



PM Modi To Visit Hyderabad Today, First Trip Since 2024 Poll Victory

During the visit, PM Modi will inaugurate and lay foundation stones for development projects collectively valued at around Rs 7,823 crore.

under the Hyderabad-Nagpur Industrial Corridor. PM Modi will also inaugurate PM MITRA Kakatiya Mega Textile Park in Warangal. The textile park, being developed at a cost of nearly Rs 1,695 crore, is projected to attract investments exceeding Rs 6,000 crore and generate large-scale employment in the textile



and apparel sector. The Prime Minister is also expected to inaugurate railway and petroleum infrastructure projects, including a modern petroleum storage and distribution terminal in Hyderabad and the third railway line between Kazipet and Vijayawada, built at an estimated Rs 1,243 crore. National

highway projects worth about Rs 3,175 crore in Mahabubnagar district will also be launched virtually.

He will also travel to HITEC City to inaugurate Sindhu Hospital and interact with medical professionals before heading to the Parade Grounds in Secunderabad, where he will address a public meeting organised by Telangana BJP.

The BJP's Telangana has termed the visit a major political show of strength, with it mobilising nearly two lakh people, particularly from Hyderabad and the undivided Ranga Reddy districts.

The state BJP has arranged four special trains from Kaganagar, Khammam, Mahabubnagar and Peddapalli, besides booking around 3,000 RTC buses. The Parade Grounds meeting is also being viewed as an early launchpad for the BJP's campaign for the upcoming Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections.

Ahead of the PM's visit, Telangana authorities and the police department have intensified security and imposed restrictions on drones, paragliders and microlight aircraft across key areas, including Begumpet, Madhapur and Secunderabad.

Lieutenant General NS Raja Subramani named new Chief of Defence Staff

New Delhi.(Agency)

Lieutenant General NS Raja Subramani (Retd) has been appointed the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). He will also function as Secretary of the Department of Military Affairs, with effect from the date of assumption of charge. The former Army officer will replace General Anil Chauhan, who will be completing his tenure as CDS on May 30 this year. Lt Gen Subramani is presently serving as military adviser in the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). He retired from the Army as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS) on July 31 last year.



During his 39-year career in the Indian Army, he also served as the General Officer

Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Central Command. For his distinguished service, Lt Gen Subramani has been awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM), Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM), Sena Medal (SM) and Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM).

He was commissioned into the 8th Battalion of the Garhwal Rifles on December 14, 1985. Lt Gen Subramani has served across a wide spectrum of conflict and terrain profiles during his stint, spanning almost four decades, with the Army.

"He commanded 16 Garhwal Rifles in Counter-Insurgency in Assam as part of Operation Rhino, 168 Infantry Brigade in Jammu & Kashmir and 17 Mountain Division in the Central Sector during a challenging operational environment. He also has the distinction of having commanded 2 Corps, the premier strike Corps of the Indian Army on the Western Front," an official release from the Centre said.

"AI-Generated": AMMK's TTV Dhinakaran Trashes Letter Of Support To Vijay

The TVK had reached out to the AMMK for the support of its lone MLA-elect Kamaraj S to stitch together a working coalition.

Chennai.(Agency)

TTV Dhinakaran, whose party has refused to back Vijay's coalition in its efforts to form the first coalition government in Tamil Nadu, has claimed that the letter of support being flaunted by the TVK is forged. The AMMK General Secretary has also called the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by Vijay, "arrogant and hateful". Live Updates Struggling for majority, the TVK had earlier reached out to the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) for the support of its lone MLA-elect Kamaraj S to stitch together a working coalition. The party later claimed Kamaraj had agreed to support them and had also given a letter of support. A video was also circulated, in which, the TVK claimed Kamaraj was seen signing a document.



Dhinakaran trashed the video as "fake" and "AI-generated". "Who recorded that video? Vijay, Bussy Anand, KA Sengottaiyan or Venkataraman P or CTR Nirmal Kumar. Where was it recorded?" he questioned at a press conference this morning.

The senior politician said he was "shocked" to learn from news reports that the AMMK MLA had extended his support to Vijay. He also asked why the TVK didn't take Kamaraj to the governor if they had this support. The TVK is trying to create confusion. They must show the original letter by the MLA. It wasn't the original one," he added. Speaking to NDTV a day earlier, he had suggested that this could also be an attempt at horse-trading in a bid to reach majority. The AMMK and the IUML's refusal to support Vijay prevents the TVK from forming a coalition government in Tamil Nadu. All eyes are now on the VCK, the party led by Thol Thiruvallavan that has two MLAs and can help Vijay reach majority.

