

MAHANAGAR METRO

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Suvendu Adhikari To Be Bengal's Next Chief Minister? Key BJP Meet On Friday

Adhikari defeated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for a second time, widening his victory margin in this election.

Kolkata.(Agency)

The BJP's giant-slayer Suvendu Adhikari is likely to be the next chief minister of West Bengal, sources have indicated, succeeding his former mentor Mamata Banerjee. A meeting of the BJP's legislative party will be held in Kolkata on Friday (May 8) to discuss the formation of the government after the party swept the recent state elections. Sources suggest that the BJP is scouting for a venue for the meeting since the party's state headquarters may not be able to host the 207 winning candidates.

At this meeting, the sources said, Adhikari will be

elected the leader of the BJP's legislative party. The election will be held by a simple raise of hands. The BJP's state president Samik Bhattacharya will propose Adhikari's name; Home Minister Amit Shah will announce his name as the leader of the legislative party, they added. Suvendu Adhikari, Bhattacharya, and the BJP's national general secretary Sunil Bansal will then head to the Raj Bhavan and stake claim to form the government, sources said.



The swearing-in ceremony will be held a day later, on Saturday (May 9), Bhattacharya has confirmed. It would coincide with Rabindra Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Nobel laureate

Rabindranath Tagore.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend the event that would mark a new beginning for a state that would have a BJP government for the first time. Other senior leaders of the BJP and ally parties, including chief ministers of other states, are also expected to mark their presence at the grand ceremony.

Union Minister Amit Shah had earlier said that Bengal's next chief minister would essentially be a Bengali, one who was born in Bengal, educated in the Bengali medium, and speaks the Bengali language. Adhikari fits the criteria.

Suvendu Adhikari - The Big Choice

A grassroots leader known for his on-ground connect in the state and administrative experience, Adhikari was the BJP's strongest candidate this election and the most prominent frontrunner for the chief minister's post. In 2021, he had defeated Trinamool chief and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram, the centrepiece of a massive protest that had helped her crush the Left regime and gain power. He emerged as the party's indisputable hero in the 2026 Bengal elections, as he repeated the feat, taking away Banerjee's Bhawanipur stronghold by a much bigger margin.

Punjab blasts: Top cop raises Pak angle, contradicts CM Mann's BJP link claim

While Punjab's Director General of Police said the blasts were part of a design by Pakistan to cause disturbance, Maan alleged a BJP hand in the attacks. Punjab Police and central agencies have launched an intensive probe, and security has been tightened across the state. No casualties have been reported.



Chennai.(Agency)

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Maan on Wednesday blamed the BJP for the twin blasts near BSF establishments in the state, alleging they were part of a larger design ahead of elections and asking whether the party wanted votes through such incidents. His remarks came after two back-to-back explosions rocked areas near Border Security Force (BSF) installations in Jalandhar and Amritsar, including one close to the BSF headquarters.

While Punjab's Director General of Police said the blasts were part of a design by Pakistan to cause disturbance, Maan alleged a BJP hand in the attacks. Punjab Police and central agencies have launched an intensive probe, and security has been tightened across the state. No casualties have been reported. Maan alleged that "wherever the BJP wants to contest, such incidents happen," and called on the party to "stop such acts," claiming the blasts were part of its preparations for Punjab.

He was referring to a tweet by the BJP's Punjab handle, posted shortly before the saffron wave swept Bengal, which simply read, "Next Punjab." The two words were enough to signal the party's shift in focus to next year's Punjab polls.

Two explosions were reported in Punjab on Tuesday, with the first near the BSF headquarters at BSF Chowk in Jalandhar and the second later at night outside an Army camp in Amritsar's Khalsa area near BSF installations. Officials said the details of both incidents were still being verified.

In Jalandhar, a parked scooter exploded in a busy locality near the BSF headquarters. Eyewitnesses said the scooter caught fire moments after the blast, triggering panic as people in the area ran for safety. Hours later, a second explosion took place in the Khalsa area of Amritsar outside an Army camp located near BSF installations. Preliminary suspicion points to a motorcycle-borne assailant allegedly hurling a grenade at the site. The area is around 15 kilometres from the Attari-Wagah international border. Amritsar Rural Police SP Aditya Warrier said the blast took place between 10.30 pm and 11 pm outside the Army camp. He said police and Army personnel were rushed to the spot immediately. "We are verifying the exact details. Forensic teams are also at the site and all aspects are being examined," he said.

Mamata Banerjee Digs In, Refuses To Resign. What Happens Next In Bengal?

On Monday evening Mamata Banerjee accused the poll panel of playing "nasty games", and pointed to defeats for non-BJP alliances in recent elections in Maharashtra, Haryana, and Bihar.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Mamata Banerjee and her refusal to resign as Chief Minister of Bengal after the 2026 Assembly election results - in which her Trinamool Congress was beaten by the Bharatiya Janata Party - has set up an extraordinary constitutional crisis that is likely to be kicked up to Governor RN Ravi and maybe the Supreme Court for resolution.

On Tuesday evening Banerjee argued she had not lost and that the BJP's mandate - poll results gave it 207 of the state's 294 seats - was the result of an illegal campaign orchestrated by the Election Commission in collusion with the saffron party. "I have not lost... so I will not go to Raj Bhavan (the



governor's residence). I will not tender resignation," she said, leaning into the street-fighter avatar that kept the BJP at bay for 15 years.

Experts agree there is no significant precedent in India for this situation.

What the rules say

There is no explicit provision in the Constitution demanding a chief minister resign after losing an election. Standing down after a poll defeat - at the core of a peaceful transfer of power - is a convention rather than the rule, though that could change now. The principle is that a chief minister must have the confidence of the legislative assembly to continue in his/her position. Once Election Commission-verified results make it clear that this is not the case, constitutional convention asks s/he to resign.

MAHANAGAR METRO EXCLUSIVE

In Gandhi's Gujarat, 'Khaki' Sold at the Price of Liquor

Rivers of Alcohol Flowing Along Railway Tracks from Vapi to Surat

Pawan Mekan (Group Editor)

Valsad/Vapi : This is a massive slap on the face of the system that proudly claims Gujarat to be a "dry state." While prohibition exists only on paper, the ground reality is far more shocking. Railway tracks from Vapi to Surat have allegedly turned into a "green corridor" for liquor smugglers. An investigation by Mahanagar Metro suggests that the law has not gone blind — it has allegedly been blinded by bundles of illegal cash and monthly payoffs. 'Praveen' Running a Parallel Empire At the center of this alleged illegal network is a man identified as "Praveen," described by sources as a powerful "vahi-vatdar" (collection agent) who allegedly manages the entire syndicate and maintains coordination with multiple enforcement agencies. Under the cover of parcel transportation, huge quantities of liquor are reportedly being smuggled daily through the railway network. Sources claim that Praveen controls operations across stations such as Vapi, Valsad, Udvada, Atul, and



Pardi, where nearly 500 to 800 boxes of English liquor are allegedly unloaded every single day. The Goa Connection Behind the Syndicate The liquor smuggling operation is allegedly run by a highly organized network stretching from Gujarat to Goa. Ground-level operators named as Akash, Vinod, Sagar, and Vijay are said to handle delivery, unloading, and local movement of liquor consignments across railway stations. Meanwhile, alleged Goa-based operators identified as Babu Majro, Jitu Mallya, and Tinu are believed to be controlling the supply chain from outside the state. Sources further allege that Praveen acts as the

central coordinator who manages the distribution of illegal money and ensures smooth functioning of the network from top to bottom. Alleged Nexus with Uniformed Agencies One of the most serious allegations emerging from the investigation is the claimed involvement of officials linked to railway and police enforcement systems. According to sources, monthly collections running into lakhs of rupees are allegedly distributed in the names of Range IG, Railway SP, RPF, and GRP officials to ensure protection for the smuggling racket. It is alleged that this protection network is the main reason why no major crack-

down has taken place against the syndicate despite the large-scale movement of liquor through railway stations. Sharp Questions Raised by Mahanagar Metro CCTV Failure or Complicity? When railway stations are covered with surveillance cameras and security personnel, how do 800 liquor boxes disappear daily without detection? Who is protecting the Network? How has a so-called collection agent like Praveen become powerful enough to allegedly challenge the entire enforcement machinery? Is there political or bureaucratic protection behind him? Why the Silence from the Government? If monthly illegal collections are allegedly reaching senior levels, is the administration unaware — or deliberately ignoring the situation? The ball is now in the administration's court. After these explosive allegations, the key question remains: Will the government crush the liquor mafia operating inside Gandhi's Gujarat, or will liquor and corruption continue to run freely along the railway tracks of the state?

Democracy in West Bengal 'held at gunpoint', says Dharmendra Pradhan

New Delhi.(Agency)

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday said that democracy in West Bengal was being "held at gunpoint" and accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of disregarding the true spirit of the people's mandate.

In a post on X, Pradhan said mandates were being treated "less like the people's voice and more like suggestions open to rejection", raising questions over whether power was being treated as a responsibility or an entitlement.

"Democracy in Bengal is being held at gunpoint, and the refusal to accept the electoral verdict lays this reality bare. Mandates are being treated less like the people's voice and more like suggestions open to rejection. The refusal of Mamata Banerjee to accept the spirit of the mandate raises a serious question: Is power being treated as a responsibility or merely as an entitlement?" he said.

He further alleged that the Trinamool Congress leadership was resisting accountability and, in the process of "clinging to power", attempting to erode the credibility of institutions such as the Election Commission and security forces.

"In the process of clinging to power, Mamata Banerjee is not just rejecting the people's mandate but also attempting to erode the credibility of institutions like the Election Commission and security forces, undermining the very pillars that ensure free, fair and secure elections," he said. Pradhan also claimed that governance in the state had long been marked by intimidation and entrenched political patronage, adding that ignoring the mandate would undermine democratic legitimacy.

"This mandate of Bengal is a rejection of fear, a rejection of coercion and a demand for accountability. To ignore it is to undermine the very foundation of democratic legitimacy," he

News box

Bodies of man and younger son (5) recovered after two days

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Two days after a 38-year-old civil engineer, along with his two minor sons, jumped into the Agra canal near Fatehpur Billoch in Faridabad, the body of the engineer and his younger son was recovered nearly 100 km away. His elder son was rescued on Monday by passers-by and is currently under treatment. Police said the body of the engineer, Bhagwat Dayal, was found in the canal in Mathura district, while that of his son Yug (5) was recovered along the Haryana-Uttar Pradesh border. Both bodies have been sent for autopsy.

The incident came to light after locals noticed a motorcycle parked on a bridge near Deeg village and alerted police. "A call was received around 9pm informing us about a bike parked on the bridge, raising suspicion that someone may have jumped into the canal," a senior police officer said. A passer-by who spotted the bike informed police, after which Dial 112 teams and State Disaster Response Force, or SDRF, reached the spot and began a search operation. Police said Dayal jumped into the canal along with his two sons — Samrat (9) and Yug — after an argument with his wife. While the father and younger son were swept away by the current, Samrat managed a remarkable escape. Samrat drifted nearly 5 km before spotting a tree branch jutting into the canal. He clung onto it throughout the night, battling exhaustion and the cold.

1 in 5 MCG waste pickup vans out of action

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A large chunk of MCG's garbage collection vans are out of service, raising questions about the city's emergency door-to-door waste collection infrastructure, monitoring and accountability. Of 400 vehicles, only 313 were on the ground as of Sunday, exposing a glaring shortfall of 87 vehicles.

MCG engaged four agencies as a stopgap solution for six months after the last contract expired. The agencies were supposed to deploy 400 vehicles for door-to-door waste collection across the city from Jan 9 to July 8, 2026. "We have already told the agencies to provide all vehicles as per the contract. If not done so, these agencies will be penalised as per the law," an MCG official said.

In Zone 1, the hired firm had to provide 115 vehicles, but has only 90 available as of Sunday. Zone 2 fares slightly better, with 87 vehicles available out of 101 promised. The agency hired for Zone 3 has managed to provide only 66 vehicles against a commitment of 86, while the agency for Zone 4 emerges as the weakest link, deploying merely 70 out of 98 vehicles. "The agency contracted for our area has not been sending vehicles here for doorstep waste collection, due to which we have now hired a private vendor for waste collection. We have raised the issue a number of times with MCG, but our complaint is not being resolved. The civic body is well aware of the fact that we have a private vendor working for us, who can dump waste anywhere after collection," said Rajesh Gera, a resident of Surya Vihar.

Noida, Ghaziabad begin digital census outreach, tap RWAs

Noida.(Agency)

With census 2027 set to enter its house-listing phase, the administrations in Noida and Ghaziabad have begun a coordinated push to ensure residents have no confusion in submitting their details online before enumerators arrive. The self-enumeration window will run from May 7 to 21, followed by door-to-door verification from May 22 — making the coming weeks crucial for families to understand the process and avoid being left out. In Noida, the district administration has called a meeting with RWAs on Wednesday, banking on them to carry the message into neighbourhoods and apartment complexes. The focus, officials said, is to make the shift to a fully digital census system simple and accessible.

District magistrate Medha Roopam said the administration was relying on direct engagement to make the transition smooth. "This is the first time the census is being conducted digitally, and self-enumeration is a key part of it. We have been involving RWAs and other local bodies so that residents understand how to fill in their details online and complete the process within the timeline," she said.

The DM added that the administration was working to ensure no household was missed and that help would be provided wherever needed. Ghaziabad has launched a similar outreach effort, holding meetings with RWAs, traders' groups and industrial bodies to widen awareness.

Additional district magistrate Saurabh Bhatt said the aim was to maximise participation before field staff begin visits. "We are meeting RWAs, market associations and industrial units to spread awareness about self-enumeration. The idea is to ensure more people complete the process online before enumerators visit their homes," he added. Officials said residents can self-enumerate through the Census of India Self-Enumeration Portal or by scanning the QR code shared by the administration. After registering with the head of household's details and verifying through OTP, users must choose a language, geo-tag their home and fill in the online form covering housing details, amenities and household assets. Once submitted, the system generates a unique self-enumeration ID, which must be saved and shown to the enumerator during verification.

4 UP cops on way to raid hideout die in KMP crash

Gurgaon/Lucknow.(Agency)

Four UP Police personnel and a complainant in a kidnapping case died on Tuesday morning when their Scorpio, headed for a raid of a suspected hideout, crashed into a truck on Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway in Nuh during an overtaking attempt.

The crash occurred around 10.30am, about a kilometre before Dhulawat toll plaza. Police said the SUV was moving at high speed when the driver tried to overtake another vehicle, lost control and rammed into the truck. The impact crushed the front of the Scorpio so badly that all five occupants died on the spot. Their bodies could not be retrieved for about an hour until the mangled vehicle was cut open.

The victims were sub-inspectors Mohit Kumar Yadav (32) and Satyabhan Singh (59), constables Ashok Kumar (28) and Pradeep Kumar (27), all attached to Jalaun police station. The fifth person who died was Amreek

Singh (35), a Jalaun resident who had lodged the kidnapping complaint and was travelling with the team to possibly lead them to the hideout. Police sources said the Scorpio belonged to Amreek and he was driving it.

