikaal ke kuch kia hua hai, mere pas aaya tha pehle bhi ye." Previously, in a chat with *Bombay Times*, Tejaswi Prakash also spoke about her wedding plans with Karan and said, "That's not happening anytime soon." Currently, the couple is seen together in *Laughter Chefs Season 3*. Talking about working with each other, the actress added, "There are, of course, a lot of things that you do explore with each other on a professional basis. You do tend to understand how the other person likes to work. Especially for me, there's so much that I get to learn from Karan, him being my senior. For me, it's been a learning process."

Karan And Tejaswi's Love Story Karan and Tejaswi's love story is not a secret. They first met while participating in the reality show *Bigg Boss*. During their time on the show, their chemistry quickly became one of the most talked-about aspects of the season. After the show ended, the couple confirmed that their bond continued outside the house. They began appearing together at public events, vacations and social media posts. Over time, their pairing earned a loyal fanbase, often referred to as "TejRan". Karan and Tejaswi have now been together for nearly five years. Currently, they are seen together on *Laughter Chefs*.



Kritika Kamra

Makes Shocking Revelation, Recalls 'Brush With Casting Couch': 'Got Off Unscathed'

Kritika Kamra began her acting career with a TV show. After shooting to popularity in TV, she forayed into films in 2018. But in her words, it was the streaming show, *Tandav*, that proved to be a game-changer. But it was no cakewalk. Not having the safety net of a film family is something a lot of outsiders deal with and Kritika is no different. Speaking exclusively to *News18*, Kritika Kamra reveals escaping casting couch in the initial years of her career. "I had heard about things like the casting couch. My parents had read about it in the papers. I also had a brush with it but got off unscathed. It was just luck and chance. It wasn't because I was too smart. I really wasn't because when I had started out, I was really young," she recalls.

While she has established herself, particularly, in the streaming space today, Kritika remarks that preferential treatment is something she still deals with. A part of it, she believes, may also stem from the background and 'baggage of TV'. "I've experienced this hierarchy. I was happily doing TV and, in my head, there was no difference between TV and films," she says.

This eventual discrimination, according to Kritika, feels like 'feudalism'. "I came from a small town and anybody who was onscreen was an actor for me. I wasn't aware of this unsaid hierarchy, which is like feudalism in a way. I also wasn't aware of how one is perceived because of their onscreen presence and characters," she tells us.

Talking about how makers would and sometimes still judge her, the *Matka King* actor reminisces, "I think there's a tinge of surprise in a lot of people when they speak to me or when they come to know that I know of other things apart from acting. I won't say that it's judgmental on their part but I guess this is something that happens to actors."

"I think they think of me as someone who isn't smart. Nobody said it in so many words but that's the understanding that I got. The fact that they didn't finally think of me as someone who's not smart was like an awkward compliment," Kritika adds. As she continues to navigate all of this, the only non-negotiable for her is playing 'women with agency'.



NEWS BOX

Stabbing at Washington state high school injures six, including suspect, police say

TACOMA. (Agency)

Police in Tacoma, Washington, responded to a report of a possible stabbing at a high school to find four students and an adult security guard injured, authorities said Thursday. The suspect, a student, was in custody and also injured, said Shelby Boyd, a spokesperson for the Tacoma Police Department. All those injured were taken to a hospital, including the suspect, she said.

The Tacoma Fire Department responded to Foss High School at 1:38 p.m. for a possible stabbing, spokesperson Chelsea Shepherd said. Upon arrival, crews treated and took five patients to local hospitals, including four in critical condition and one with minor injuries.

The sixth injured person was in police custody and was also taken to a local hospital with minor injuries, she said. All were in stable condition as of late afternoon.

Shepherd did not confirm the type of injuries treated. "The school is secure, and we are currently investigating. Parents can pick up their kids in the student's parking lot. There's a reunification area there," said Boyd, the police spokesperson. The school went into lockdown at 1:38 p.m., and students were safely dismissed at 2:45 p.m., Tacoma Public Schools said in an emailed statement. School and after-school activities for Friday were canceled. The school will reopen Monday with counselors on site to support students and staff. "We are grateful for the quick, calm action of our staff and our first responders," the district said.