MAHANAGAR METRO | SPECIAL INVESTIGATION | BIG EXPOSE

Religion-Based "Blackmailing Nexus" Exposed: Shocking Conspiracy to Frame a Jain Monk Comes to Light

Pawan Makan (Group Editor)

Ahmedabad: A disturbing and sensational case from Idar has shaken the Jain community and raised serious questions about an alleged extortion network operating under the guise of religion. What initially appeared to be a controversy involving a Jain monk has now reportedly turned into a major revelation of a planned conspiracy and financial blackmail racket. According to reports and investigation details highlighted by Mahanagar Metro News, Jain monk Rajtilak Sagarji Maharaj was allegedly targeted in a fabricated "honeytrap" case. An FIR was reportedly lodged against him as part of a larger plan designed to pressure and defame him for financial gain. The case initially created panic and outrage within sections of the Jain community. However, during the course of the police investigation, several inconsistencies reportedly surfaced, leading investigators to question the authenticity of the allegations. A major turning point came when complainant Kiran Harshadbhai Doshi and his wife allegedly submitted an affidavit before authorities. According to the affidavit, the accusations and controversy were linked to monetary motives. Following the investigation and legal scrutiny, Rajtilak Sagarji Maharaj was reportedly found innocent. The exposé further claims that several individuals, including Jagat Parekh, Vikram Singhvi, Hardik Hudiya



and Vikram Bafna, have allegedly been linked to the conspiracy and extortion network. Sources claim the group targeted influential personalities within the Jain community in an attempt to extract large sums of money. After the publication of the investigation by Mahanagar Metro, the alleged syndicate reportedly began circulating false rumours against the media organisation in an attempt to damage its credibility and divert attention from the revelations. Responding strongly to these developments, Mahanagar Metro Group Editor Pawan Makan issued a stern statement, saying: "Mahanagar Metro has never bowed down and will never be compromised. Those who are using religion as a tool

for illegal extortion are now being exposed. Attempts to spread false propaganda against our organisation will not deter us. We will continue this campaign until every individual involved in this nexus is brought before the law." The revelations have reportedly triggered widespread anger and concern within the Jain community. Several community members have demanded a fair and strict legal investigation against all those allegedly involved in the conspiracy. Mahanagar Metro stated that it will continue to follow the developments closely and raise questions in the interest of truth, transparency and justice.

EAM Jaishankar holds talks with Trinidad PM, explore new ideas to boost bilateral cooperation

New Delhi.(Agency)

Jaishankar arrived in Port of Spain from Paramaribo on Friday, marking the final leg of his three-nation official tour in the Caribbean, following his engagement in Jamaica and

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held comprehensive discussions with Trinidad and Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, exploring new ideas and initiatives to develop bilateral cooperation between India and the dual-island nation. Jaishankar arrived in Port of Spain from Paramaribo on Friday, marking the final leg of his three-nation official tour in the Caribbean, following his engagement in Jamaica and Suriname. "Sat down this evening with PM Kamla Persad-Bissessar and her Cabinet colleagues for a comprehensive review of our bilateral ties," Jaishankar said in an 'X' post on Friday. "While delivering on the commitments made by PM Narendra Modi



initiatives in our bilateral cooperation," he said. Earlier in the day, Jaishankar joined Persad-Bissessar at an event for the distribution of Made-in-India laptops to schoolchildren,

commitment made by Prime Minister Modi last year. He concluded agreements on tourism, solarisation of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market) Affairs building, Quick Impact Projects and the establishment of an Ayurveda Chair.

Jaishankar said in another post that he was pleased to be back in the country. He was welcomed by the Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Sean Sobers. He also met the legendary cricketer of the West Indies, Brian Lara, in Trinidad and Tobago.

He shared a post on X with photos of himself alongside the former batter and wrote, "With the one and only @BrianLara". Earlier, Jaishankar concluded his high-level visits to Jamaica and Suriname between May

engagement with these countries.

In Jamaica, Jaishankar undertook the first-ever bilateral visit by an Indian External Affairs Minister, where he held wide-ranging talks with Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness and Foreign Minister Kamina Johnson Smith.

The discussions reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral ties and focused on expanding cooperation in health, infrastructure, digitalisation, agriculture, education, tourism, and capacity building.

During the visit, both sides signed three Memoranda of Understanding in the areas of health cooperation, solarisation of The Hugh Lawson Shearer Building, and broadcasting. They also reviewed progress in digital transformation, culture, sports, and digital

News box

Man held for shooting bank employee over brother's business rivalry in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Days after a Bank of America employee was shot at outside his house in Laxman Vihar, police arrested a 49-year-old man from Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly for allegedly attempting to murder him over a financial rivalry linked to the victim's brother.

Vivek was arrested on Thursday by the Palam Vihar Crime Branch unit for the firing on Wednesday.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Vivek and the victim's brother, Gaurav, had started a hotel business in Bareilly. "The business suffered losses, leaving Vivek in financial distress. With his brother's support, Gaurav remained financially stable. Vivek held resentment against Gaurav and targeted Rastogi," Sandeep Turan, police spokesperson, said.

According to police, the victim, Rajat Rastogi, had returned from work and stepped out of his car outside his house on Street No. 4 in Laxman Vihar around 6 pm when the attacker approached him from behind and opened fire. Police said the bullet missed Rastogi and struck a nearby wall, but gunpowder from the shot injured one of his eyes. The attacker fled the spot after abandoning a country-made pistol at the scene.

Hearing him scream, residents alerted the police control room. Teams from Sector 9-A police station, Sector 4 police post and the crime branch rushed to the spot. Rastogi was first taken to Kalyani Hospital in Sector 14 and later referred to the civil hospital for treatment.

During the initial investigation, police recovered the country-made pistol, one empty cartridge and two live cartridges from a nearby vacant plot.