According to officials, the police team was on its way to rescue Amreek's cousin, Bijender Singh, who was allegedly kidnapped from an agricultural field on Monday morning. In his FIR lodged in Jalaun, Amreek alleged that four unidentified men kidnapped Bijender because of a dispute involving farmland taken on lease for cultivation.

The case was registered under BNS sections 140(1) (abduction) and 305 (theft). The police team from Jalaun was working in coordination with special operations group.

Passersby said the truck had been parked on the roadside for some time and its driver had gone to a nearby kiosk when

the Scorpio slammed into it. After the collision, the truck driver fled.

Teams from Sadar Tauru police station reached the spot and began rescue work. SHO Shishram said it took considerable effort and time to extricate



the bodies using rescue equipment. Ambulances were called and the bodies were sent to a hospital in Nuh for autopsy. Traffic was briefly affected during the operation.

"We began proceedings as soon as we reached the spot. A complaint is awaited, after which further legal

action will follow. Prima facie, speeding and the parking of the truck on the expressway led to the accident," DSP Abhimanyu Lohan said. Vehicles are not allowed to park along expressways. There are designated parking bays on such speedways.

Police said they were tracing the truck driver and trying to find out if the parked vehicle had proper warning signs or hazard indicators. Once a complaint is received, an FIR will be registered under relevant sections dealing with causing death by negligence, rash and negligent driving,

and endangering life, the DSP said. In Lucknow, chief minister Yogi Adityanath condoled the deaths and asked officials to coordinate with Haryana govt to ensure the bodies reached families at the earliest. Officials said UP govt was taking all steps to provide assistance.

Two rob businessman of Rs 11 lakh at gunpoint outside his home in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Two armed men allegedly looted Rs 11 lakh in cash from a businessman outside his residence in Sector 10A on Monday night. Police said the complainant, Abhay Bansal, runs a beverage warehouse near Khandas Road. He returned home from work around 9.30pm carrying the cash in a bag. As he parked his car and stepped out, one of the accused, wearing a helmet, opened the passenger-side door and snatched the bag. When Bansal raised an alarm, the accused pointed a pistol at him. At the same time, an accomplice on a motorcycle, also wearing a helmet and armed, approached and threatened him, preventing any resistance. The snatcher then mounted the motorcycle, and both fled the spot.

The incident was captured on CCTV cameras. Footage shows the two accused arriving on a motorcycle, briefly passing Bansal's car before returning. Both, wearing helmets, walked towards the car as it was being parked. This was when one of them told the other to bring the motorcycle for their escape while he opened the car door and took the bag.

Bansal is seen chasing them, but stops after being threatened with a weapon. "Before residents could gather, the robbers fled with the cash," Bansal told.

Police said they received information around 9.35pm and reached the spot soon after. Preliminary inquiry suggests the accused may have followed the victim from his warehouse, located about 800 metres from his residence.

Based on the complaint, an FIR has been registered against unidentified persons under relevant sections of BNS, including robbery with attempt to cause death or grievous hurt and criminal conspiracy, along with provisions of the Arms Act. Police teams are scanning CCTV footage from nearby areas and along the suspected escape route to identify the accused.

Scrutiny on building sites using potable water in DLF phases in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

As summer peaks, a crackdown has been initiated in DLF City phases to curb illegal extraction and use of potable water at construction sites. Motors installed to draw water at seven construction sites have been removed over the past few days, said officials of DLF security team on Tuesday, adding that they have urged MCG to impose fines on violators. The action follows repeated instances of drinking water, meant only for household use, being diverted for construction and other activities. Officials said the misuse disrupts distribution and adds pressure to an already strained water infrastructure.

"We are committed to ensuring that residents receive uninterrupted access to safe drinking water, and any violations will be



dealt with firmly," said DLF Utilities head Nitya Mohan.

DLF has also directed property owners who

were found misusing drinking water to stop construction activities. Residents welcomed the move, citing long-standing concerns over water supply and pressure fluctuations. "During the peak hours, we often notice a drop in pressure. If construction sites are illegally tapping into the same supply, it directly affects us," said Rakesh Sharma, a resident of DLF 3.

Neha Bansal, a resident of DLF-1, said the action was overdue. "We've been raising this issue for months. It's reassuring to see strict enforcement finally happening. Water is not something that can be taken for granted anymore," she said. Residents also called for sustained monitoring. "Such drives are effective, but only if they are held regularly," said Amit Arora, a resident of DLF 5.

Staffers assault, damage car over FASTag dispute at toll plaza in Gurgaon

Nagpur.(Agency)

Four employees were arrested for allegedly assaulting a lawyer and vandalising his car at Ghamroj Toll Plaza on Monday following a dispute over FASTag scanning.

Advocate Ravindra, who works at the Sohna Court Complex, has filed a case against the employees at Bhondsi police station. He said after his FASTag failed to scan at the booth, he requested an employee to manually scan it. The employee allegedly refused and used abusive language. He told the advocate to "stand here all day". The complainant was not allowed to leave.

Ravindra then moved his car to another lane, but the situation escalated as toll

The situation escalated when an employee jumped out of the booth window, approached his vehicle and tried to pull down the car window.

Another employee allegedly struck the window, shattering it, and physically assaulted the advocate. They tore his clothes during the scuffle.

Once Ravindra informed his colleagues, several lawyers from Sohna bar association reached the spot. Police personnel from Bhondsi police station also arrived and brought the situation under control. The lawyers warned the toll plaza employees of staging a protest at the toll, but police intervened and controlled the situation.



employees continued to misbehave. When he warned them about calling the police, the staff abused him even more.

Nine trapped as cylinder blast triggers fire in Indirapuram home

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Nine members of a family, including two senior citizens, were trapped on the third floor of a three-storey residential building in Indirapuram's Niti Khand-2 on Tuesday afternoon after a gas cylinder burst on the ground floor, triggering the explosion of three more cylinders and engulfing the stilt parking area in fire.

Firefighters broke through an iron grille and a setback wall separating the terrace from an adjacent building, and brought the family down to safety through its staircase.

Officials said the building's narrow setback proved critical to the evacuation. It was the absence of a setback in Sunday's Vivek Vihar fire in Delhi that had hindered the rescue operation and led to the death of nine people in a basement-plus-four-storey building with a single staircase and no emergency exit. Protective iron grilles on the front facade and a locked terrace had further hampered rescue efforts there.

The blaze had started one floor below, in a small quarter where the building's shared security guard, Manish, lived with his family. His wife was cooking when a gas cylinder burst, igniting a fire that spread rapidly through the parking area and sent the two small and one large cylinders stored there into successive explosions.

Manish managed to get his wife and two children out and raise the alarm. But by then, black smoke had already found the stairwell, the building's only escape route, and was rising fast.

The building, on plot number 495 in Niti Khand-2, is a modest three-floor structure with a stilt parking below, one family per floor above. The Aggarwals on the first floor were abroad. The Dwivedi family on the second floor got out safely. It was the Guptas on the third — JP Gupta (75), his wife Prabha (75) and seven others, including three

children, the youngest just three years old — who found themselves with nowhere to go. When smoke began seeping through the floorboards, Prabha herded her family into the



bathroom and shut the door. "As smoke filled every corner of the flat. We moved from the bathroom to my younger son's room," Prabha said. "We waited for nearly 30 minutes before help arrived."

According to chief fire officer Rahul Pal,

the rescue team reached the trapped residents and moved them to the terrace using ladders raised from the rear balcony. They broke through a terrace grille and setback wall, evacuating the family through the adjacent building.

Pal said five fire engines had reached Niti Khand-2, two of them engines and two water bowers, carrying 22,000 and 14,000 litres respectively, from Vaishali station. A third engine was set from Sahibabad. Pal said the first units arrived around 1.30 pm to find the ground floor fully engulfed.

The fire was out in roughly 45 minutes, the officer said. Five motorcycles and three bicycles in the parking lot were removed on time. This is the second fire incident in Indirapuram in less than a week. On April 29, a blaze at Gaur Green Avenue gutted eight flats across five floors.

'Serial bride' marries 9 times, dupes grooms, vanishes with cash and gold

Police in Beed are investigating a complaint that a woman married multiple men through agents before fleeing with cash and jewellery. The case has raised concerns about an alleged racket targeting unmarried men in rural parts of the district.

Beed . (Agency)

A suspected "looter bride" racket allegedly targeting unmarried men through fake marriages has come to light in Maharashtra's Beed district, with police investigating claims that a woman married multiple men before fleeing with cash and jewellery. The latest case surfaced from a village, where a local man alleged that he was cheated of lakhs of rupees after being lured into a fraudulent marriage arranged by agents.

According to the complaint, Yogesh Shinde was introduced to the woman through intermediaries who promised to arrange his marriage. The agents allegedly collected large sums of money from him during the process. The marriage was solemnised, but

within days, the bride and the agents reportedly disappeared. During subsequent enquiries, Yogesh allegedly discovered that the woman had previously married eight other men in a similar fashion and had allegedly fled each time after taking money and valuables.

VICTIM SEEKS POLICE ACTION

Deeply distressed by the incident, Yogesh approached the district police seeking action against the alleged gang. In his complaint to the Beed Superintendent of Police, he said, "I have been cheated of lakhs of rupees and the situation has pushed me towards suicidal thoughts. I want justice." He further alleged that he had no knowledge of the woman's previous marriages and was kept completely in the



dark before the wedding. A complaint has now been registered at

Chaklamba police station, and an investigation is underway.

GANG TARGETED RURAL BACHELORS: COMPLAINT

According to the complaint, the alleged racket specifically targeted unmarried men in rural parts of Beed district, where families often struggle to find brides.

Police suspect the gang used agents to identify vulnerable men and allegedly extracted huge sums on the pretext of arranging marriages. In several cases, the bride would allegedly vanish a few days after the wedding with jewellery, cash and other valuables.

The incident has triggered concern across the district, with police now trying to trace other members of the alleged network and determine whether more victims were similarly duped.

Short news

Rescued Tiger Found Dead In Madhya Pradesh, 28th Casualty This Year

Panna (MP). (Agency)

A bizarre incident from the Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj has come to light where a man's alleged affair led him straight into a trap set by his own wife, ultimately landing him in police custody.

The case was reported from the Daraganj area of Prayagraj. According to police, Soni Tripathi, a resident of Nawabganj, filed a complaint stating that she had been married to Prabhudutt Tripathi alias Raja, a resident of Kisundas village in Pratapgarh, around nine years ago. She alleged that she was thrown out of her matrimonial home and had been living with her parents for the past five years along with their one-year-old daughter. During this period, her husband neither met her nor took responsibility for the child.

Seeking to confront him, Soni devised a plan. She created a fake Instagram account and sent a friend request to her husband, posing as another woman. Unaware of the identity, Prabhudutt began interacting with the account, engaging in conversations and eventually expressing interest in marriage. Over several days, their communication continued, and he insisted on meeting in person.

After initially avoiding the meeting, Soni agreed to meet him on May 2 at the Nagvasuki temple in Daraganj. When Prabhudutt arrived expecting to meet his 'girlfriend', he was shocked to find his wife standing before him.

According to the complaint, upon realizing the truth, Prabhudutt allegedly assaulted Soni and threatened her before attempting to flee.

POLYCET records highest turnout, 91.37% qualify in Andhra

Vijayawada. (Agency)

The results of the Polytechnic Common Entrance Test (POLYCET) were released on Tuesday morning at Mangalagiri, marking a record year for participation and performance. This year's examination, held on April 25, witnessed the highest-ever turnout in its history, with 1,77,581 candidates registering and 1,63,008 appearing.

Of these, 1,48,950 qualified, recording an overall pass percentage of 91.37%. Officials noted that the surge reflects the growing aspiration of Andhra Pradesh's youth towards technical education.

Girls once again outperformed boys, achieving a pass percentage of 93.57% compared to 89.88% for boys. Authorities described this as a positive indicator of the State's commitment to empowering young women as future technocrats and entrepreneurs. On the district front, Alluri Sitharama Raju emerged as the top performer with a pass percentage of 99.11%, followed by Polavaram (95.46%) and Prakasam (94.72%).

The strong showing from tribal and Agency areas was highlighted as evidence that quality education is reaching every corner of the State. Candidates can access their results through the official website <https://polycetap.ap.gov.in> or via the Mana Mitra WhatsApp Governance service by messaging 9552300009. For the academic year 2026-27, 84,000 seats are available across 265 Polytechnic institutions in Andhra Pradesh, including 87 government and 178 private colleges. With nearly 1.49 lakh qualified candidates competing, officials said ample opportunities exist for admission into three-year.

Pride of the Dhani Media Family — Pawan Makan's Daughters Shine Bright in SSC Examination

Dhani and Sachi Anshi Makan brought pride to their family and the media fraternity with their outstanding performance in the SSC examinations.

Mahanagar Metro Beuro

Ahemdabad : It is often said that true potential reveals itself early, but when daughters rise through sheer dedication and hard work, the entire society feels proud. Such a proud moment has come for the family of Dhani Media Managing Director (MD) Mr. Pawan Makan, whose daughters have achieved remarkable success in the recently announced SSC examination results. Daughters Bring Glory to the Family Dhani Makan, daughter of Dhani Media MD Pawan Makan, secured excellent marks in the SSC examination, bringing immense pride to her family. Continuing this streak of success, his second daughter, Sachi Anshi Makan, also delivered an outstanding performance with impressive scores. The remarkable achievement of both sisters has become a symbol of determination, discipline, and academic excellence, earning praise from across the media fraternity and social circles. A Mother's Dedication Behind the Success Behind every successful child stands the silent sacrifice and

dedication of a mother. The true inspiration behind the success of Dhani and Sachi is their mother, Mrs. Sarabjit Makan, whose relentless support, guidance, and encouragement played a vital role in shaping their bright future. From motivating the children toward education to ensuring they remained focused and disciplined, her efforts have now translated into this proud achievement. "Children's success is often a reflection of a mother's values, sacrifices, and perseverance." Congratulations Pour In Following this double celebration in the Makan family, relatives, friends, colleagues, and well-wishers have been extending heartfelt congratulations and blessings. Society salutes mothers who nurture their children with education, strong values, and the vision to contribute positively to the nation. The entire Mahanagar Metro family extends heartfelt congratulations to Dhani Makan, Sachi Anshi Makan, and the entire Makan family on this golden achievement, wishing them a bright and successful future ahead.



Punjab on alert after blast outside Jalandhar BSF HQ, Amritsar camp targeted

Panic spread in Punjab's Jalandhar after an explosion outside BSF headquarters, where a parked delivery scooter caught fire and went up in flames. No casualties were reported. Police are probing the cause, examining CCTV footage, and questioning the rider as investigations continue.

Jalandhar. (Agency)

Two back-to-back explosions rocked areas near Border Security Force (BSF) establishments in Punjab's Jalandhar and Amritsar, including one close to the BSF headquarters in the border state. While no casualties have been reported so far, Punjab Police and central agencies have launched an intensive investigation, and security has been heightened across the state.

The first blast occurred near the BSF headquarters at Jalandhar's BSF Chowk when a parked scooter exploded in the busy locality. Eyewitnesses said the scooter caught fire moments after the explosion, triggering panic as people in the area ran for safety. Hours later, late on Tuesday night, a second explosion took place in the Khalsa area of Amritsar outside an Army camp located near BSF installations. Preliminary suspicion points to a motorcycle-borne

assailant allegedly hurling a grenade at the site. The area is situated around 15 kilometres from the Attari-Wagah international border.