US Defence Secretary Hegseth clashes for a second day with Democrats in Congress over Iran war

Washington. (Agency)

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth clashed with Democratic lawmakers in Congress for a second day Thursday, rejecting senators' accusations that the Iran war was launched without evidence of an imminent threat and waged with no coherent strategy. In his opening statements for a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Hegseth called Democratic lawmakers "reckless naysayers" and "defeatists from the cheap seats" who have failed to recognize the many successes of the U.S. military against the Islamic Republic. Hegseth said President Donald Trump has had the courage "unlike other presidents to ensure that Iran never gets a nuclear weapon and that their nuclear blackmail never succeeds. We have the best negotiator in the world driving a great deal."

Sen. Jack Reed, the committee's ranking Democrat, argued that the war has left the U.S. in a worse strategic position, with 13 American troops killed, more than 400 injured and equipment destroyed.

The Strait of Hormuz remains closed, sending fuel prices skyrocketing, Reed said. Iran still has enriched uranium, retains enough combat effectiveness to keep the conflict locked in an impasse, while Iran's hard-line regime is still in charge. "I am concerned that you have been telling the president what he wants to hear instead of what he needs to hear," Reed said.

House approves bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security and end the record shutdown

Washington. (Agency)

After weeks of delay, the House voted Thursday to fund much of the Department of Homeland Security, but not its immigration enforcement operations, and send the bipartisan package to President Donald Trump to sign, ending the longest agency shutdown in history. The White House had warned that temporary funding Trump had tapped to pay Transportation Security Administration and other agency personnel would "soon run out," and that sparked new threats of airport disruptions.

DHS has been without routine funds since Feb. 14, causing hardship for workers, though much of Trump's immigration agenda that is central to the dispute is being funded separately.

"It is about damn time," said Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, who proposed the bill more than 70 days ago.

The House swiftly voted by voice, without a formal roll call, to pass the measure. The House's narrow Republican majority has repeatedly stalled out under House Speaker Mike Johnson, with his own party tangled in internal disputes on a range of pending issues, including the homeland security funding. While the Senate unanimously approved the bipartisan package a month ago, the bill languished in the House.

Democrats refused to fund U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol without changes to those operations after the fatal shootings of two U.S. citizens by federal agents during protests against an immigration crackdown in Minneapolis. Republicans would not go along with a plan pushed by Democrats to fund TSA and the other parts of DHS without the money for ICE and Border Patrol.

White House event shooter seen storming security, opening fire in new CCTV footage

Security camera footage released by

Jeanine Pirro shows Cole Tomas

Allen running through a checkpoint

and shooting a federal agent at the

Washington Hilton during the

White House Correspondents'

Association dinner.

World. (Agency)

A security footage released by US Attorney Jeanine Pirro on Thursday shows the moment Cole Tomas Allen began his attack at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner on April 25. The video captures Allen running through a security checkpoint at the Washington Hilton hotel and allegedly shooting an agent at point-

blank range. Reuters verified the location using details such as the floor design, windows, doors and gym, which matched archive imagery of the hotel. The date was confirmed through a visible timestamp and reporting on the incident. US President Donald Trump and the head of the Secret Service said on Thursday that the federal agent injured in the attack was not hit by friendly fire.

Authorities have charged Allen, 31, of Torrance, California, with attempting to assassinate Trump after he opened fire at the high-profile Washington event. He faces multiple federal charges and could receive a life sentence if convicted. Another video reveals the suspect conducting a reconnaissance at the hotel ahead of the attack. DOJ-released surveillance footage shows Allen moving through hallways and a gym area of the Washington Hilton on April 24, 2026. Allen appeared in Washington federal court wearing a blue jail-issued



outfit, with his hands cuffed behind his back as US Marshals escorted him. He did not respond to the allegations during the brief hearing but told the court he holds a master's degree in computer science. Prosecutor Jocelyn Ballantine said Allen "attempted to assassinate the president of the United States," underscoring the seriousness of the case. Authorities said Allen brought multiple weapons to Washington, including a 12-gauge pump-action shotgun and three knives. He also faces charges of illegally transporting a

firearm across state lines and discharging a weapon during a violent crime.