Based on the victim's complaint, a case was registered under relevant sections of attempt to murder and under the Arms Act at Sector 9-A police station, and investigation was handed over to the crime branch.

Police said the accused is being interrogated, and further investigation into the case is underway.

Only 3% of UP's 2.6 lakh schools have classes I-XII: Niti report

Noida.(Agency)

Only 7,610 schools out of 2,62,358 institutions in the state, or 2.9%, offer uninterrupted education from primary to higher secondary classes, according to NITI Aayog's latest policy report on school education in India. The national average of integrated schools stands at 5.4%, placing UP far below the benchmark.

The report suggests that the fragmented school structure forces children to repeatedly change institutions at key academic stages, increasing transition gaps and dropout risks. "This fragmented progression structure compels students to change institutions multiple times, which contributes to transition inefficiencies and increases the risk of dropout," the report stated.

Rajasthan emerged as the strongest performer in integrated schooling, with nearly 26% of its schools offering uninterrupted classes I to XII. The state has 27,889 integrated schools, accounting for nearly 35% of all such schools in the country. Haryana followed with around 16% of schools providing integrated education, while Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra reported 7.7% and 7.2%, respectively. Bihar (1.40%) and West Bengal (0.91%) ranked below UP in terms of the share of integrated schools.

The report also points to a heavily skewed institutional structure in Uttar Pradesh, with a disproportionate concentration of schools at the foundational stage. Of the state's schools, nearly 1.35 lakh are primary-only institutions, while another 52,000 schools provide education only up to classes I to VIII. However, the number of institutions drops sharply at secondary and higher secondary stages, creating a bottleneck in student progression. UP has only 12,164 upper primary-to-higher secondary institutions catering to classes VI to XII. The state presents a mixed picture on school dropout rates across educational levels. At the primary level, the state has shown major improvement, bringing dropout rates down from 7.09% in 2014-15 to virtually 0% in 2024-25, placing it among the large states that have nearly achieved universal retention in early schooling. However, the trend reverses at the upper-primary stage, where dropout rates rose sharply from 0.52% to 3.0% over the decade, indicating growing challenges as students transition into higher classes. The report notes that this stage often sees increased attrition due to household responsibilities, transition pressures and lack of school continuity.

Man gets 20 years in jail for sexual assault of minor

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A teenager's four-year-long battle for justice ended in success after a special Pcoso court on Friday sentenced the man who sexually assaulted her to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and fined him Rs 1.05 lakh.

Judge Neeraj Gautam said the survivor was under 16 years at the time of the incident. "Therefore, the charges against the accused under Section 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) of IPC and Section 376(3) (raping a woman under the age of 16) of IPC, as well as Section 4(2) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, are proven beyond reasonable doubt," the court said. The court said that out of the total fine, Rs 1 lakh must be given to the minor to meet the expenses of her treatment and rehabilitation.

The survivor filed an FIR with the Nandgram police station on June 28, 2022, alleging the accused raped her a day before. She explained the one-day delay in filing the FIR — which could have proven detrimental to her case — was because her father was not present at the house when she went back home and she had to gather courage to talk to her aunt before she could file the complaint. Her mother died years ago.

Police registered a case under sections 323 and 376 of the IPC and, after collecting documents and evidence, included Section 3/4 of the Pcoso Act.

The accused denied the charges and preferred a trial. The survivor said she was on her way to a coaching class on the day of the incident when a group of four boys, two among them minors, stopped her. They dragged her to a nearby kuccha house, where the accused raped her while the three others stood guard.

After row with judge, lawyers go on strike in Gurgaon, Faridabad

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Court proceedings in Gurgaon and Faridabad came to a halt on Friday as lawyers struck work over a confrontation that has sharply escalated tensions between the Bar and the Bench.

The flashpoint was an April 29 hearing in Faridabad. The District Bar Association alleged that a judicial magistrate (first class) passed an arbitrary order and used derogatory language towards advocates present in court. It said even when bar office-bearers stepped in to calm the situation, the judicial officer allegedly continued to use insulting language and behaved disrespectfully towards lawyers.

But the court's version was starkly different. In an eight-page order, Deepak Yadav, civil judge (junior division), said the dispute began after the matter was adjourned because the trial record was requisitioned by the appellate court,

which he described as a routine legal procedure. According to the order, lawyers Sunil Singh and Ramesh Nagar, unhappy with the outcome, "started shouting in courtroom and making false, frivolous and baseless allegations against the court".

The judge recorded that the lawyers created a ruckus, disrupted proceedings and issued threats. "Advocate Ramesh Nagar misbehaved with the undersigned and threatened to teach a lesson," the order said. It added that the advocate's conduct was "very offensive, intimidating and aggressive" and that he "was about to hit undersigned in fit of anger".

The order further said the advocates had "not only disturbed the decorum of the court, but also created obstruction in administration of justice". It accused them of wilful disobedience, scandalous

and unruly behaviour, using foul language and attempting to influence or intimidate the court. The court referred the matter to the sessions judge for contempt proceedings and said a copy of

registration of an FIR, would be considered. The order indicated possible charges linked to obstruction of judicial proceedings, intimidation of a public servant sitting in court, use of abusive language, criminal intimidation and acts amounting to contempt of court.