Amritsar Rural Police SP Aditya Warrier confirmed that the blast occurred between 10.30 pm and 11 pm outside the Army camp. Police and Army personnel were immediately rushed to the spot. "We are verifying the exact details. Forensic teams are also at the site and all aspects are being examined," he said.

Exclusive CCTV footage from Jalandhar accessed by India Today captured the moment of the explosion, with flames erupting instantly and debris scattering across the road. A man standing near the scooter was seen running away immediately after the blast. Officials suspect some of the scattered fragments



could be parts of the scooter itself. Jalandhar Police Commissioner Dhanpreet Kaur said it was too early to draw conclusions. "Prima facie, the facts are that a scooter parked here caught fire. We are still verifying the situation on the ground," she said.

She added that the scooter driver and another individual are being questioned, while CCTV footage from the area is being examined to determine the sequence of events.

According to PTI, the scooter rider has been identified as 22-year-old Gurpreet Singh. A relative told reporters that Gurpreet works as a delivery agent and visits the area daily to drop off parcels. On Tuesday evening, as he approached his parked scooter, it suddenly caught fire. He immediately called his father to inform him about the incident, the relative added. The opposition parties have targeted the ruling AAP government over the incident.

Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring claimed that an "explosion" near the BSF headquarters in Jalandhar is deeply alarming.

Faithline | Summer of kindness

A number of people I know, including myself, fell ill in the high heat. I recovered physically fairly soon, but what would fix my mind? Hearing educated, entitled people complain incessantly both about the zooming temperature and life in general, my own fundamentally cheerful worldview began to dent. I now felt ridiculous about ‘being positive’, like an absurd Pollyanna; this, despite knowing that my peace of mind would be ruined, I tipped over into permanent ‘crib mode’. An alternate worldview showed up in the form of electricians Hunny and Suhel. They were pleasant and cheerful. Hunny obligingly mended my favourite hand fan, the one with delicate fretwork. As they toiled away in the 43-degree-celsius heat, fixing the inverter that had suddenly packed up, I had one of those urban nirvana moments that hits us all, reminding us of what we already know but have let get scorched by the negativity around us. How would I feel in their place, I suddenly wondered, dashing from house to house, dealing patiently with irritable people? This abrupt realisation that my gradually growing inner landscape of sada vasantam or ‘always Spring’, was being parched by the always-grumbling ‘society’ made me rush out with tall glasses of cold water with rose syrup. The star-shaped ice cubes floating on top amused the boys. I felt as though God in the form of two cheerful, hardworking electricians had just rapped my knuckles. So, this is my (hopefully sustainable) summer strategy, thanks to those boys. I’m resuming my childhood ‘glad game’ like Pollyanna in the American children’s story from 1913. It means putting a positive spin on everything, even sad or annoying situations. Some can laugh at it as unrealistic optimism, but Hunnys and Suhels may keep me on track. Reviewing what helps me stay on the path, I find it’s a funny mix of the values of the rationalist liberals whom I grew up among, and Naam, the ‘Name of God’ that I cling to. The ‘Name of God’ seems to translate into personal dos and don’ts. I don’t think it means we are immune to bad thoughts. But I think it does mean that we should be aware and watch our thoughts.

An old friend and legal luminary with a deep belief in Constitutional morality, who once attended Vipassana courses, told me how that works. ‘Watch our thoughts’ means, for instance, that when we feel angry, we realise that we’re feeling angry but don’t express it violently in everyday situations. Underlying such useful practices, ‘real religion’ does not seem to mean that we should sweat the small stuff like how we dress, what we eat and so on. In my view, that’s a personal cultural choice, not a deep religious belief. Rather, Naam seems to be about gratitude. As evident from stories, the one thing that seems to deeply annoy every single god and goddess is ingratitude. The deities also seem remarkably united on how we’re supposed to express gratitude. One, appreciate the good things we have with deep awareness. Two, express that appreciation through kind words and kind deeds. Which is not to say that we meekly tolerate predators—our devi-devta are armed, remember, and always fighting demons, as we are meant to. Regarding kindness, many years ago, a young researcher reportedly showed up in Kanchipuram with this question: What is life really about? He asked the Kanchi seer, Sri Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati, before a large gathering of the sage’s devotees. They wondered how their guru would reply, since there were many sources on the subject—the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, the two great epics, innumerable stotras, bhakti verses, philosophical views and bhashya or commentaries by great acharyas in the past.

An end of long seasons in politics

It’s tempting to see anti-incumbency waves behind the fall of three established leaders in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal. More disruptive features stand out beyond the personalities

How to read the four big state assembly election results that came in today? Shock, surprise, celebratory pageantry and gloom, they were all there in equal parts as the day progressed, not changing its script much since the early trends established the drift of things. But emotions do not fully capture the momentousness of what has happened. Even the analytical frames that are the stock-in-trade of psephology, like anti-incumbency, seem inadequate because they are essentially ahistorical and can be applied any time, anywhere. Disenchantment is of course writ large on the way three incumbent state governments were felled by the electorate, with only Himanta Biswa Sarma’s Assam standing as an exception. Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kerala, to varying degrees of surprise, have had well-established titans of the opposition taken down. Of them, M K Stalin, 73, despite the earth giving way under his feet without any warning, seems the most well-placed to return to fight another day. The structure of politics and ideological belief-systems on which his party stands is perhaps not dismantled. Mamata Banerjee’s future is more cloudy. She is only 71, but ambushed so spectacularly on her native turf by the BJP, she is now up against a newly entrenched party that will not easily give up its hard-won territory. Pinarayi Vijayan, 82, surely walks off into the sunset.

Go beyond the personalities and the more historically salient and disruptive features stand out in stark relief. It is for the first time in over half a century—since 1971, in fact—that Tamil Nadu will see a ruling party that’s not squarely within the bipolar mainstream of Dravidian politics. Disenchantment, here, was married to a politics of enchantment and rapture that few saw coming. Similarly, it is for the first time since 1967, barring a month or two, that India will have no Left government in any state—that’s another long certitude fallen by the wayside. Closing an even longer gap than those two, it is for the first time ever that saffron comes to rule in West Bengal, whose political culture was long deemed to hold it as anathema but whose modern historical memory is smeared with the trauma of Partition.

In the meteoric rise of Vijay and his Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, borne aloft by a remarkable youth-led wave beyond both the DMK and the AIADMK, do we see the demise of an entire political ecosystem? It’s too early, and the signals are too scanty, to make that assessment. The star has been famously sphinx-like about what he stands for, except for being a rebel with a singular cause: of unseating the DMK. His appeal, for now, seems to draw from a kind of indeterminate, hybrid positioning:

anti-establishment without being ideologically committed. The form was ravishing but the content is still encrypted. Whatever verbal assertions have come from him still place him close to the default line of the Dravidian political ethos, and its contrarian stance vis-à-vis New Delhi. How that evolves will be worth watching. All we have for now is his stunning reversal of the state’s traditional top-down political socialisation, with younger voters actively influencing family voting patterns. The one thing you can decipher there is an aspirational spirit searching for direction. A charismatic figure is easier to fall for than an argument, and with him Tamil Nadu returns to its old predilection for personality-driven politics that has not been seen since



Jayalalithaa’s demise. No wonder comparisons are being made to MGR. Vijay’s campaign doubtless tapped into a latent fatigue with Dravidian binaries. The question now is whether he will be forced into post-poll negotiations that will necessitate pragmatic choices. The Congress seems an eager suitor but the BJP, via its proxy, could be interested too. The defeat of Mamata Banerjee after 15 years in power is, without exaggeration, of tectonic proportions. The sheer scale of the BJP victory—well past the 200-seat mark—begs a few questions. Was this merely an anti-incumbency wave? It is tempting to see it as purely a rejection of Mamata, especially given the way voters also chose the Left and Congress where they could—both parties curiously spying in this moment a chance for revanchism. Even the minority vote split and chose alternatives in various constituencies, depriving Mamata of her famous 30 percent head-start. But there are many reasons why seeing this as a purely anti vote may be a reductive reading. There was certainly a kind of near-terminal

Alert India: Quick response across states a challenge

Early warning is only the first link in the chain. Its value depends on what follows

INDIA’s emergency architecture is entering a new phase. The “Extremely Severe Alert” that rang out across millions of phones on Saturday during a nationwide test by the National Disaster Management Authority and the Department of Telecommunications was more than a technological trial. Using cell broadcast, messages can be pushed simultaneously to all devices in a defined area, bypassing congested networks and even silent modes. In disaster scenarios, that capability can mean the difference between timely evacuation and chaos. But early warning is only the first link in the chain. Its value depends on what follows. Here, the performance of the Himachal Pradesh Police under the 112 Emergency Response Support System is instructive. With an average response time of about three minutes 36 seconds and minimal dispatch delays, it shows how integrated control rooms, GPS-enabled patrols and streamlined call handling can translate alerts into action. Such efficiency is



particularly critical in terrains like Himachal’s, where geography often slows intervention. The broader

lesson is about integration. India now has the building blocks of a modern emergency grid: a unified helpline (112), real-time alert capability and improved data-driven policing. Yet, these systems do not operate uniformly. Response times in many states remain significantly higher, reflecting disparities in manpower, training and infrastructure. Equally pressing is the communication gap. The recent alert triggered confusion because citizens were not adequately informed about test protocols or alert categories. Trust in such systems depends as much on public awareness as on technological reliability. The way forward lies in convergence and consistency. Standardising response benchmarks, investing in local capacity and institutionalising public outreach can turn scattered gains into a nationwide safety net. The test alert was a warning bell. It was more about preparedness.

Time of the conspiracy theorist

Public truth used to be mediated through a small set of actors on trusted platforms. Today, there are a million voices on social media at a time the earlier voices have lost the people’s faith through disappointing acts. Perhaps the first was the claim about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

Conspiracy theorists were once called cranks and viewed with contempt by the sophisticates of society. Today, they dominate public discourse. Figures like Joe Rogan (who asks whether the pyramids or ancient Indian temples were built by superhuman technology), Tucker Carlson (who says Israel runs America instead of its electorate) and Candace Owens (who swears that the French president is married to a transgender woman) command larger audiences than traditional media. And, of course, many have seen aliens. Just as gossip is a collective, if malevolent, approximation towards truth, conspiracy theories grope towards the idea that reality is maya: we do not see what we see. Almost all of this scepticism flows from our largely disappointing lives and the sense that legacy institutions, such as parliament or media, have failed. The real triumph of the conspiracy theorist is not that any one plot has been exposed, but that the conspiratorial imagination is becoming the default way of reading power. How did this happen? Not through one grand betrayal, but through a series of small, individually rational choices—each perhaps justified on its own—that collectively produce an outcome no one explicitly intended. Each conspiracy theory chips away at public trust until the edifice collapses. For decades, public truth was mediated through a small set of actors: State broadcasters, major newspapers and the judiciary. There was the belief that these institutions existed for public interest. That faith was largely true, or so we thought—because there was no social media then, not a million voices saying a million different things—if only to feel we all make a difference to the world.

One great reason for this shift is simple: every State apparatus entrusted with delivering justice is run by careerists. Naturally, no careerist endangers their job

when the State’s interests are in question. It’s symbiosis. As philosopher Louis Althusser says, every apparatus justifies itself to the extent it consolidates state power. The conspiracy theorist’s credibility is sourced from the State not fully delivering on its promises, and also because that’s his or her career. The career of the outcast. What ‘really happened’ was, until recently, mediated by time honoured institutions. That is now in question, replaced by rogue versions. It is the Walmart of narratives. You are free to choose depending on the mood of the moment. Truth, like an atom, is divisible. So almost overnight, Tucker Carlson, held in contempt by Democrats, has become their uncrowned spokesperson as he interprets Trump as a war-monger and a puppet of Israel, the cornerstone of America’s deep state. Israel, until recently a victim nation, is now seen as the villain—though its ethno-supremacist policies have been consistent since 1948. What changed is our perception of the State. Carlson is one reason why. And with perception, reality too changes.

The Iraq war offers the clearest prototype. In 2002-03, US officials framed the invasion as a response to the imminent threat of weapons of mass destruction. Millions of lives and many orphaned children later, when no stockpiles were found, the war became its own critique. Iraq was a turning point in the public distrust of the official version. But no single decision caused the mutant ‘sceptical’ gene of the present. It has been a cumulative process—what economists call the tyranny

of small decisions. One man spits on the road, no problem; everybody does it independently, and it’s a problem. In India, the 2021 Pegasus revelations showed that a powerful surveillance tool had been used against journalists, lawyers, and activists. Evidence-based reporting, coupled with patchy official responses, produced a framework of suspicion: if this much can be



hidden, what else goes on behind closed doors? Social media accelerates this logic. Platforms reward engagement, and nothing competes with nuance like the sudden revelation of a hidden pattern: the election “stolen”, the pandemic “engineered” for profit. Is it true?

We don’t know for certain. But it is in this grey mist of doubt that institutions begin to assume a spectral shape. And so, the world appears to be in a state of permanent riot. And it is set to worsen with artificial intelligence. Deepfakes and synthetic audio blur evidence and artefact. Recently, Trump congratulated himself for Iran not executing eight feminist activists. Iran said the eight were AI creations. Over time, the accumulated effect of these individual creative contributions is the loss of a shared, verifiable reality. Citizens once assumed that the State, however flawed, aimed at public interest. When that assumption erodes—not by decree, but by a thousand justified disappointments—conspiracy becomes the only intellectual tool that seems capable of explaining the world. When verified investigations and wild fabrications are treated as equally plausible, public reasoning becomes a marketplace of mutually exclusive belief systems, each just in its own right, each propagated by its own media channels. Truth, like an atom, becomes divisible. The Iraq WMD scandal, the Snowden leaks and the Pegasus revelations re-taught citizens that there is always a “real story” behind the official one. The triumph of the conspiracy theorist is not that they have been proven right, but that we now mediate the world through the outlier’s imagination. This is the new Matrix. And we have, with great dedication and equal abandon, thrown away the red pill.



Night Cream

can delay ageing!

all fall prey to lavish advertising of beauty products that claim to make you look younger. But, whether these products are actually useful or not is something we all need to know. One such product is a night cream.

After keeping a safe distance from all such beauty products for decades, I started my beauty regime with a day and a night cream, thanks to the sudden presence of pores on my face. But one thing that confused me always was, if we really need a special 'night cream' or is it just a result of growing market for extravagant beauty products? Contrary to what I thought, experts say, IT IS IMPORTANT!

"Night Care is about rejuvenating your skin and reversing the damage done to it during the day. In other words, if Day Care is about defence, Night Care is about the attack," says Dr. Jamuna Pai, the celebrity beauty expert.

Why is nighttime so important?

"Since our skin is not exposed to the environment at night, the focus should be on providing hydration and nourishment to the skin cells to help keep our skin rejuvenated and fresh. In addition, the skin also needs a serious boost to its metabolism and this can be

achieved with a night cream that contains effective performance ingredients. Retinol is one such ingredient because it penetrates deep into the dermis and evokes stimulation right where collagen fibers are created. It is considered to be one of the most miraculous ingredients for skin smoothing, reducing lines and wrinkles and reducing pore size," says Dr. Ramanjit Singh, Dermatologist, Medanta.