US Magistrate Judge Matthew Sharbaugh ordered Allen to remain in custody until at least Thursday, when the court will decide whether to detain him pending trial. Defence lawyer Tezira Abe said Allen has no prior criminal record. Investigators said Allen sent a message to family members referring to himself as the "Friendly Federal Assassin" and outlining plans to target senior Trump administration officials. Officials believe the president may have been among his intended targets.

Court documents show Allen booked a room at the Washington Hilton and travelled from California by train in the days leading up to the attack.

The shooting caused panic at the black-tie event, with attendees diving under tables as security personnel evacuated senior officials. Trump, who was scheduled to speak, was quickly escorted off stage after gunfire erupted.

South Africa scraps its debut AI policy after it was found written by AI

World. (Agency)

South Africa has withdrawn its first ever draft national artificial intelligence (AI) policy less than three weeks after its publication, after investigators found that parts of the document contained fabricated, AI-generated academic references. The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies released the Draft South Africa National Artificial Intelligence Policy for public comment on April 10, positioning the country as an emerging leader in AI innovation. However, just 16 days later, the document was pulled after inaccuracies were identified in its citations. The country's communications minister, Solly Malatsi, confirmed that at least six of the policy's 67 references were "hallucinated" by AI, pointing either

to non-existent academic journals or to articles that were never published in legitimate publications, raising serious concerns about oversight, credibility and governance.



"The most plausible explanation is that AI-generated citations were included without proper verification. This should not have happened," Malatsi said, adding that the lapse had "compromised the integrity and credibility" of the policy.

The issue first came to light following an investigation by a South African broadcaster, which flagged discrepancies in the references.

Editors of established journals, including the South African Journal of Philosophy, AI & Society, and the Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy, confirmed that the cited articles did not exist, British newspaper, The Independent reported.

The now-withdrawn draft sought to establish a comprehensive AI governance framework, including proposals for a national AI commission, an ethics board and a regulatory authority.

It also outlined tax incentives, grants and subsidies to boost private-sector investment in AI infrastructure, while addressing the ethical, social and economic challenges posed by the technology.

After TACO, Trump's flip-flops on Hormuz have earned him a new name: NACHO



World. (Agency)

The flip-flop approach taken by US President Donald Trump over reopening the Strait of Hormuz has led to a new nickname inspired by TACO label used to describe his policy reversals. As tensions between Washington and Iran continue to disrupt one of the world's most critical oil routes, the Wall Street has coined the new term. It was first coined by Bloomberg columnist Javier Blas, who shared it on X. "We thought we were getting a TACO, 'Trump Always Chickens Out.' But so far we are getting a NACHO, 'Not A Chance Hormuz Opens,'" Blas wrote.

The comparison is not accidental. "TACO" -- short for "Trump Always Chickens Out" -- has been used on Wall Street to detail a pattern in Trump's policy moves: strong threats followed by U-turns. Now, as the situation in the Strait of Hormuz drags on, everyone is increasingly doubtful that a quick resolution is anywhere in sight. NACHO, seemingly, justifies Trump's back-and-forth approach. On one hand, he pushed Iran to lift restrictions on Hormuz. A few days later, the US enforced its own naval blockade. He had also called for fresh talks and was ready to send a delegation to Islamabad for a second round of negotiations. Iran was initially reluctant to engage. The talks finally seemed possible when Abbas Araghchi showed up in Pakistan, not once, but twice. Trump called off the trip, saying the US "holds all the cards" in the conflict and that his team would not make the 18-hour journey.

Then he went on to reject Iran's proposal to open Hormuz. According to him, the blockade is more effective than the bombing.