As the Faridabad Bar struck work on Friday, the Gurgaon Bar joined in. Chandra Kant Sharma, president of the District Bar Association in Gurgaon, said the Faridabad Bar had passed a resolution on May 6 over the incident.

"In support of the said resolution and to stand in solidarity with members of the Faridabad Bar, the District Bar Association Gurgaon has resolved to observe 'no work day' as a mark of protest and support for the dignity of the legal fraternity," he added.



the order should also be sent to the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana in Chandigarh for appropriate legal action against advocates Ramesh Nagar, Sunil Singh and Rajesh Bainsla.

It added that other action, including

MCG sanitation workers warn of indefinite strike if Haryana govt does not address demands by May 10

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Even as Gurgaon stared at the face of a sanitation crisis, MCG's sanitation workers on Friday warned that their strike would be extended indefinitely if the Haryana govt fails to meet their demands by May 10. The workers, under the banner of Haryana Sarv Karamchhari Sangh, continued their protest for the eighth day at the old MCG office, raising slogans against the Haryana govt for not addressing their concerns.

The president of the union's Gurgaon unit said their demands included the reinstatement of 3,480 laid-off sanitation workers along with retrenched employees of other municipalities, councils and municipal corporations on the departmental roll; withdrawing of chargesheets and false cases filed during the recent Gurgaon strike and ending the service break of 26 sanitation worker leaders.

"In addition, payment of wages for the strike period of 2023 and resolution of 17 other demands must be looked into," he said. Meanwhile, garbage kept piling up along roadsides and in vacant plots across

the city. On Friday, waste was seen scattered in several areas, including Civil Lines, Baliawas, Palam Vihar, sectors 9, 9A, 10, 10A, 14 and 50, and Sadar Bazar.

Mayor Raj Rani Malhotra criticised the way the protesters were conducting their agitation. "The protesting workers are



disrupting sanitation works being carried out by outsourced staff too. On Thursday, the protesters punctured the tyres of waste collection vehicles taking garbage to waste collection points. Such behaviour is not acceptable," she said.

Local authorities will convene a meeting on Saturday to make alternative

arrangements for the city's sanitation work, she added.

Councillor of Ward 25 Anup Singh said, "The union members are now resorting to hooliganism by not allowing outsourced sanitation workers to work. We are closely monitoring the situation on the ground and will come up with an alternative plan so that the problem resolves."

Residents said that private sanitation agencies, which were already providing limited services, have further reduced operations citing a shortage of sanitation workers. "These sanitation agencies have now got an excuse for not working. They are telling us that sanitation workers are not available due to the strike. If the strike continues, we will soon have a sanitation emergency in the city," said a

resident of Sector 9A, Lalit Suraj Bhola. In 2024, Haryana govt had declared a solid-waste exigency in Gurgaon and directed MCG to fast-track clearance of waste piles along with legacy waste at Bandhwari. The city has been struggling with waste collection and management ever since.

MLA flags costlier ticket, but Noida flight fares identical to IGI across all routes

Noida.(Agency)

A day after bookings opened, ticket prices for flights to and from Noida airport came under early scrutiny after Jewar BJP MLA Dharendra Singh on Friday wrote letters to the PM and CM flagging a marked difference in fares with Delhi's IGI Airport.

The MLA highlighted that IndiGo's Noida to Lucknow tickets were priced at Rs 6,556 on June 15, but the fares from IGI on the same date are around Rs 3,394 and urged govt to reduce proposed user development and passenger charges so that flying in and out of Noida isn't costlier than IGI.

However, when TOI checked the airfares to the five cities — Lucknow, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Jammu and Amritsar — on which flight operations are to resume from Noida in June, it found that the ticket prices were at par with IGI on all dates till July 15. Only on June 15, the

airlines' Noida to Bengaluru airfare for June 15 was Rs 9,202, while the fare from IGI is Rs 8,910. The airlines' official website also did not show flight data between Noida and Lucknow routes post June 15. The airline said there would be daily flights on the route from July 1.

In an official statement, IndiGo had said that it would progressively introduce direct flights connecting Noida airport to more than 16 destinations, including key metro cities. The opening day will see flights to and from four cities, including Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Amritsar. From June 16, along with these daily flights, IndiGo will begin a daily service to and from Jammu. From July 1 onwards, it will add daily flights to Navi Mumbai, Srinagar, Jodhpur, Dharamsala, Bhopal, Dehradun, Bareilly, Kishanganj, Jaipur, Pantnagar and Chandigarh.

Pricing, sources said, is determined by a range of factors, not just user charges.

Last year, the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) approved an ad hoc UDF for Noida International Airport, allowing charges of Rs 490 and Rs 980 for departing domestic and international passengers, respectively, and Rs 210 and Rs 420 for arriving domestic and international passengers.

In comparison, at IGI, the UDF for domestic passengers is fixed at Rs 129 for flying out and Rs 56 for flying in. For international passengers, the UDF is Rs 650 for economy class and Rs 810 for business class on embarking or flying out, while on disembarking or flying in, economy travellers pay Rs 275 and business class travellers Rs 345.