Aging, no matter how much you avoid paying attention, scares all of us. A simple skincare routine with few beauty products is a must to avoid these ageing signs. Night cream is one such important product. To understand this further, we first need to understand how our skin behaves while we are asleep!

Ahh! Now we know that all the efforts we did before hitting the bed, did not go in vain. But another question that breaks out here is - do all skin types need a night cream regime?

Experts say that all skin types need a night

cream to replenish the damages done to the skin during the day time. "A Night cream hydrates and moisturises dry skin, it balances the oil and prevents acne in oily skin. And in balanced skin it maintains suppleness. Generally, for all skin types, the role of a night cream is to rejuvenate and repair," says Dr Kalpana Sarangi, Dermato-cosmetologist, Nanavati Super Speciality Hospital.

The right age to start your regime with night cream

25 is the new 35! If you think twenties are very early to realize that your skin needs care, you are wrong. With the worsening environmental conditions around us, the early you start, the longer you delay the onset of ageing.

"While the difference between the cell turnover rate in your teens to the time you are in your fifties is large, there are still ways you can speed up the turnover rate as you age. You can start either when or before you see the first signs of fine lines, dryness of the skin, mild pigmentation patches or Sun damage/photoaging," recommends Dr. Jamuna Pai.

Moisturising is something that automatically becomes a part of a woman's routine, but most of us ignore the most important hours of the day. Even while we are asleep for 7-8 hours, our skin needs to be taken care of. Because of the evaporation process during the nighttime, our skin needs uninterrupted nourishment and thus, night creams come for rescue.



Look your best with crystal Make-up



A Makeup trend that women can swear by this season is crystal. We tell you how you can sport this look with elan...

For women who are high on bling, do not restrict yourself to clothes and accessories alone. Crystal make-up, which has been seen at the international as well as domestic runways this year, is high among current fashion charts.

Nishi Chatwani, makeup professional says, "While last few years have seen the rise of smokey eyes and blue eye shadows, this year is all about wearing shiny and crystalised make-up. And the best way to do it is by wearing it on your eyelids."

Three creative ways to wear this look

- Go for the smokey eye look. Instead of blending in the usual black eye shadow, take a small quantity of grey and blue to create a different colour combination.

- After you have applied the blush, you can take a few quantity of crystals (similar to eye crystals) and apply it on your cheeks. Make sure that you do not go overboard with it, since it can kill the look altogether.

- The recent runways have also had women showcasing crystal lips. To get the look, apply a dark shade of lip colour — red or mauve and apply crystals on it. However, this is one look that you can sport only during the night, since wearing it in the morning will make it look OTT.

Crystal eyes

- Before applying make-up, wash your face with a cream-based cleanser and pat dry.

- Take a generous amount of lotion (preferably aloe vera) and apply it on your face. Let it dry.

- Take a small quantity of primer and blend it on your face well.

- Next, instead of applying foundation, it is recommended that you apply compact powder. **Dust off the excess from your eyes.**

- Line your outer eyelids with black gel eyeliner. You can also apply kajal if you want. Take a small amount of shimmer and dust it on your eyelids. You can then take a few pieces of crystallised balls and stick it on the shimmer.

- Make sure that you dust off the shimmer and excess crystals from your face.

- To complement the eyes, make sure that you apply a lighter lip shade. Nudes and pinks look the best.



Easy remedies for Dark Circles

Tired of dark circles and want to get rid of them. Avoid chemically induced serums and gels, by using these interesting remedies, which can be prepared easily at home, to reduce dark circles naturally. Just be careful and avoid getting them into the eyes when applying it.

Rose water -

Soak two cotton balls in rose water and place them over the eyelids. Keep them for 10 minutes and then remove them.

Cucumber -

It is a known fact that cucumber has skin-lightening properties and

acts as a great astringent. Take a fresh green cucumber and cut it into thick slices. Chill them in the refrigerator. After half an hour, take them out and put them over closed eyes for 10 - 15 minutes. Wash off with normal water.

Tomato -

Tomato too acts as a great skin lightening agent. Take one teaspoon of fresh tomato juice mix it with one teaspoon of lemon juice. Gently apply the mixture around your eyes on the dark circles. After keeping it for around 10 minutes, wash it off with cold water.

Potato slices -

Peel and cut potato into thin slices. Immediately put them over closed eyes for 15-20 minutes. Wash off with normal water. Almond oil - Before going to bed every night, gently massage almond oil into the skin around your eyes.

Mint -

Crush six to seven fresh mint leaves and apply them around the eye. Keep it for around 10 - 15 minutes and then wash it off with cold water.



TIME TO Treat your Tootsies

Going sans pedicure during winter is no big deal as your feet are usually covered. But this is the season when you end up wearing strappy sandals, exposing your feet to the scorching



heat and elements that be. Not only are you exposing your tootsies to pollutants galore, it's also a time when sweat and grime can make a heady cocktail and lead to blisters — never a pretty sight. Here's what all you could do...
Happy feet, happy you
For well-kept feet, you don't need to spend a bomb on salon pedicures. It's easy to get happy feet at home...
Always keep your feet clean. This will avoid problems like smelly feet, fungal infection or eczema. Wash your feet thoroughly as soon as you get home, and pat them dry. Moisturize daily.

Scrub your feet once or twice a week to get rid of tanning and dead cells. To prepare natural scrub, mix together 2 tsp sugar, 1 tsp lemon juice and 1 tsp coconut oil. Apply the scrub all over your feet and gently massage for 3-4 minutes till the sugar granules get dissolved. Wash it off with water.
Use foot powder before putting on socks to avoid smelly feet. Wear cotton socks, as it absorbs sweat better.
Use sunscreen before going out, especially when wearing open footwear.
Keep toe nails clean and trimmed. Cut the

nails straight to avoid ingrown nails.
Weekend foot ritual
In a bucket, fill lukewarm water, some rose petals and raw milk. Soak your feet in it. Raw milk contains lactic acid which exfoliates the skin and milk proteins provide nourishment. After soaking for 10 minutes, massage feet with rose petals. Wash with water and pat dry. Finish by applying a heavy-duty moisturizer.



8 Benefits of Rose water



The delicate rose has so much more to it than just its beauty and fragrance. An essential component of various beauty products and regimes, its derivative, rose water, has as many benefits. A look at few of them...
1. It helps in softening the skin by hydrating, moisturising and revitalising it.
2. Its antioxidant properties helps strengthen skin cells and regenerate skin tissues. It also keeps wrinkles aside.
3. Its moisturising and nourishing properties help in enhancing one's quality of hair. In addition to this, it helps treat dandruff and slight scalp inflammations.
4. Before Indians used medicated eye drops, it has often been used to clean and soothe one's eyes. Also, it helps prevent and cure dark circles and puffiness around the eyes.
5. It helps in treating skin rashes caused due to the scorching heat. Spraying it helps relieve sunburns and itchy skin.
6. Adding few drops of rose water to your regular creams can be used for its moisturising properties
7. It can also be used as a cleanser to get rid of the dirt and dead skin off your face.
8. Finally, it can be used to treat acne. Mix lemon juice and rose water in equal quantities, apply it and keep it on for half an hour before finally cleaning it with water helps reduce acne. Following this regime for two to three weeks creates visible effects in reducing scars and blemishes.



The rainy season is a time when your hair gets dry and brittle and more susceptible to breakage. But a spa need not always be a solution to regaining hair health back. With a few of these home-made masks, your tresses will regain their bounce and shine.
1) Banana-coconut milk mask: For hair softness
Bananas are known to have immense value to your diet, but this time try them on your scalp, too. Mashed with a tablespoon of coconut milk, they add shine and softness to your hair. Apply the mask for about 20 minutes and rinse off.
2) Avocado-olive oil mask: To hydrate the hair
Ripe avocados are just what you need to nourish the hair. Mix this with a little olive oil in a bowl and leave it on the hair to revitalise it. Apply this and leave it on for half an hour and wash off with warm water.
3) Papaya-hibiscus: For split ends
Mash some ripe papaya (without the skin). Add some hibiscus juice to this. Apply the paste on your hair.



Try these Hair mask to beat hair problems in the monsoon

Rinse off with warm water.
4) Curry leaves mask: To stop hair loss
Suffering from falling hair? Use curry leaves to help. The leaves are packed with beta-carotene and proteins and have vitamin B, which restores colour to the hair by strengthening the roots. Boil the leaves with your hair oil. Let it cool a little. Apply and wash off.

MCD was told to maintain drain in which toddler drowned, shows letter sent by I&FC dept last July

Contractual junior engineer from I&FC department dismissed after CM seeks action

New Delhi.(Agency)

Two days after a two-year-old girl died after falling in an open drain in North Delhi's Burari while playing outside her house, The Indian Express has learnt that the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) department had written to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) last July to take over the management of the drain but it did not.

According to the letter accessed by The Indian Express, the drain — located between Gujar Chowk and Ramlila Ground in Mukundpur — was constructed by I&FC department. However, as it was a small drain, only 4 feet in width, the department had asked MCD to take over the drain for desilting

purposes and also maintain it.

The letter was based on a 2014 order issued by the Delhi Lieutenant Governor, as per which, "municipal corporations... carry out desilting work of drains in unauthorised colonies which are less than 4-ft... irrespective of the agencies which are carrying out the development work in that area..."

In its letter to the MCD, the department said, "A road and side drains from Gujar Chowk to Ramlila Ground (D-Block Mukandpur) has been constructed by I&FC department and after that the cleaning of the side drain on both the sides has also been



cleaned/desilted..."

"It is requested to take care of the above cited drains and maintenance at your end please, to avoid any inconvenience to people residing there," it added.

A senior government official said, "Even when AAP was in power and Manish Sisodia was the minister, he had directed the MCD to take over and manage the drain... A letter was also written by the I&FC to the MCD last year."

Despite repeated attempts, MCD officials could not be reached for a comment. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, meanwhile, on Tuesday demanded action against officials and engineers found responsible for the child's death. Following this, a contractual junior engineer from the I&FC department was dismissed from service with immediate effect, officials said.

"The CM also directed officials to identify open drains and other hazardous sites that pose a threat to life and property, and to rectify them immediately," said an official.

According to Bhalswa Dairy police station, officers found the toddler inside the drain, located about 15 m away from her residence, on Sunday. She was taken to Babu Jagivan Ram Hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

Preliminary inquiry revealed that the child had likely wandered out of the house while playing and accidentally fell into the open drain, leading to drowning. Family members have not expressed any suspicion of foul play at this stage, police had said.

Junior engineer sacked over death of 2-year-old in open drain in Delhi

New Delhi.(Agency)

A junior engineer from the irrigation and flood control department was dismissed on the directions of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta over the death of a girl who fell into an open drain in the Mukundpur area, a statement from the CMO said on Tuesday.

Expressing sorrow over the death of the two-year-old girl, the CM said that the incident was extremely distressing and alarming. She took to the social media platform X and wrote, "The news of the innocent little girl's demise after falling into an open drain in Mukundpur is extremely heartbreaking. My deepest condolences are with the bereaved family."

Asvi Kesari had stepped out to play outside her house around 11 am when she suddenly went missing. Family members and neighbours immediately launched a search, combing the area for hours. When no trace of her was found, fears arose that she might have fallen into an uncovered drain running along Mukundpur Ram Janaki Path in Ishu Vihar.

Later in the afternoon, the child was discovered stuck in thick sludge inside the three-foot-wide and four-foot-deep drain that was left open after recent desilting. She was rushed to a nearby government hospital where doctors declared her brought dead. Her family had blamed the civic officials for negligence.

Her father owns a small grocery shop in the area, while her mother is a homemaker. She was their only child.

The CM said the negligence in covering the drain was unacceptable and directed action against the junior engineer. Acting on the CM's directives, the department dismissed the contractual junior engineer from service with immediate effect, the statement said.

Gupta directed all the departments concerned to identify open drains and other hazardous sites within their respective jurisdictions that pose a threat to life and property. She warned that officials would be held accountable for any form of negligence, and strict action would be taken. She said that the government's priority is to ensure the safety of every citizen—particularly children, who are the most vulnerable.

Relief to flyers as metro link between T1, T3 of Delhi to come up soon, says DMRC

New Delhi.(Agency)

The hassle of commuting by road between the domestic and international terminals of the Indira Gandhi International Airport may be eliminated in the future, as an underground Metro link linking them is in the pipeline. An airport source said a project is underway by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation in connection with its Golden Line corridor, which will turn the airport into a seamless connectivity hub for flyers.

Sharing details, Anuj Dayal, Principal Executive Director, DMRC, told newspaper, "The Aerocity station of the Airport Express Line will be connected to the Terminal 1 station of the domestic airport via a 2.263-km-long underground stretch. This will be an extension of the Tughlakabad-Aerocity Golden Line corridor, which is currently under construction." The foundation stone for the line was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 8. "The Metro link between Terminal 1 and Aerocity will allow passengers to take the Golden Line from T1 and get down at Aerocity to board the Airport Express Line to reach T3," Dayal said.

Once completed, the travel time between T1 and T3 is expected to be around six to seven minutes, the official said.

The construction of the stretch has not yet begun. "Preparatory pre-construction work, including tender documentation and design, is currently underway," Dayal said.

The airport source added, "Passengers arriving at T1 who need to catch a connecting domestic or international flight from T3 will be able to do so via the Metro. This will also benefit passengers travelling in the reverse direction."

Telangana: 6.6-ft bus conductor gets alternative duty after neck, back pain

New Delhi.(Agency)

In an unusual incident that has come to light from Telangana, a bus conductor was reassigned alternative duties by the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) because his exceptionally tall height made it difficult for him to perform regular tasks inside the buses.

Official order issued

Conductor Ameen Ahmed Ansari, attached to the Mehdiapatnam depot, was allowed to continue working under Out of Designation (OD) duty. On May 5, an official order was issued from the corporation's headquarters at Bus Bhavan in Mushirabad, Hyderabad, to this effect. Reports said that Ansari is 198 centimetres (6 feet 6 inches) tall. Earlier, he had been put on OD duty for a year after it was found

that he was unable to carry out his regular work inside RTC buses in a comfortable manner.

Conductors are required to move through narrow aisles and function in spaces with limited headroom. These proved physically



challenging for Ansari.

Faced physical challenges

On April 28, Ansari's initial OD duty period got over. But he didn't get an immediate extension. Ansari went back to his regular role as a bus conductor. During this time, he

suffered intense neck and back pain.

His pain arose because he was forced to bend his neck constantly while doing his job inside the buses.

When the corporation was informed, it paid heed to his physical problems and the challenges he was

facing due to being exceptionally tall. He was reassigned OD duty immediately. Under the new order, his services may be utilised in roles more suited to his physical comfort, like in Bus Pass Sections or at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, based on operational needs.

Move triggers online discussion

The corporation's move has sparked discussions online over workplace adaptability and employee welfare. Some pointed out how job roles, especially in public transport,

Delhi HC issues notice on Hansraj student's plea challenging his suspension over 'defaming college on social media'



New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court has issued notice on a petition filed by Hansraj College student Parth Srivastava, challenging his suspension on grounds that include, among others, "defaming the college through social media platforms" and using "derogatory language."