WHY THIS OIL CHOKEPOINT MATTERS

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most sensitive energy chokepoints, normally carrying nearly a fifth of global oil along with large volumes of liquefied natural gas. Tensions have escalated after military actions involving the US and Israel targeted Iranian positions earlier in 2026. Even with a fragile ceasefire in place, commercial shipping remains heavily restricted due to the blockade.

Jeffrey Epstein's Suicide Note? Ex-Cellmate Found 'Time To Say Goodbye' Letter

World. (Agency)

A suicide note - allegedly written by Jeffrey Epstein, the disgraced American financier and convicted child sex offender - before he died in his prison cell in August 2019, has been kept sealed and confidential for the past seven years, The New York Times said this week.

The note was reportedly first found by Epstein's cellmate, Nicholas Tartaglione, a former police officer convicted of multiple murders and running drugs. This was in July 2019, days after Epstein's first attempt to die by suicide; he was found unconscious with cloth around his neck.

Tartaglione said he found the note inside a graphic novel in their shared cell. It was written on a piece of yellow paper torn from a legal pad, and had the



phrase 'time to say goodbye'.

Tartaglione gave the note to his own lawyers - who claimed to have authenticated it, though it is unclear how they did so - instead of prison authorities. He later said this was because he feared Epstein might accuse him of trying to stage an attack on him and make it look like a suicide.

According to The Times, the federal judge hearing Tartaglione's case then

sealed the note. It is important to note that neither the Justice Department nor investigators into Epstein's death have examined the note so far. In fact, it hasn't even been released yet.

The Times has requested the judge in the Tartaglione case to make the note public, reasoning it has nothing to do with the former police officer's case but is a critical part of the inquiry into Epstein's life and death, and could throw light on his mental condition in his final days. The discovery of this note comes amid scrutiny over a mountain of documents, letters, photographs, and other files related to Epstein, his sexual abuse and trafficking network, and his connections to some of the richest and most powerful men and women in the world.

Rich Dad Poor Dad author exposes Pak's oil shock vs India's remarkable stability

Across the border, the picture

looked very different. Despite

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crude prices climbing above

\$120 per barrel, petrol and diesel

rates in India stayed largely

unchanged across major cities.

World. (Agency)

What Pakistan said and what Pakistan showed are now two very different stories - and it took a Facebook post by Robert Kiyosaki, US entrepreneur and author of Rich Dad Poor Dad, to bring that gap into clearer perspective. As oil routes tighten and prices rise amid Middle East conflict, that disconnect is becoming harder to ignore on the ground.

Robert Kiyosaki flagged the remarks by Pakistan Petroleum Minister, Ali Pervaiz Malik, who admitted that the country does not even have a day's worth of strategic petroleum reserves.

What made the statement sting even more was how different the tone had been just days earlier. In a previous press conference, the same minister had said Pakistan's fuel supply was "secure and stable." He claimed the country's position was comparatively stronger than many others, including India, which he said was struggling with long queues at petrol pumps and widespread shortages. He praised the government's "proactive measures" for ensuring energy security and insisted everything was under control.

After the disruption in the Strait of Hormuz triggered by the Iran conflict, fuel prices in Pakistan soared. In early April 2026, petrol

jumped from around PKR 321 to PKR 458 per litre, which was a 43 per cent increase in a month. Diesel rose even more sharply, from PKR 335 to PKR 520, a 55 per cent hike.



Massive protests broke out across the country. Businesses warned of collapsing supply chains, and the opposition labelled it a national emergency.

INDIA'S QUIET STABILITY

Across the border, the picture looked very different. Despite the same global oil shock and crude prices climbing above \$120 per barrel, petrol and diesel rates in India stayed largely unchanged across major cities. According to Robert Kiyosaki, India survived COVID pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine and now the Iran conflict without dramatic price hikes to absorb the shock. He argued India has built strategic petroleum reserves that, as even Pakistani officials acknowledged, allow emergency supplies to be released with "one signature" -- enough for 60-70 days when combined with commercial stocks. India has also widened its oil supply network, leaning on Russia as a key source while bringing back shipments from Venezuela in 2026.

As one of the world's largest refining hubs, India absorbed the shock internally. It also adjusted export duties on fuels.