Shailendra Bhatia, nodal officer of Noida International Airport Ltd (NIAL), said AERA is the competent authority to fix and revise the UDF. "Last year, they approved ad hoc UDF, based on that, the airline company started booking tickets.

Other opposition parties have failed to challenge BJP but Congress will beat them, Rahul says at Gurgaon Yatra

Noida.(Agency)

Gurgaon: Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused the BJP of "stealing elections" in multiple states and alleged that constitutional institutions, including the Election Commission and bureaucracy, were functioning under the governing party's control.

Addressing the Sadbhavna Yatra in Khandsa, Rahul claimed that elections in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal had been manipulated by BJP.

"They have built a system to steal elections," the Congress leader alleged. Referring to special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, he added, "Lakhs of names are deleted, lakhs of new names are added. Election Commission and the bureaucracy are under their control. By attacking the democratic system, they have attacked Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution. They have attacked democracy and the rights guaranteed to the people of this country."

Framing the political contest as an ideological battle, Rahul said, "This is a battle of ideologies. On one side is the



RSS ideology of hatred and division, and on the other is the Congress party's ideology of love."

He acknowledged opposition parties had failed to effectively challenge BJP, but said Congress would ultimately emerge victorious. "All other parties have failed to stand against BJP as their leaders fear

ED, CBI and income tax. In the end, only Congress will stand and Congress will defeat Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and BJP," he said.

Taking aim at the Modi govt's economic policies, Rahul accused the Centre of favouring a handful of industrialists while unemployment and economic

distress deepen. "The biggest issue in Haryana and across India is unemployment. Young people get degrees from colleges and universities, but they cannot get jobs. Small and medium industries collapsed under the current economic model. Youth are distracted with Instagram and social media instead of being given employment opportunities," he said.

Rahul criticised what he described as a "one-sided" US-India trade deal, alleging India had compromised key national interests under pressure from the United States. "India gave America everything and got nothing in return. India opened its agriculture sector to American farmers by reducing barriers on products such as pulses, cotton and oilseeds. American farmers have mechanised farms and thousands of acres of land, while Indian farmers are struggling on small farms. Indian farmers will be destroyed," he said.

Rahul also brought up the Epstein files, alleging material linked to "Prime Minister Modi" exists in those documents in the US, though he offered no evidence for it.

Bandipora tragedy: Three men drown in Jhelum while washing tents

Three men drowned in the Jhelum in Bandipora's Chandergir area while washing tents. Condolences poured in as leaders urged support for the bereaved families.

Srinagar. (Agency)

Three youths allegedly drowned in the Jhelum river in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district on Friday, officials said. Expressing grief, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families, according to an official. The incident took place at Chandergir area of the north Kashmir district when the three youths were washing tents in the river, officials said.

They said rescue efforts were launched immediately and following a search operation, the bodies of the trio were recovered.

The deceased have been identified as

Sohail Ahmad Dar (22), Adil Ahmad Dar (18), and Sameer Ahmad Dar (22) -- all residents of Chandergir area.

The bodies were shifted to a hospital for medico-legal formalities, they added.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic loss. "I am deeply pained by the loss of precious young lives in an unfortunate drowning incident in Bandipora. My thoughts and prayers are with the grieving family members. We stand in solidarity with the bereaved in this difficult hour," the LG said in a



condolence message. The chief minister also prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls, an official spokesperson said.

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah expressed profound

grief over the tragic incident. In his condolence message, Farooq Abdullah described the incident as "deeply distressing" and an irreparable loss to the affected families.

The NC chief also urged the administration to provide all possible support and assistance to the grieving families in this hour of immense sorrow. Sonawari MLA Hilal Akbar Lone visited the spot and took an assessment of the rescue operations, an NC spokesperson said. People's Democratic Party (PDP) said it was heartbroken by the incident. "Heartbroken beyond words by the

tragic drowning of three young, precious lives in Bandipora. The pain is unbearable. Our prayers and tears are with the grieving families in this crushing hour of loss. May Almighty Allah grant families the courage to bear this devastating loss," the party said on X.

Kashmir's chief preacher Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said he was deeply saddened.

"...Heartfelt condolences to their grieving families in this moment of grief and pain. May Allah grant the departed souls the highest place in Jannah and give strength and patience to their loved ones," the Mirwaiz said on X.

Short news

Machilipatnam struggles with mounting civic infra problems

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

The historic city of Machilipatnam is fast losing its charm, turning into a dust-ridden and unhygienic urban centre due to poor maintenance and civic neglect. Despite being a district headquarters, the city is struggling with encroached roads, uncollected garbage, plastic waste, and overflowing drains, with several areas resembling dumping yards. Basic sanitation remains a major concern, as the absence of adequate public toilets continues to inconvenience thousands of daily commuters, students, and visitors, reflecting glaring gaps in essential civic infrastructure. The situation is particularly alarming given that the city functions under the Machilipatnam Municipal Corporation, yet basic amenities remain grossly inadequate. The city, which had a population of around 1.69 lakh as per the 2011 Census, is now estimated to have grown to about 2.52 lakh. Though it was upgraded to a municipal corporation nearly a decade ago from a special grade municipality, the expected improvement in civic infrastructure is yet to be realised. Large stretches of roads across the town are encroached upon by informal businesses and street vendors, leaving little space for smooth movement of traffic and pedestrians.