When the matter came up for hearing on April 29, Justice Jasmeet Singh allowed limited interim relief, permitting Srivastava to enter the college campus for one hour to fill his examination form, noting that the last date for submission was April 30. The court further directed that he "will not cause any disruption to the working of the college" and granted the respondents one week to file their replies.

The petition arises from a series of suspension notices issued by Hansraj College between April 20 and 25 against at least 30 students. Several of these notices cited "defaming the college through social media platforms" as a ground for disciplinary action, alongside allegations of indiscipline and violence during the college's annual fest held earlier in April. Srivastava, a former president of the students' union, was among the first to be suspended.

Filed under Article 226 of the Constitution, Srivastava's plea seeks to quash the April 20 suspension order and all consequential disciplinary proceedings. It also asks the HC to direct the college to allow him to attend classes, participate in academic activities, and continue his education without interruption. The petition further seeks restoration of "all academic benefits, including attendance, coursework, internal assessments, and participation in academic and co-curricular activities" for the period affected by the suspension. Or people living outside Kerala," he said.

Arguing that the action violates principles of natural justice, Srivastava's counsel, advocate Shaurya Vikram, told The Indian Express, "This is not merely a challenge to a suspension but to the legality of the process that led to it."

AI push to fight crimes: Senior Delhi Police officers to adopt 100 police stations

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a major push to modernise policing, the Delhi Police is set to roll out a first-of-its-kind initiative where senior officers of DCP rank and above — each with over a decade of service — will adopt 100 police stations to drive targeted reforms.

At the heart of the plan is AI-based predictive policing to identify crime hotspots and enable sharper deployment of patrols and personnel on the ground, officers told The Indian Express. They added that the direction was issued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a conference attended by director generals and inspector generals of police last year. The project is now beginning to take shape with senior officers being assigned police stations.

The initiative is also set to focus on tracking missing

children, strengthening cybercrime response, and addressing station-level gaps to improve overall policing efficiency at the grassroots.

"This will be backed by an expanded network of CCTV cameras equipped with facial recognition across public spaces, along with deeper integration of databases such as Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) and 'Crime Kundali' to give officers real-time access to criminal records," a senior officer said. Delhi Police is also looking to enhance surveillance and response during large gatherings, protests and



emergencies through the use of drones, while body-worn cameras are expected to improve transparency and aid evidence collection, officers said. Police stations will be equipped with performance dashboards to track response times and overall efficiency, they added.

Pollution shift: Delhi's air quality dashboard shows rise in Ozone as NO2, CO decline

New Delhi.(Agency)

Over the years, January PM2.5 levels in Delhi have typically ranged well above safe limits, often crossing 150 micrograms per cubic metre, before dropping during monsoon.

A public air quality dashboard on Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data since 2015, launched by Delhi-based research and public policy think tank Envirocatalysts, has highlighted a shift in the Capital's pollution pattern — decline in nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide emissions are accompanied by a growing challenge from ozone.

The dashboard, launched on Monday, enables pollutant-wise, long-term analysis of emissions across cities. In Delhi, fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and coarse particles (PM10), for instance, show a winter and post-monsoon peak. Between October and February, pollution levels rise sharply, aided by stagnant atmospheric conditions that trap emissions close to the ground.

Over the years, January PM2.5 levels in Delhi have typically ranged well above safe limits,



often crossing 150 micrograms per cubic metre, before dropping during monsoon.

However, this seasonal dip does not necessarily indicate lower emissions. Instead, meteorological conditions such as rainfall and stronger winds help disperse pollutants more effectively, temporarily improving air quality index (AQI).

In contrast, the data shows that ozone peaks during summer, particularly in May, when

strong sunlight drives photochemical reactions between nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds. Delhi's annual average ozone rose from 52 µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic metre) in 2021 to 66 µg/m³ in 2025, alongside a sharp increase in ozone-dominant days, from 33 µg/m³ in 2024 to 76 µg/m³ in 2025. Among cities with consistent data across five years, the steepest increases were recorded in Meerut (53 µg/m³ to 76 µg/m³), Noida (54 µg/m³ to 74 µg/m³), and Muzaffarnagar (55 µg/m³ to 73 µg/m³), indicating a broader regional shift beyond the Capital. The trends, however, remain uneven. Bulandshahr in UP saw a sharp decline from 95 µg/m³ in 2021 to 45 µg/m³ in 2025, while Ghaziabad and Gurgaon recorded moderate reductions. Bharatpur stands out as a persistent high-ozone location, recording annual averages.

Confused about ITR filing, refunds or deductions? 'Kar Saathi' has answers

New Delhi.(Agency)

If filing your income tax return feels confusing every year, you're not alone. From choosing the right form to understanding deductions and tracking refunds, the process can feel overwhelming. But now, the Income Tax Department has introduced a simpler way to get answers, just ask Kar Saathi. The Income Tax Department posted on X, "KAR SAATHI. An AI-powered chatbot by the Income Tax Department, designed to provide quick, reliable, and 24x7 assistance for all your tax queries."

A CHATBOT THAT SPEAKS YOUR LANGUAGE

Kar Saathi is an AI-powered chatbot launched ahead of the ITR filing season under the PRARAMBH 2026 campaign. Instead of going through lengthy guides or waiting for help, taxpayers can simply type their queries and get instant responses. The idea is to make tax-related conversations easy and natural, almost like speaking to a helpful friend.

What makes it useful is that the chatbot is built entirely on official Income Tax Department guidance. So, the answers are not only quick but also accurate and consistent. Whether it's about filing returns, understanding deductions, dealing with notices, or checking refund status, Kar Saathi covers it all in real time.

AVAILABLE ANYTIME, WITHOUT THE HASSLE

One of the biggest advantages is that Kar Saathi works 24/7. Tax queries don't always come up during office hours, and this tool ensures that help is always available. It also reduces the need for intermediaries, as users can resolve common doubts on their own, quickly and clearly. The chatbot is designed to guide users step by step, especially under the new Income Tax Act, 2025 framework. It explains forms, deadlines, and compliance requirements in a simple way, helping taxpayers avoid confusion and mistakes.

SBI employees on 2-day strike: Operations can be impacted on 4 consecutive days

New Delhi.(Agency)

SBI employees have called a strike on May 25 and 26. May 23 is the fourth Saturday of the month and May 24 is a Sunday which can lead to a situation when the country's largest bank with more than 50 crore customers can be closed on four consecutive days. The employees' union has put forward 16 demands concerning staff shortages, pensions, recruitment and service conditions. Therefore, services of the State Bank of India could be disrupted in the last week of this month. Customers could encounter difficulties regarding branch-related transactions. However, all digital services of the bank, along with ATMs are expected to remain functional. Services such as cash deposits, withdrawals, making bank drafts work regarding loans and physical paperwork could be affected.

16 demands in total

The employees' union in SBI has put forward a total of 16 demands. The issues it has flagged include raising the recruitment of support staff and to boost the number of security personnel, removal of wage disparities. The union also wants medical benefits and overall working conditions for the employees to be improved.

The union also demands changes in pension-related regulations. They have also urged for greater flexibility and enhanced benefits under the NPS (National Pension System). The need for improved career progression opportunities and modifications to pension calculation methods has also been highlighted. Concerns have also been raised regarding the decline in recruitment for entry-level positions.

Gold price prediction today: Will gold, silver price rally on May 6, 2026 sustain? Check near-term outlook

New Delhi.(Agency)

Any upside in gold and silver prices may face resistance at higher levels, says Vedika Narvekar, Research Analyst - Commodities & Currencies, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers.

Gold prices continued to decline last week, with international spot falling around 2% to near \$4,614/oz, while MCX gold weakened 0.80% to Rs 1,51,352. This has reduced gold's gains for the year to 7% suggesting a cooling phase after the strong rally earlier in 2026. Notably, this drop has come despite ongoing tensions around the Strait of Hormuz, showing that macro factors are currently driving gold more than safe-haven demand. Higher oil-driven inflation pushed US yields up (30Y ~5.03%, 2Y ~3.99%) and delayed Fed rate-cut hopes exerting pressure on gold.

On the positive side, demand remains strong, as per the World Gold Council. Global gold demand stood at 1,231 tonnes (+2% YoY), with value jumping 74% to \$193 billion, supported by bar & coin demand of 474 tonnes (+42%), ETF inflows of 62 tonnes, and central bank purchases of 244 tonnes (+3%), as per the World Gold Council.

In India, total demand rose to 151 tonnes (+10% YoY), led by investment demand of 82 tonnes (+54%), while jewellery demand fell to 66 tonnes (-19%), indicating a clear shift toward investment despite higher prices. Overall, this shift toward investment demand is helping support gold prices in the medium term, even as short-term pressure continues. Gold entered this week with a bearish bias, but has rebounded strongly after the US President signaled "great progress" in talks with Iran. Prices are up 0.50% so far this week. However, despite the US downplaying a return to war, continued incidents near the Strait of Hormuz and uncertainty over a deal are keeping inflation concerns elevated, raising expectations.

Stock markets rebound in early trade as oil prices decline amid progress in US-Iran negotiations

New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded in early trade on Wednesday after crude oil prices declined, following US President Donald Trump's claim that negotiations with Iran were progressing towards a deal aimed at ending the conflict. A positive trend in global markets also aided the rally in domestic stocks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 657.22 points to 77,675.01 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty rallied 218 points to 24,250.85. From the 30-Sensex firms, InterGlobe Aviation, Mahindra & Mahindra, Trent, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv and Tech Mahindra were among the major winners.

Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Unilever, NTPC and Power Grid were the laggards. US President Donald Trump has suspended "Project Freedom," to escort ships through the Strait of Hormuz, claiming progress in negotiations with Iran toward

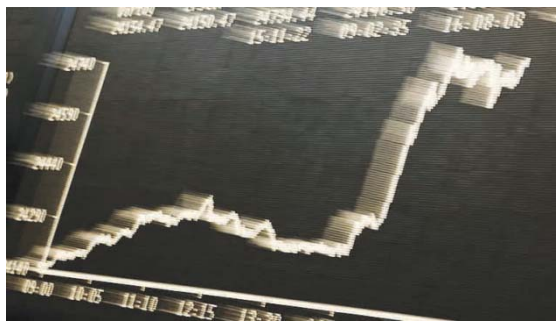
an agreement to end the war.

In a post on Truth Social on Tuesday, Trump said, "Great progress has been made toward a complete and final agreement with representatives of Iran." "Based on the request of Pakistan and other Countries, the tremendous Military Success that we have had during the Campaign against the Country of Iran and, additionally, the fact that Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement with Representatives of Iran, we have mutually agreed that, while the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom (The Movement of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz) will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalized and signed," Trump said.

Project Freedom was launched on Monday

to escort ships, stranded due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, out to safety.

Trump's statement on Truth Social came hours after US Secretary of State Marco



Rubio announced that Operation Epic Fury, launched on February 28, had concluded as its objectives have been achieved.

"Operation Epic Fury is concluded. We achieved the objectives of that operation.

We're not cheering for an additional situation to occur. We would prefer the path of peace. What @POTUS would prefer is a deal that is, so far, not the route that Iran has chosen," Rubio told a press conference at the White House on Tuesday. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 1.67 per cent lower at USD 108 per barrel.

"The primary global trigger remains the situation around the Strait of Hormuz. Recent comments from Donald Trump indicating that 'Project Freedom' will be paused temporarily-effectively halting plans to escort vessels through the strait amid ongoing negotiations with Iran-offer some near-term respite.

However, the broader blockade dynamics remain unresolved, keeping energy markets on edge," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.

FPI equity ownership plunges to 14-year low of 16.13% in FY26

New Delhi.(Agency)

With foreign investors continuing to withdraw from Indian equity markets — pulling out close to \$18.9 billion in calendar year 2025 and \$20.5 billion during March–April 2026 alone — their ownership of domestic equities has plunged to a 14-year low of 16.13% in March 2026. This compares with a peak of 20.70% in March 2015.

The share of domestic institutional investors (DIIs), however, reached a new high of 19.24%. On the other hand, the ownership share of individual investors (retail and HNIs) declined to a five-year low of 9.11% in March 2026, down from 9.28% in December 2025. Within this, retail investors' share fell from 7.25% to 7.12%, while HNI share slipped from 2.03% to 1.99%. According to Prime Database data, DIIs, along with retail investors and high net worth individuals (HNIs), together owned 28.34% of the market

as of March 2026. DII holdings rose to an all-time high of 19.24% from 18.72% in December 2025, while mutual funds (MFs) also hit a record



high share of 11.46%.

The share of DIIs increased to 19.24% in March 2026, up from 18.72% in December 2025, backed by a net investment of Rs 2.51 lakh crore in the quarter. MFs played the biggest role, while insurers, banks and alternative investment funds (AIFs) also

contributed with net investments of Rs 28,784 crore, Rs 1,621 crore and Rs 512 crore, respectively.

Meanwhile, MFs continue to narrow the gap with FPIs, with the gap shrinking by a sharp 83 basis points in March to 4.67%. The gap stood at 9.34% in December 2023 and had peaked at 17.14% in March 2015, when FPI share was 20.70% and MF share just 3.56%, said Pranav Haldea, managing director of Prime Database. The trend of MFs increasing their market share began after demonetisation in November 2016, accelerated during the Covid years, and has strengthened further over the past 18 months due to geopolitical concerns and valuation issues for FPIs, among other factors. MFs, flush with retail inflows through systematic investment plans (SIPs), made net investments of Rs 1.42 lakh crore in the March quarter alone, while FPIs recorded net outflows of Rs 1.31 lakh crore.

Are memes and reels turning stock markets into a casino for investors?

New Delhi.(Agency)

You're scrolling through Instagram when a reel pops up. "Top stock to buy now. Target Rs 500. Stop loss Rs 420." On your screen, there's a confident voice, a few charts, maybe even screenshots of profits. It feels convincing, especially for a 30-second video. You watch it, maybe save it. For many, that's enough to take the next step and invest. This is no longer unusual. A growing number of young investors are discovering the stock market through Instagram reels, Telegram channels, Reddit threads and WhatsApp forwards promising quick gains. The line between advice and influence

is blurring. The cost of getting it wrong can be high. Most realise that



only after the trade goes south.

By then, the reel is gone, but the loss is real. And this is where the concern is growing. In parts of the market, investing is starting to look less like

analysis and more like a bet.

All of this is well known. So why revisit it now? Because Warren Buffett, widely regarded as one of the greatest investors of all time, has flagged a deeper shift and concern.

He says he no longer fully understands how parts of today's market behave, suggesting that a lot of the activity is starting to resemble gambling rather than investing, driven more by speculation than fundamentals.

"I understand fewer businesses as a percentage of the whole than I did 10 years ago," he said. "The market always feels like a church.

8th Pay Commission: Why employee unions want a 5-year salary revision cycle

As part of its continuing exclusive coverage of the 8th Pay Commission discussions, India Today has learnt that one of the major suggestions raised during these meetings was to reduce the gap between two Pay Commissions from 10 years to 5 years.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The 8th Pay Commission has started its consultation meetings with employee unions and staff representatives across the country, with the Delhi round of discussions concluding between April 28 and April 30. During the Delhi meetings, the commission held discussions with representatives from the National Council-Joint Consultative

Machinery (NC-JCM) and several employee bodies on issues related to fitment factor, salary hikes, pension reforms, allowances and the old pension scheme.