Many roads are covered with dust, plastic waste, and uncollected garbage, making them resemble dumping yards rather than public thoroughfares.

Police 'laxity, inefficiency' led to mob lynching of GRP constable in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR. (Agency)

When the mob was lynching GRP constable Soumya Ranjan Swain in full public glare at Baliaanta on Thursday morning, the Commissionerate Police sent in just a three-member team in a PCR van to tackle the extremely violent situation, it has been reliably learnt. No senior police officer was at the spot for the next few hours.

The PCR van comprising a non-policeman driver, two home guards, including a woman and a constable, arrived at the spot after receiving a call on emergency response support system (ERSS) dial - 112.

It has now emerged that the cops had arranged the plank to which Swain was tied because he was 'beyond control.' Police sources say he may have been on some intoxicant or steroids.

The response of Commissionerate Police to the volatile situation has come under scrutiny as it provided highly inadequate security and could not prevent the brutal mob justice which has drawn widespread outrage across the country.

As per police, after the two women were allegedly assaulted near Ramachandrapur by Swain and his friend Om Prakash Rout, locals rushed to the formers' rescue. As a large mob gathered, Rout managed to escape but Swain continued to engage the locals. However, realising he was in trouble he also fled into a farm field by the roadside. The locals, though, caught up with him. Swain, who is also a fitness trainer and bodybuilder, was dragged around by the attackers and rained with blows, kicks and punches.

When this was happening barely 7 km from Baliaanta police station, all the IICs and ACPs of the city were attending the monthly crime meeting at DCP office. The local police station received the emergency call but failed to anticipate gravity of the situation.

Devotion and Faith: Bowing Before the 'Hare Ka Sahara' Lord Khatu Shyam < Dhani Media Group Editor Pawan Makan Visits Khatu Shyam Temple with Family, Prays for Universal Well-Being

Mahanagar Metro Beuro

A wave of devotion continues to flow at the sacred shrine of Khatu Shyam Temple, revered by millions as the divine "Hare Ka Sahara" — the savior of devotees in difficult times. In this spiritual atmosphere, Mr. Pawan Makan, Group Editor of the reputed Dhani Media Group, visited the holy shrine along with his family to seek blessings from Baba Khatu Shyam. Sought Blessings in a Divine Atmosphere During the visit, Pawan Makan and his family participated in the sacred aarti and performed traditional prayers with deep devotion. Bowing before

Baba's divine court, they prayed for happiness, prosperity, good health, and peace for their family. The entire temple premises echoed with chants of "Jai Shri Shyam," creating a spiritually uplifting atmosphere. Prayed for Welfare of Society Expressing his deep faith after the darshan, Mr. Makan said that Baba Khatu Shyam is truly the "support of the defeated and distressed." He added that his prayers were not limited to his family alone but were dedicated to the welfare and happiness of all humanity. "May



Baba remove the sufferings of every devotee and bless every household with peace and prosperity," he said. Khatu Dham Remains a Center of Faith Known for his simplicity and strong spiritual values, Pawan Makan's religious visit has also attracted attention on social media, where well-wishers have extended prayers and blessings for him and his family. The divine blessings received at the holy shrine are expected to bring renewed energy, positivity, and inspiration to both his personal and professional life.

UPRERA activates filing of online complaints against developers over 'unlawful demands'

Complaints can now be filed under Form-M through the official portal, to ensure transparency and consumer rights protection.



Lucknow. (Agency)

The Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (UPRERA) has activated the online complaint filing process on its portal where homebuyers and allottees can raise their issues against the promoters and developers like demand of unlawful transfer charges during the allotment transfer.

Complaints can now be filed under Form-M through the official portal, to ensure transparency and protection of consumer rights in the real estate sector, the realty regulator said in a statement.

The move follows the implementation of the 10th Amendment to the UPRERA General Regulations, 2019, under which the authority has prescribed the maximum permissible transfer and processing charges that promoters can levy during transfer of allotment or succession cases. Any demand beyond the prescribed limit can now be challenged directly before the authority through the e-court system.

Under the amended regulation, promoters are prohibited from executing any new or revised agreement for sale or lease with the assignee or successor-in-interest. Instead, only an endorsement is to be made in the existing agreement for sale/lease along with necessary updating of records by the promoter. The amendment provides significant relief in family transfer cases. In the event of the death of an allottee, the promoter cannot charge a processing fee exceeding Rs 1,000 if the successor-in-interest is a family member. The successor will be required to submit documents including the death certificate of the original allottee, succession certificate issued.

Andhra's first HOHO bus service generates Rs 29 lakh revenue

VISAKHAPATNAM. (Agency)

Andhra Pradesh's first official Hop-On Hop-Off (HOHO) city tour service, operated by the Greater Visakhapatnam Smart City Corporation Limited (GVSCCL), has generated approximately Rs 29,65,780 in revenue, including GST, from inception till May 7, 2026. The electric city tour initiative, launched to promote sustainable tourism in Vizag, currently operates two AC electric HOHO buses and one open rooftop electric bus. The two AC electric buses were inaugurated by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on August 29, 2025, while the open rooftop electric bus was introduced during the G20 Summit on



November 13, 2025. Since launch, the two AC buses have completed around 2,272 round trips, while the rooftop electric bus has completed nearly 703 trips as of May 7. Operated by GVSCCL, the HOHO service covers several major tourist attractions

across the city, including RK Beach, TU142 Aircraft Museum, Submarine Museum, Sea Harrier Museum, Visakha Museum, VMRDA Park, Kailasagiri Ropeway, Tanneti Park, Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, ISKCON Temple, TTD Temple, Rushikonda Beach, Thotlakonda, and Ramanaidu Film Studio.

Speaking with TNIE, GVSCCL officials said approximately 9,858 adults and 1,661 children have travelled on the buses so far, excluding bulk bookings under whole contract carriage arrangements. Officials added that the buses currently record an average daily occupancy of around 39 adults and seven children.

Maharashtra: Pilot Marathi test flags 15% of auto drivers unable to speak the language

Transport Minister says drive not aimed at threatening livelihoods

Mumbai. (Agency)

Less than 20 per cent of autorickshaw drivers inspected during a pilot drive to check Marathi proficiency were found unable to converse in the language, even as transport authorities confirmed to The Indian Express that all inspected drivers carried valid licences and badges.

The pilot was conducted in the Mira-Bhayandar region between April 2 and May 1, ahead of the state-wide inspection campaign that began on Maharashtra Day. The area RTO has around 12,000 registered autorickshaws. Of the 3,760 drivers checked, 587 could not demonstrate functional knowledge of Marathi, The Indian Express has learned.

The drive is now being used as the basis for the larger exercise across all 59 RTOs in Maharashtra, from May 1 to August 15. On completion, each RTO will submit its verification drive data to the state transport department. Transport Minister Pratap

Sarnaik, whose assembly constituency partly covers the Mira-Bhayandar region, said the objective was not to threaten drivers' livelihoods. "This drive was started as a pilot project in Mira-Bhayandar to understand the ground reality. We found that several drivers were unable to communicate in basic Marathi, though many expressed willingness to learn the language. The objective of the exercise is not to target anyone's livelihood, but to ensure that drivers operating public transport in Maharashtra are able to communicate with passengers and comply with the existing rules," he told.

The state-wide drive follows the Maharashtra government's decision to strictly implement Rule 24 of the Maharashtra Motor Vehicles Rules, amended in 2019, which requires public transport drivers to possess working knowledge of Marathi. This rule specified



that a metal badge authorising a person to drive a public service vehicle will be issued only if the applicant demonstrates adequate knowledge of local routes in the area of operation, along with a working knowledge of Marathi and at least one other commonly spoken language.

The initial announcement on April 14 had indicated that all licensed autorickshaw and taxi drivers would need to demonstrate Marathi proficiency from May 1. But

following strong objections from unions over fears that drivers unable to speak Marathi could lose permits, the government softened its position and clarified that no punitive action would be taken solely on the basis of Marathi proficiency until August 15. The current phase has been restricted to spot verification, document scrutiny and language familiarisation, with action being taken primarily against illegally operating vehicles and permit violations.

At JP Road in Azad Nagar, Andheri West, three Motor Vehicles Department officers were stationed along the roadside stopping autorickshaws one after another, in scenes similar to what would have played out during the Mira-Bhayandar pilot. Drivers were asked to present licences, badges and permit documents while officers noted registration numbers and vehicle details. The interactions often extended beyond paperwork.

Why BJP's wins in Assam, Bengal matter for all of Northeast

The BJP victory in Assam did not come as a surprise—at least not to anyone in the Northeast. The party returned with 82 seats in the Assembly of 126, giving it a majority on its own. Its allies in the North East Democratic Alliance, Asom Gana Parishad and Bodoland People's Front, won 10 seats each. Many factors ensured this. The foremost is the persona of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and his well-calculated and calibrated populist agenda whipping up and capitalising on the inherent Assamese demographic anxiety of being overwhelmed by Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh. Whether this proves to be a boon or a bane for the state and the region in the long run is a matter of anticipation. Equally important is the fact that dislodging a party in power, especially if it is also in power in New Delhi, has never been easy in the Northeast. The region today suffers from a psychology of living on Delhi's charity, therefore seeing themselves safer on the right side of the powers that be at the Centre. The BJP's victory was also helped by some high-profile, pre-election defections—engineered or otherwise—from its major rival, the Congress.