As part of its continuing exclusive coverage of the 8th Pay Commission discussions, India Today has learnt that one of the major suggestions raised during these meetings was to reduce the gap between two Pay Commissions from 10 years to 5 years.

However, employee representatives clarified that changing the duration between two Pay Commissions does not directly fall under the purview of the 8th Pay Commission itself. Instead, union leaders said they wanted commission members to place this demand before the government during discussions and recommendations. The commission is now scheduled to continue consultations in other parts of the country. According to the latest



schedule shared by the 8th Pay Commission, the next meetings will be held in Hyderabad on May 18–19, Srinagar between June 1–4 and Ladakh on June 8.

WHY EMPLOYEE UNIONS WANT A 5-YEAR PAY COMMISSION

Shiva Gopal Mishra, Secretary (Staff Side), National Council-Joint Consultative Machinery (NC-JCM), told that the current 10-year cycle no longer matches today's inflation and wage realities. "The five-year demand for the wage of the government

employees should be met. There are many reasons for this," Mishra said.

He pointed out that many public sector undertakings (PSUs) and banking organisations revise wages every five years. "All the public undertakings of the government have been arranged for five years.

There is a change in wages in all our banking organisations in just five years," he said. Mishra also compared the system with the private sector. "In the private sector, there is a change in wages in just three years. But the government employees have to wait for ten years to increase their wages," he told.

According to him, inflation is one of the biggest reasons behind the demand. "If we take it for ten years, then in the ten-year wait, our entire price index will increase a lot. And because of inflation, our wages that are made ten years in advance, instead of being in the original form, they are reduced," he said.

Short news

Andhra Pradesh HC issues notices on plea to cancel SC certificates of converted pastors

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Tuesday issued notices to the Centre, State government, and Collectors of West Godavari and Eluru districts over a petition seeking cancellation of Scheduled Caste (SC) certificates granted to pastors who converted to Christianity. Justice Nyapathy Vijay directed the authorities to file detailed counters and adjourned the matter to July 6. The petition was filed by P Prasanna Kumar, president of the Scheduled Castes Rights



Protection Committee, who argued that pastors in the two districts had obtained SC certificates despite embracing Christianity.

Advocate N Srinivasa Rao, appearing for petitioner, contended that such certification violated Supreme Court rulings, which state that SC and ST benefits do not extend to converts. He alleged that some pastors had secured certificates through irregular means, citing information obtained under Right to Information Act.

The petitioner maintained that this practice was harmful to genuine SC members and urged the court to take action against officials responsible for issuing such certificates.

Andhra Mining department earns Rs 3,416 crore revenue, sets Rs 4,650 crore target for FY 2026-27

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

Andhra Pradesh's Mines Department has recorded a revenue of Rs 3,416 crore in 2025-26, exceeding its target by 108 per cent and marking a 32 per cent growth over the previous year - the highest among mineral-rich states such as Odisha, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. Building on this performance, the State has set a revenue target of Rs 4,650 crore for 2026-27, representing a 36 per cent increase. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, reviewing the department's performance on Tuesday, directed officials to prepare a comprehensive action plan to fully utilise the State's vast iron ore reserves, which stand at nearly 1,938 million tonnes.

He said effective utilisation would not only boost revenue but also generate large-scale employment, projecting investments worth Rs 1.90 lakh crore and the creation of 1.52 lakh jobs. The Chief Minister noted that ArcelorMittal Nippon India is establishing a steel plant with a capacity of 17.8 million tonnes, while JSW is setting up a major unit in Rayalaseema. By 2035, these projects are expected to exceed 20 million tonnes of annual capacity. The Chief Minister instructed officials to allocate the remaining iron ore blocks to companies and set production targets of 30 million tonnes by 2030 and 113 million tonnes by 2035.

West Bengal: Four killed as TMC, BJP blame each other for post-poll violence

Kolkata.(Agency)

Two BJP workers were killed in New Town in North 24 Parganas and Udaynarayanpur in Howrah, while the TMC alleged that two of its party members were killed in Belegkata in Kolkata and Nanoor in Birbhum amid alleged post-poll violence across the state. A man identified as a TMC worker was found dead in Birbhum district's Nanoor, with party supporters alleging he was hacked to death by BJP workers. In a separate incident, the BJP alleged one of its workers was killed by miscreants associated with the TMC, while he was celebrating the party's poll victory in Howrah's Udaynarayanpur on Tuesday.

The family members of the TMC worker, identified as Abir Sheikh, alleged he was attacked by BJP miscreants while he was on his way back to his house. On receiving the information, a large contingent from the Nanur police station arrived at the location and cordoned off the area.

The family members of BJP worker Yadav Bor Jadhav Bor (45) alleged that while he was returning home after poll victory celebrations on Monday, he was dragged away by a group of individuals and attacked with sharp weapons, police said, adding one person has been arrested in connection with the incident. In two other separate incidents, a TMC worker identified as Biswajit Pattanaik (44) was killed, while in New Town, BJP worker Madhu Mondal was killed, allegedly by TMC workers, following an argument when a victory procession of the BJP was passing by the Bhalliguri area, police said.

19-year-old worker from Nepal killed at Sewri-Worli Connector site

Mumbai.(Agency)

A 19-year-old construction worker from Nepal died early Tuesday after being struck by an iron frame at the Sewri-Worli Connector project site in Parel, marking the fourth fatality at infrastructure worksites across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region in the past two weeks.

Ravi Giri was working past midnight, assisting in the movement of iron frames between pillars 44 and 53 near KEM Hospital, when the accident occurred.

According to police, two frames had been lifted by a crane, and Giri was walking alongside when one swung into his chest and abdomen, knocking him unconscious. He was rushed to KEM Hospital, where he was declared dead during treatment at 3:05 am. The supervisor was allegedly not present at the site.



The Bhoiwada police have registered an FIR under Section 106(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for causing death by negligence against the crane operator and the site supervisor.

The Sewri-Worli Connector, being executed by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority with J Kumar as contractor, is a key link between the Coastal Road and the Atal Setu. While most piers have been completed, work on

spans and girders is underway amid pressure to meet a September deadline.

Giri had moved to Mumbai in 2023 with his father and uncle, both daily wage workers, to support their family in Nepal. The family lived in labour quarters in Sewri. By Tuesday evening, his body had been handed over after post-mortem.

The fatality follows a string of recent accidents across infrastructure projects in the region. On Saturday, two workers — Raghunath Das (38) and Kanha Singh (45) — died at the Dahisar-Bhayandar Link Road site after an elevated platform collapsed. Days earlier, police constable Santosh Gopal Chavan (48) was killed on the Sion-Panvel Highway when a piling rig toppled onto his vehicle. Both projects fall under the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation.

Other than accused & victim, public can't seek to view FIR as a right: Madras HC

MADURAI.(Agency)

Observing that, except the accused and the victim, the public cannot, as a matter of right, seek to view FIRs, the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court recently refused to allow a PIL filed seeking direction to restore online public access to FIRs on the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems) 2.0 web portal.

The litigant G Chidambaram, who is an advocate from Tirunelveli, stated that previously, FIRs registered by the Tamil Nadu Police, except those relating to offences against women, sexual offences, and the SC/ST Act, were accessible to the public online by providing a mobile number and OTP on the CCTNS portal of the TN police. However, after the implementation of the CCTNS 2.0 project on February 26, public access to view FIRs has been barred,



and at present, FIRs are accessible only to the complainant and the investigating officer, due to which advocates and litigants are unable to access FIR details.

Claiming that this causes considerable delay in approaching the courts for legal remedies, including anticipatory bail, he sought the above relief.

The additional advocate general said the Supreme Court, in a 2016 judgment, has set

out some guidelines in the matter, and granting access to FIRs to all persons creates some problems.

A bench of justices N Sathish Kumar and M Jothiraman noted that, the apex court had mentioned that the accused or any other person connected with the same can download the FIR. The judges opined that the phrase 'any other person connected' in the judgment refers to only the informant and the victim, as per Section 173 of BNSS. Meanwhile, the accused is already entitled to a copy of the FIR.

"Therefore, other than the accused and the victim, we are of the view that the public, as a matter of right, cannot view the FIRs. If any third party requires a copy of FIR, he or she may approach the concerned Magistrate's Court seeking a certified copy of FIR as per law," they observed and disposed of the PIL.

Encroaching grama Natham land will lead to lawlessness: Madras HC

CHENNAI.(Agency)

It is not as if any person can encroach upon the grama natham lands and claim ownership or title. If such a situation is permitted, it would lead to lawlessness, said the Madras High Court recently.

The observation was made by a division bench of justices SM Subramaniam and K Surender while dismissing a plea by S Selvakumar seeking to quash the eviction notice issued by revenue authorities for removing encroachments made on grama natham land in Chengalpet.

The bench held the government is empowered to regulate grama natham lands as reiterated in the Revenue Standing Order 21 and 26 and such lands are to be assigned for

the construction of dwelling houses to the landless/homeless poor persons, and may be utilised for public purposes.

The petitioner prayed to quash the



eviction notice issued by Thirukazhukundram tahsildar in 2025, under the TN Land Encroachment Act, for removing the commercial building raised by him on the grama natham land and

forbearing the respondent authorities from interfering with his possession of the properties.

The petitioner's counsel said he is running a shop and is in occupation of the grama natham land and so the government has no right over it. However, the counsel for the respondent authorities contended that the land is meant for running commercial establishments but only for dwelling purposes. The bench said, "Grama natham lands are not meant to be encroached upon by greedy men or any person with muscle or political powers." It added the ownership of the material resources of the community are so distributed to subserve common good; that apart, raising commercial establishments on such land is impermissible.

Khalistan group claims BSF blast in Jalandhar; police probe terror link, tighten security

Jalandhar.(Agency)

A day after the explosion outside the Border Security Force (BSF) headquarters in Jalandhar, a group identifying itself as the Khalistan Liberation Army (KLA) Wednesday claimed responsibility through a social media post, though security agencies said the claim is yet to be verified. Security has since been tightened across Punjab, especially after a separate incident Tuesday night outside an Indian Army camp in Amritsar, where a grenade attack caused minor damage but no injuries.

In the purported post, the group described the blast as part of "Operation Nawa Savair" and issued threats against senior BSF officials, including DIG Sandeep Goyal. It also made claims of casualties, which authorities have dismissed, confirming that no one was killed in the incident. Police sources said the authenticity of the post is under scrutiny and no conclusions have been drawn so far.

Two detained

The blast in Jalandhar occurred around 8 pm when a delivery package placed on a two-wheeler parked outside the BSF headquarters exploded, setting the vehicle on fire and triggering panic in the area. The explosion was heard up to a kilometre away. Dhanpreet Kaur, Commissioner, Jalandhar police, said two people, including the scooter owner, have been detained for questioning. The vehicle belonged to Gurpreet Singh, a delivery worker from Garha, who had come to deliver a parcel at the BSF complex.

'This time we don't have strength to rebuild': Bird flu hits western India's biggest egg-supply hub, again

Navapur.(Agency)

Suresh Dollabhai Prajapat (63) has run his Diamond Poultry Farm in Navapur through two bird flu outbreaks. He rebuilt after 2006 and survived 2021. On May 2, as officers finished culling the last of his 11,000 chickens, he decided he was done. "This time I don't have any strength left," he told The Indian Express.

Navapur, a town in Maharashtra's Nandurbar district, is one of western India's most productive egg-supply hubs, pushing nearly 10 lakh eggs daily to markets in Mumbai, Surat, Jalgaon and Nashik. It has now been hit by bird flu three times, in 2006, 2021, and now. Each time, the industry has shrunk a little more. The current outbreak began quietly. On

April 12, Prajapat found five dead chickens in his shed and assumed it was heatstroke. A vet prescribed medicines. By afternoon, 50 more were dead. By the next morning, over 300. Farms nearby were reporting the same thing.

Similar scenes were playing out at Dawn Poultry Farm, beyond three-kilometre radius. On April 18, Tausif Balesaria (37) found 55 dead birds in the morning. By afternoon it was 132. "There were no visible symptoms, the birds were eating normally," he said. "We thought it was a routine illness. You don't realise until it's too late."

Samples were collected on April 26 and sent to the National Institute of High Security



Animal Diseases in Bhopal. Those from three farms — Diamond, Tasleem and Dawn — tested positive for Avian Influenza. On April 30, District Collector Dr Mittali Sethi declared parts of Navapur an infected and surveillance zone, with a one-kilometre infected radius and 10-km

surveillance radius around the epicentre. Movement and sale of poultry and related materials are banned for 90 days. Police have been deployed to enforce the restrictions.

By May 5, the numbers were staggering. Over 2 lakh birds were culled. Approximately 8 lakh eggs destroyed and more than 210 metric tonnes of feed disposed of. Dr Sanjay Kachane, Deputy Commissioner, Animal Husbandry and Dairy, Nandurbar, said the final toll could climb higher. A team of 18 culling officials, working in groups of four to five, has been at it since 8 am every day, he told The Indian Express, adding that another 140 veterinary officers, para-vets and support staff are deployed across the zone.

NEWS BOX

Lionel Messi's India tour promoter breaks silence, threatens to sue TMC for 100 crore

New Delhi. (Agency)
Lionel Messi's "GOAT tour" promoter Satadru Dutta has hit back at the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) after the party's defeat in the Bengal elections. Dutta, who was jailed for 37 days after Messi's visit to the Salt Lake Stadium descended into chaos, has threatened to sue the party for Rs 100 crore. In a series of posts uploaded on social media, the entrepreneur alleged that the TMC ruined three years of his hard work and defamed him in the aftermath of the incident at Salt Lake. He added that he would take the party to court and fight the case till the end.

"Just because you have lost in the elections, don't think that you have been punished. I will lodge a defamation case and I will go to the Supreme Court if need be. I will



fight till the end," Satadru said after the election results were announced. Dutta also slammed outgoing Bengal sports minister Aroop Biswas for thrusting himself and his associates in front of Messi, which reportedly left the footballer irritated. The crowding around the athlete by the minister and his associates angered the capacity crowd at Salt Lake, leading to vandalism inside the stadium and cutting short Messi's visit.

Dutta blamed Biswas for the incident and said that the outgoing minister would have to answer for his actions. "Repeatedly, I told him not to click pictures here. But he used his power and went on to take photos. He will have to pay for this," Dutta said.

Following the Kolkata debacle, Dutta spent 37 days in jail after police registered two separate cases against him and others in connection with the incident.

Meanwhile, former India cricketer Manoj Tiwary also criticised Biswas. After announcing that he was quitting the TMC, Tiwary said that Biswas did not know the "A, B, C, D of sports" and had blocked the state's sports policy during his tenure.

TMC were ousted from Bengal after a 15-year rule. BJP came to the power in Bengal for the first time after sweeping the polls with 207 seats.

French Open: Aryna Sabalenka threatens to boycott Grand Slam over prize money dispute

New Delhi. (Agency)
World No.1 Aryna Sabalenka has threatened to boycott the French Open if prize money is not increased, warning that multiple players could pull out of the claycourt Grand Slam if their demand for a 22 per cent hike is not met this year.

The world number one's remarks have intensified an ongoing dispute between players and Roland Garros over prize money distribution, despite this year's tournament offering a 9.5 per cent increase to 61.7 million euros.

Several top players issued a statement earlier this week, pointing out that their share would still likely remain below 15 per cent of tournament revenue - well short of the 22 per cent they have demanded to align with payouts at combined ATP and WTA 1000 events.

Speaking at the Italian Open, Sabalenka made it clear that a boycott could become inevitable if talks fail.

"I think at some point we will boycott it, yeah. I feel like that's going to be the only way to fight for our rights," Sabalenka said. "Let's see how far we can get. If it's going to take players for a boycott... some of the things, I feel like it's really unfair to the players."

Despite the strong stance, Sabalenka expressed hope that negotiations would lead to a resolution acceptable to both sides. "I just really hope that all of the negotiation that we are having, we at some point are going to get to the right decision, to the conclusion that everyone will be happy with," she added.

World number four Coco Gauff backed the possibility of a boycott, stressing the need for collective action among players. "I could 100% see players boycotting a Grand Slam if they took the decision together as one," Gauff said. "It's not about me. It's about the future of our sport and also the current players who aren't getting as much benefits."

Gauff also highlighted the financial struggles of lower-ranked players, noting that many ranked between 50 and 200 continue to live paycheck to paycheck despite the sport's growing revenues. She suggested that forming a players' union could be key to achieving long-term change, pointing to recent progress made by the Women's National Basketball Association Players Association.

Akeal Hosein forgotten no more: At CSK, the Powerplay King has found his kingdom

IPL 2026, DC vs CSK: Akeal Hosein

spent years being world-class

and ignored by IPL franchises.

Chennai Super Kings took the

punt. Now, the Powerplay King is

making them look very, very

smart.

New Delhi. (Agency)

There is a peculiar cruelty in being world-class and overlooked at the same time. For years, Akeal Hosein has been precisely that.

A left-arm spinner widely regarded as one of the finest powerplay bowlers in T20 cricket, a man who reached the pinnacle of T20I rankings, yet somehow remained a peripheral figure in the Indian Premier League, the sport's grandest stage. One solitary season with Sunrisers Hyderabad in

2023. That was all IPL teams collectively deemed sufficient for a bowler of his calibre. Chennai Super Kings thought differently. When they traded Ravindra Jadeja to Rajasthan Royals ahead of IPL 2026, they moved with purpose to fill the void, and the man they backed was the 33-year-old Trinidadian. It has proven to be one of the shrewdest punts of the season.

Seven wickets in five matches. An economy rate of 7.24. A four-wicket demolition of Mumbai Indians. A crucial breakthrough against the tournament's leading run-scorer in Delhi on Tuesday, May 5. Numbers, yes. But they only begin to tell the story of what Hosein has brought to CSK this season.

BRAVERY IN THE POWERPLAY

The powerplay is cricket's most unforgiving arena for a spinner. Two fielders permitted outside the 30-yard circle. Batters liberated, eager to plunder. For most spinners, it is a theatre of anxiety. For Hosein, it is home.

What separates him from the ordinary, though, is not just skill. It is his mindset. He speaks of bravery the way a seasoned campaigner



speaks of hard-won wisdom.

"I think it's about being brave," Hosein said after CSK's eight-wicket win over Delhi Capitals on Tuesday. "One thing I keep saying when I keep getting asked this question is Dwayne Bravo said as bowlers, and spinners in particular, that you are going to get hit in the powerplay. It's about getting that fear factor out of the game."

It's just about working with the two fielders outside the powerplay. It's about being brave, and I am a big believer in homework. "That philosophy, courage married to preparation, is the cornerstone of everything Hosein does. He does not walk to his bowling mark hoping

for the best. He arrives having already done the work, having already mapped the batter, ready to read the pitch, quickly deciding what he is going to ask the surface to do for him. Against Delhi Capitals on Tuesday at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, that preparation was on full display. The pitch was offering assistance to spinners, and Hosein had assessed that early. KL Rahul, the IPL 2026 season's leading run-scorer with over 400 runs to his name, was at the crease — a player widely acknowledged as one of the finest players of spin in world cricket. The challenge could not have been more pronounced.

But Hosein had a plan. "The basic knowledge that I had when coming to this match is that it is not going to bounce that much," he explained. "So, bowling to shorter guys, your lengths change totally. For me, after seeing the pitch, I wanted to spin it as much as possible." He spun it. Rahul, who looked to hit it with the spin and clear long-off, skied one to mid-off instead. Delhi Capitals were 36 for 2 after 5.1 overs, their powerplay.

Home (dis)advantage? DC rue unpredictable pitches in Delhi after 4 losses in 5 games



New Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi Capitals' woes continued at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi after the team lost its fourth home game of the Indian Premier League 2026 season. DC have now played five home games this season, out of which they have lost four.

Apart from their win in their first home game of the season against Mumbai Indians, DC have lost every single match at Kotla, which has compounded their woes this season. In the four matches that they have lost, apart from the Gujarat Titans game, DC have been blown away in almost all of them.

DC AT HOME: 5 GAMES, 4 LOSSES

In the day game against Punjab Kings, on a flat deck, DC lost after scoring 264 runs - one of the highest totals in the history of the IPL. In the next match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, DC were given a slightly seaming wicket, which saw them fold for just 75 runs.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood ran riot in that game, marking a horrible defeat for DC on April 27. On Tuesday, when they returned to Kotla once again, DC won the toss and opted to bat first, hoping that the pitch would slow down in the second innings. The reality turned out to be the opposite, as Sanju Samson anchored Chennai Super Kings to an eight-wicket win.

Delhi Capitals head coach Hemang Badani lamented in the post-match press conference that they have not been able to read the pitches this season. Badani said that DC were not in control of the surfaces, as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) monitors wickets to ensure neutrality in the IPL.

"As much as I would like to think that we are in control of the surfaces that we would like to play on, there is a clear mandate from the BCCI. They are the ones who set guidelines to ensure neutrality, that there is no local advantage. You play what is presented to you. Yes, it has been a little up and down to understand what we are going to get. One game was 75, another was 265, then there was a surface that spun," Badani said after the match.

How can DC be a serious cricket team? Ex-India star slams selections after CSK loss

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India cricketer Dodda Ganesh has questioned the seriousness of Delhi Capitals after their latest IPL 2026 defeat, slamming the side's team selections and tactical decisions following the loss to Chennai Super Kings. With DC's playoff hopes beginning to wobble badly, Ganesh openly criticised the franchise for ignoring what he felt were obvious calls. Delhi once again struggled for clarity in both selection and execution during their eight-wicket defeat at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. Reacting to the loss, Ganesh questioned DC's continued backing of Pathum Nissanka at the top while experienced finisher David Miller remained on the bench despite the side's middle-order issues.



"There's so much Indian batting talent available in Delhi's camp. They can so easily open with Shaw/Rana/Porel along with KL, & have Miller in the middle order. Instead, the geniuses play Nissanka at the top & drop Miller. Tell me, how can this be a serious cricket team?" Ganesh posted on X.

The frustration around Delhi's tactics has

been building for a while now. Against CSK, it surfaced again through another underwhelming batting effort, uncertain combinations and defensive bowling plans during a chase that never really felt out of Chennai's control.

DC'S TACTICAL DISASTERS VS CSK

The first gamble arrived at the toss when Axar Patel chose to bat first despite rain around Delhi and improving chasing conditions under lights. DC believed the surface would slow down later, but instead ended up posting only 156 on a ground where 170-plus has almost become the safety score. The batting order again created confusion. Pathum Nissanka retained his place after his match-winning 62 against Rajasthan Royals, but the inconsistency returned quickly.

Arsenal through to Champions League final as Arteta hails 'historic' Emirates night

London. (Agency)

Arsenal are heading back to the UEFA Champions League final for the first time since 2006. On a loud, emotional night at the Emirates, Mikel Arteta's side edged past Atletico Madrid 1-0 to seal a 2-1 aggregate win and move one step away from European glory.

Bukayo Saka's first-half strike proved enough to send Arsenal into only the second Champions League final in the club's history. Speaking after the match, Mikel Arteta said his side had "made history" and praised both the players and supporters for the atmosphere on the night. "It was an incredible night. We made history again together and I cannot be happier and prouder for everybody that's involved in this football club," Arteta said. The supporters were with us for every ball. They made it special and unique, and I have never felt it like that in this stadium. "We knew how much it

meant to everybody, we put everything on the line, the boys did an incredible job and after 20 years, and the second time in our history, we are back in the Champions League final."



The full-time whistle brought a different kind of feeling around the Emirates. Fans stayed back in the stands, players soaked it all in, and for a club that has spent years trying to get back among Europe's elite, this felt like one of those nights people will talk about for a long time.

The reward is a final in Budapest on May 30 against either Paris Saint-Germain or Bayern Munich. More importantly, Arsenal now have a shot at winning the one trophy that has always escaped them.

HOW ARSENAL DEFEATED ATLETICO IN UCL SEMI-FINAL

This match was exactly what most expected from an Atletico semi-final. Tight spaces, plenty of fouls, long pauses, and very little room to breathe. After the 1-1 draw in Madrid, Arsenal knew patience would matter as much as attacking quality. Atletico had their moments, especially in the second half, but Arsenal never really lost control of the tie.

The big moment arrived just before halftime. Leandro Trossard forced Jan Oblak into a save with a low effort, but the rebound fell straight to Bukayo Saka, who reacted quickest to smash home from close range and send the Emirates wild.

Momentum is key: PBKS, SRH look to peak in last leg of group-stage games

IPL 2026: Punjab Kings travel to

Hyderabad to play their treverse

fixture against the SRH. Both the

teams will be searching for

momentum as they make a final

charge to secure the playoffs

places.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Shreyas Iyer's Punjab Kings will be desperate to break their two-match losing streak when they face SunRisers Hyderabad on Wednesday, May 6. Punjab, who were unbeaten till the halfway mark of the Indian Premier League 2026 season, have suddenly

lost momentum, suffering back-to-back defeats. They will hope that this dip does not spiral into a mini-crisis ahead of the playoffs. Punjab and SRH are two of the frontrunners for playoff spots this season. Punjab currently sit comfortably with 13 points from nine games, while SRH are in third place with 12 points from 10 matches. A poor run of form at this stage could complicate matters for both teams, who will be keen to peak at the business end of the tournament.

Like Punjab, SRH's winning streak was also snapped by Kolkata Knight Riders in their previous game. The Hyderabad side faltered with the bat and were bowled out for 165 at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium. They will hope to brush that aside as an off day and return to their explosive batting ways.

The first meeting between the two sides earlier this season produced a thriller. SRH got off to



a blazing start in Mullanpur, racing to 120 in just eight overs. Punjab, however, fought back to restrict them to 219/6 in 20 overs.

What followed was an emphatic chase, with Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh putting on a 99-run opening stand. After the openers laid the platform, Iyer took charge with a fluent 69* off 33 balls, sealing the chase with seven balls to spare.

Iyer was named Player of the Match for his captaincy, particularly his decision to hand

the ball to part-timer Shashank Singh, who dismissed both Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma to trigger a crucial turnaround.

Shashank's fortunes have dipped since, and he was eventually dropped after a string of poor fielding efforts. However, the SRH clash could present an opportunity for a return, with the finisher likely to have worked through his struggles in training under head coach Ricky Ponting. Punjab assistant coach Brad Haddin emphasised the importance of their aggressive opening pair heading into the contest. "They've been one of the reasons we're sitting at the top of the competition. They're exciting, they're talented, but the one thing they've given us is a no-fear approach at the top of the order. And you have to play that role with the way the game's going, especially in this tournament. So there's no real concern with any of the batters at the top, to be honest," Haddin said ahead of the game.

Janhvi Kapoor

To Marry BF Shikhar Pahariya In Jamnagar This Year? Boney Kapoor Reacts

Janhvi Kapoor often makes headlines due to her rumored relationship with Shikhar Pahariya. The couple, reportedly dating for several years, has never shied away from showing affection in public. From temple visits to cozy dinners and glamorous events, they are often seen together, with their social media posts further fueling speculation about their relationship. Recently, rumours surfaced suggesting that Janhvi and Shikhar were planning to marry later this year in Jamnagar. However, Janhvi's father, Boney Kapoor, has shut down the rumours, confirming there's no truth to them.

Janhvi Kapoor And Shikhar Pahariya to Marry Soon?

Recently, rumours surfaced suggesting that Janhvi and Shikhar might be planning to get married later this year, possibly between September and October. A few reports on the Internet claimed that a traditional wedding was on the cards in Jamnagar. The speculations quickly spread across entertainment portals and social media, sparking excitement among their fans. However, Janhvi's father, Boney Kapoor, shut down these rumors. In an interview with ETimes, he firmly stated, "No, this is not true," putting an end to the wedding buzz for now.

Janhvi had subtly confirmed her relationship with Shikhar when she wore a customized 'Shiku' necklace, a nickname for

Shikhar, during the screening of Maidaan in 2024. The gesture immediately caught the attention of fans and was seen as her quiet way of acknowledging the relationship without making a formal announcement.

Janhvi Kapoor And Shikhar Pahariya's Relationship

Rumours about their relationship first emerged in 2016, however, neither party confirmed nor denied them back then. Reports suggest the couple briefly parted ways after Janhvi's Bollywood debut in 2018, something she hinted at on Koffee with Karan. However, they reportedly rekindled their romance in 2022 and have been inseparable since, regularly appearing together in public. Shikhar is also known to share a close relationship with Janhvi's family and is often seen at their gatherings and celebrations.

Janhvi Kapoor's Upcoming Film

Meanwhile, on the professional front, Janhvi will next be seen in Peddi, opposite Ram Charan. After several changes in release plans, the film is now scheduled to arrive in cinemas on June 4, 2026. She was last seen in Shashank Khaitan's Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari, co-starring Varun Dhawan. The film released in theatres in October last year.



Huma Qureshi

Rachit Singh Set To Marry Later This Year, Wedding Prep Begins

Looks like wedding bells might be on the way for Huma Qureshi and this time, it's not just rumours doing the rounds. Something real seems to be quietly coming together behind the scenes. As per a report by Hindustan Times, Huma and her partner Rachit Singh are planning to get married later this year. The couple, who have mostly kept their relationship private, have already begun preparations for their big day. A source told Hindustan Times, "They are planning an October end or November wedding as of now. The preparations have begun."

The celebrations are expected to reflect Huma's personal style – simple, warm, and close-knit. Sharing more details, the source added, "Knowing Huma she will have a good intimate wedding party and then throw a reception for the industry. May be not a lavish wedding but something that only her close friends and family will attend, followed by a big reception. As of now its most probably looking like Mumbai."

Speculation about their relationship had been growing for a while. The two were spotted together at a screening of Thamma and later attended Sonakshi Sinha's wedding, which caught attention. In September 2025, Hindustan Times had earlier reported that the

couple got engaged in the US.

Speaking about the proposal, a source had shared, "Huma and Rachit have been going strong for a while as a couple and on Sunday, he proposed to her in an intimate proposal and she said yes. It was a close-knit affair that took place in the US. They are yet to decide when they want to



make it official by announcing it publicly."

The two were also recently seen travelling together from the Mumbai airport, one of the rare times they've been spotted publicly as a couple. Rachit Singh, originally from Varanasi, moved to New Delhi in 2012 and briefly explored modelling before shifting to Mumbai in 2016 to pursue a career in entertainment, according to his IMDb profile.

Kangana Ranaut Slams Fake News About Marrying Rahul Gandhi: 'No Dignity For Women Even In Politics'



Kangana Ranaut is quite vocal about her thoughts, and she is someone who knows how to shut trolls. The actress has called out a meme page for making derogatory remarks about her and put the record straight that she isn't someone who will take such remarks as jokes. Following Raghav Chadha joining the BJP, all sorts of conversations are happening on social media, and a meme page has now put out a post featuring a fake comment by Kangana Ranaut that reads, "Agar Rahul Gandhi BJP join karenge toh main unse shaadi karne ke liye tayar hoon." This post caught Kangana's attention, and she isn't ready to let it go.

Kangana reshared this meme on her Instagram story and wrote, "How pathetic is this fake news. No dignity for women even in politics. Shame on those who are spreading this fake news." This clarification came after several reports claimed that the 40-year-old actress had supposedly said she would marry the Congress leader if he decided to join the BJP.

Kangana Ranaut on the work front

The actress is currently busy working on the sequel to her hit film Queen. Vikas Bahl, who is handling writing, direction, and co-production duties, has reportedly planned a tightly packed three-month schedule from start to finish. Meanwhile, Kangana is also juggling her responsibilities as a Member of Parliament from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, alongside the shoot.

According to Mid-Day, "In the last 10 days, Kangana has been flying in and out of the city to attend Parliament sessions. There have been times when she went to Delhi for the day, came back at night, and shot till the next morning."

What we know about the Queen sequel so far

The report further states that the second part is not a direct continuation of the original, but it will retain its core themes of self-discovery and self-reliance. "This time too, Rani is a small-town woman from North India, but her look is entirely different."

Deepika Padukone Will Not Be Attending MET Gala 2026; Here's Why



Deepika Padukone, currently expecting her second child with husband Ranveer Singh, has been balancing her personal and professional life with grace. The actress has been busy shooting for King alongside Shah Rukh Khan in Cape Town, and several glimpses from the sets recently went viral on social media. The much-loved duo's reunion on screen has sparked excitement, but it's her dedication to her work, even during her second pregnancy, that's truly shining through. With the MET Gala 2026 just around the corner, many are wondering—will Deepika make an appearance this year?

Deepika Padukone To Skip MET Gala 2026

Now as per reports, sources have clarified that Deepika Padukone will not be attending the Met Gala this year. According to the source, "Her priority has always been and continues to be films. With King slated to release at the end of this year and Raaka scheduled to release next year, her priority at the moment is to complete the shoot for these two films." Yes, the audience across the globe will miss her serving some iconic looks this year, but with two of the biggest films of the country in production right now, Deepika is busy fulfilling her professional commitments.

A few days ago, reports revealed that Deepika plays a significant role in Atlee's film Raaka and she already has wrapped the shooting sequences, which includes a grand entrance and a major action sequence alongside Allu Arjun. Meanwhile, leaked glimpses from the sets of King, featuring Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone, have further amplified anticipation among fans.

The Met Gala 2026 is set to take place on May 5 (IST) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. This year's theme is "Fashion Is Art," and a diverse mix of global celebrities from film, music, fashion, and sports are set to attend the prestigious event.

High-profile attendees and co-chairs for the event include Beyoncé, Nicole Kidman, Venus Williams, and Anna Wintour. Meanwhile, stars like Rihanna, Kim Kardashian, Bad Bunny, and Kendall Jenner are also anticipated to grace the red carpet. From India, filmmaker Karan Johar will reportedly make his MET Gala debut this year. According to industry buzz, the filmmaker will attend fashion's biggest night alongside regular Met Gala attendeee Natasha Poonawalla and close friend, couturier Manish Malhotra.

NEWS BOX

UK man creates Tinder profile of ex-lover, entices men to rape her; 18 show up

World. (Agency)

A man who created a fake Tinder profile in his ex-girlfriend's name and lured men to break into her home and rape her has been found guilty of stalking. According to Cheshire Police, at least 18 men turned up at the woman's address believing they had been invited through the app for "rape fantasies." The accused, Asad Hussain, 36, from Cheadle, was convicted after a nine-day trial at Chester Crown Court. Prosecutors said he used a fake identity to manipulate both the victim and unsuspecting men. He is due to be sentenced in June.

The court heard Hussain created multiple bogus Tinder accounts in July 2024, shortly after his relationship with the victim ended. Using these accounts, he posed as the woman and sent explicit messages to men claiming she wanted to engage in violent sexual acts. On one night alone, four arrived in quick succession, each describing nearly identical exchanges with what they thought was the victim's profile. The messages said she wanted to be "roughed up" and told men that if she resisted, it meant she wanted it more.

In one incident, a man forced the front door, shattering a glass panel, before showing the victim messages instructing him to give the door a "shove". On another occasion, a man entered the house while the victim was away, leaving her teenage daughter alone upstairs.

The relationship between Hussain and the victim began in April 2024, when he contacted her under the alias "Mick Renney". According to prosecutors, his behaviour quickly became controlling. On one occasion, he rang her doorbell for two hours after learning a male friend was visiting, leaving only when police were called. The relationship ended weeks later after he accessed her phone without permission and confronted her over messages.

Inside the cruise ship at the center of a rare hantavirus outbreak

World. (Agency)

Footage obtained by The Associated Press of a cruise ship at the center of a rare-virus outbreak shows deserted decks and gathering areas, medical teams in protective gear, and a still landscape ahead as the vessel and its nearly 150 passengers and crew waited another day for direction and help off the coast of West Africa.

Three passengers have died and at least four people are sick in what health officials say is an outbreak of hantavirus, which usually spreads by inhaling contaminated rodent droppings. The World Health Organization said passengers are isolating in their cabins.

The company that operates the vessel — currently anchored in the Atlantic off Cape Verde — said it plans to move to Spain's Canary Islands once three people have been medically evacuated and put on specially equipped planes to the Netherlands. Earlier Tuesday, Spanish officials said that they were monitoring the situation and hadn't made a decision.

The MV Hondius, a Dutch ship on a weekslong polar cruise, departed April 1 from Argentina for Antarctica and several isolated islands in the South Atlantic.

"Our days have been close to normal, just waiting for authorities to find a solution," passenger Qasem Elhato, 31 — who sent AP the video footage — said via WhatsApp. "But morale on the ship is high and we're keeping ourselves busy with reading, watching movies, having hot drinks and that kind of things."

Teen shooter kills two at Brazil school

World. (Agency)

A teenage boy shot dead two staff members and injured two other people, including a student, at a school in northeast Brazil on Tuesday, prompting panicked students to try to escape over a wall, authorities and a witness said.

A 13-year-old boy was arrested over the attack at Sao Jose Institute in Rio Branco, the capital of Acre state, the local government said in a statement. Eduardo Rodrigues Cavalcante, who works as a receptionist at a hotel adjacent to the school, told AFP that when the shooting began, some students tried to jump over a wall separating the school from the hotel.

"The wall is six meters high, and only one person managed to jump over and take refuge here in the hotel. The other people were left on the school roof trying to escape," the 19-year-old receptionist said, adding that he heard "gunshots and a lot of screaming."

Images released by a local media outlet showed a woman being evacuated on a stretcher and people crying and hugging each other outside the school. It was not yet clear whether the attacker was a current or former pupil at the school. His legal guardian, who owned the firearm allegedly used in the attack, was also arrested, authorities said.

Acre police launched an investigation into the attack. "In the face of this tragedy, the state expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the victims, the school community of the Sao Jose Institute, and all education professionals affected by this event," the state government said. It added that classes had been suspended for three days at all schools in the state and that psychological support teams had been mobilized to offer assistance to students and teachers.

Trump shows off signature 'YMCA' dance moves with students at White House

Donald Trump showed students his signature dance on the White

House South Lawn during a youth fitness event. The moment came as he announced the return of the Presidential Fitness Test and renewed his push on fitness and nutrition.

World. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump briefly turned dance instructor on the White House South Lawn on Monday, showing students his trademark "Trump dance" during an event focused on youth fitness and sports. A short video shared by the official White House account on X captured Trump

performing the familiar arm-pumping routine, often seen at his campaign rallies, as the Village People's hit song "YMCA" played in the background.

The clip showed Trump smiling and gesturing through the dance moves while students joined in before he returned to the formal proceedings.

The moment came during an event where Trump announced the revival of the Presidential Fitness Test and signed a memorandum restoring the long-running school fitness programme that had been phased out during former president Barack Obama's administration.

Addressing students and athletes gathered at the White House, Trump underscored the importance of physical fitness and sports. "We're thrilled to have so many young athletes here at the White House," Trump said. "It is indeed a beautiful day to celebrate America's

athletic traditions and champions and physical fitness."

The president also joked about his own exercise habits, saying, "I work out so much, like about one minute a day max



if I'm lucky."

RETURN OF PRESIDENTIAL FITNESS TEST

The Presidential Fitness Test, first introduced in 1956, was replaced in 2012 with a programme focused more

US Air Force's 'flying gas station' goes missing over Hormuz after emergency alert

World. (Agency)

A US Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker, often referred to as a "flying gas station" for its aerial refuelling capabilities, reportedly lost signal while flying over the Gulf region near the Strait of Hormuz after broadcasting a general emergency alert. Flight-tracking systems showed the Boeing aircraft transmitting a 7700 squawk code, the international signal for a general emergency, before it disappeared from public radar near Qatar. According to reports, the aircraft was believed to be heading towards a military base at the time.

The incident comes amid heightened tensions between the US and Iran despite the ceasefire following the recent West Asian conflict.

Reports said the aircraft disappeared

over the Strait of Hormuz after making a descent and altering course towards Qatar. It was reportedly conducting refuelling operations over the Gulf when it transmitted the emergency transponder code 7700,



which can be triggered by a range of situations, including a mechanical failure, onboard fire, medical emergency or an external threat. Roughly an hour after the emergency code was detected on

flight-tracking platforms, the aircraft's transponder signal was lost, GulfNews reported.

It was initially unclear how many crew members were on board. According to US Air Force data, the aircraft is typically operated by a single crew member and features a cargo deck that can also accommodate passengers. Though going off the transponder signal does not automatically confirm a crash, the combination of a 7700 emergency squawk code followed by the aircraft disappearing from radar has raised the possibility of a serious incident, reports suggest.

However, there have been no confirmed reports of debris, distress calls, rescue operations, or maritime alerts in the area. Since the beginning of the West Asia conflict on February 28, Iran has reportedly downed multiple US military aircraft in the region in targeted attacks.

Trump pauses Project Freedom as Iran talks advance, blockade stays

World. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump said the United States will temporarily pause "Project Freedom," an initiative aimed at ensuring the movement of ships through the Strait of Hormuz, as diplomatic efforts with Iran show progress.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said the decision followed requests from Pakistan and other countries and came amid what he described as "tremendous military success" during the US campaign against Iran.

"Based on the request of Pakistan and other Countries, and the tremendous Military Success that we have had we have mutually agreed" to pause



the operation, Trump wrote.

He added that negotiations with Iranian representatives have moved closer to a "Complete and Final Agreement," saying "Great Progress has been made toward" a deal.

Despite the pause in maritime

operations, Trump made it clear that pressure on Iran would continue. "While the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom will be paused for a short period of time," he said.

According to Trump, the temporary halt is aimed at testing the viability of diplomacy. The move is "to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalised and signed," he said.

WHAT IS PROJECT FREEDOM?

"Project Freedom" is a maritime initiative announced by US President Donald Trump to safely escort foreign ships stranded in the Strait of Hormuz amid rising regional tensions.

Spain to dock hantavirus-hit MV Hondius in Canary Islands



World. (Agency)

A luxury cruise ship that has been hit by an outbreak of the deadly hantavirus was preparing to travel from Cape Verde towards Europe on Wednesday after the Spanish government gave permission for it to dock in the Canary Islands. The Spanish Health Ministry said it had been asked by the World Health Organisation and the European Union to take the MV Hondius "in accordance with international law and humanitarian principles". It said it would also on Tuesday evening receive a medical flight carrying the ship's doctor, a Dutch national who it said was gravely ill, following a formal request from the Dutch government.

A Dutch couple and a German national have died since the outbreak manifested in early April, while a British national was evacuated from the ship and is in intensive care in South Africa, officials said. Two crew members require urgent medical care, the Dutch-flagged MV Hondius ship's operator, Oceanwide Expeditions, said. Another person on board with a suspected case has only reported a mild fever.

Cape Verde was meant to be the ship's final destination but the nation off West Africa has not allowed the vessel to put passengers ashore.

Once in the Canary Islands, at a port yet to be determined, the Spanish health ministry said crew and passengers would be examined, treated and repatriated to their respective countries, in coordination with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the WHO.

All necessary safety measures would be taken, the health ministry said, with medical care and transportation in special facilities and vehicles to avoid contact with the local population and protect health workers. "The World Health Organization has explained that Cape Verde is unable to carry out this operation," the statement added.

US to shut Consulate in Peshawar citing personnel's safety, shift ops to Islamabad

Diplomatic engagement with

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will shift

to the US Embassy in Islamabad

as Washington cites staff safety

and resource management.

World. (Agency)

The US has announced a phased closure of its Consulate in Pakistan's Peshawar with its responsibilities set to be transferred to the US Embassy in the south Asian country's capital city of Islamabad. The move, confirmed by the State Department, is being undertaken with a focus on ensuring the safety of diplomatic personnel and improving resource efficiency, while maintaining Washington's engagement in the region.

In an official communication, the Office of the Spokesperson said, "The US Department of State is announcing the phased closure of the US Consulate General in Peshawar. Responsibility for diplomatic engagement with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will transfer to the US Embassy in Islamabad." The statement further emphasised that "This decision reflects our commitment to the safety of our diplomatic personnel and efficient resource management".

Despite the closure of its physical presence in Peshawar, the US underlined that its broader policy priorities in Pakistan remain unchanged.

"While our physical presence in Peshawar is changing, the Administration's policy priorities in Pakistan remain steadfast," the statement noted. It added that

Washington would continue to engage with the region to "foster economic ties, promote regional security, and advance the interests of the American people".



The State Department also reiterated its commitment to maintaining diplomatic relations through its remaining missions.

The Department, through the US Mission to Pakistan, remains dedicated to

advancing the US-Pakistan relationship through our remaining diplomatic posts in Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore," it said. The decision follows earlier indications reported in March this year that the consulate would be permanently shut.

At the time, the State Department had informed Congress of its intent, noting that the closure could save approximately USD 7.5 million annually without compromising US strategic interests in Pakistan.

The move had been under review for over a year as part of a broader downsizing effort initiated during the Trump administration, which targeted several federal agencies. The Peshawar consulate, located near the Afghan border, has historically played a significant role in US operations related to Afghanistan.