The Congress was left licking its wounds, garnering just 19 seats, down 10 seats from its share in the last election. Even its flag-bearer, Gaurav Gogoi, lost in his home constituency Jorhat. While it does seem like a decimation of the Congress in the state, a little rethink is called for. The picture is quite different in terms of vote share. While the BJP won 37.81 percent of the votes polled, the Congress received 29.84 percent. Though nobody can argue with the decisive nature of BJP's win, in terms of the support base, the margin is not as great as the seat numbers make it seem. The debate on the pros and cons of the first-past-the-post electoral system is for another time. What everyone needs to keep in sight at this moment is that though victors have all the right to celebrate their victory, they also need to display some humility in the knowledge that citizens on the opposite end of the political spectrum number almost as many as those who supported them. The Assam victory is important for the BJP and its prospect in the Northeast. The party's upbeat mood is also bolstered tremendously by its victory in West Bengal. For the Northeast, Kolkata offers an important junction parallel to Guwahati for connectivity to the rest of the country. So whatever happens in Bengal has always had very profound impact on the Northeast as well. This has been so from the colonial days. Indeed, when the British annexed Assam in 1826, it was made an extension of Bengal. Likewise, Curzon's partition of Bengal and subsequent reunification had a great bearing on the politics and psychology of ordinary people in the Northeast. Not the least, most first-generation, western-educated pioneers from the region acquired their degrees from Calcutta and Dhaka universities, making this connection even deeper-rooted. How, then, would the BJP victory in Assam and West Bengal pan out in the rest of the Northeast is a question all observers of politics in the region would be asking. The first thing to remember is that of the region's seven states—excluding Sikkim, which is more in West Bengal's orbit—the four states of Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur are BJP-ruled today. The remaining three, which are core Christian states—Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland—are ruled by regional parties allied with the BJP. Those alliances are not for any ideological affinity, but are driven by transactional considerations of aligning with the power corridors in Delhi. This profile of the major political equations in the region is unlikely to change. What the BJP victory in Assam and West Bengal has probably done is to ensure this equation remains secure and intact.

Somnath's saga of faith and resilience

Special pujas will be organised at Somnath for the next thousand days

AT the start of 2026, I had gone to Somnath for the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, marking 1,000 years since the first attack on the Somnath Temple. Now, I will be back in Somnath on May 11 to mark 75 years since the inauguration of the restored temple by the then President of India, Rajendra Prasad. In less than half a year, it is a privilege to be attending two important milestones relating to Somnath and its journey from ruin to renewal or what we describe as from vidhvans to srijan. Somnath gives us a civilisational message. The vast sea before it evokes timelessness. The waves tell us that no matter how fierce the storms or turbulent the tides are, one can always rise again with dignity and strength. The waves return to the shore, as though reminding every generation that the spirit of the people can never be subdued for long. Our ancient scriptures say: Prabhassam cha parikramya prithvi-kramasambhavam. It means, a pradakshina (circumambulation) of the divine Prabhassa (Somnath) is equal to a pradakshina of the whole earth itself! While people have come here to pray, they have also experienced the remarkable continuity of a civilisation whose flame could never be extinguished. Empires rose and fell, tides changed, history moved through conquest and upheaval, yet Somnath continued to endure in our consciousness. It is time to remember the countless greats who stood firm in the face of tyranny. There were Lakulisha and Soma Sarman, who transformed Prabhassa into a great centre of philosophy. Chakravarti Maharaja Dharasena IV of Vallabhi built the Second Temple there centuries ago. Bhima Deva, Jayapala and Anandapala will always be remembered for defending civilisational honour against invasions. It is said that Raja Bhoja too helped with the reconstruction. Karna Deva and Siddharaja Jayasimha played a vital role in restoring Gujarat's political and cultural strength. Bhava Brihaspati, Kumarapala Solanki and the Pashupata Acharyas rebuilt and sustained the shrine as a great centre of worship and learning. Vishaladeva Vaghela and Tripurantaka protected its intellectual and spiritual traditions. Mahipaladeva and Ra Khangar were instrumental in reviving worship after destruction. Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar, whose 300th birth anniversary is being marked, ensured the continuity of devotion in the most difficult of times. There were the Gaekwads of Baroda who safeguarded the rights of pilgrims. And, of course, our soil is blessed to have nurtured brave personalities like Veer Hamirji Gohil and Veer Vegdaji Bhil, whose sacrifice and courage have become a part of Somnath's living memory. In the 1940s,

when the spirit of freedom swept across India and the foundations of a new republic were being laid under the leadership of towering figures like Sardar Patel, one thing continued to trouble him deeply—the condition of Somnath. On November 13, 1947, during Diwali time, he stood next to the dilapidated ruins of the temple with seawater in his hands and said, "On this auspicious day of the (Gujarati) New Year, we have decided that Somnath should be reconstructed. You, people of Saurashtra, should do your best. This is a holy task in which all should participate." On one clarion call of Sardar Patel, it was not only the people of Gujarat but also the people of the whole of India who responded enthusiastically.



Unfortunately, fate did not allow Sardar Patel to witness the fulfilment of the dream he had championed. Before the restored Somnath Temple could open its doors to devotees, he had departed from this world. Yet, his impact continued to be felt across the sacred shores of Prabhas Patan. His vision was championed by KM Munshi, ably supported by the Jamsaheb of Nawanganar. In 1951, when the Temple was complete, it was decided to call President Rajendra Prasad for the ceremony. Overcoming objections from the then Prime Minister Pandit Nehru, Prasad graced the ceremony, thus making it even more special and historic.

My mind also goes back to October 2001, when I had just taken over as Chief Minister. On October 31, 2001, the Jayanti of Sardar Patel, the Gujarat Government had the honour of organising a programme to mark 50 years since the Somnath Temple had opened its doors. It also coincided with the 125th birth anniversary celebrations of Sardar Patel. The then Prime Minister Atal Bihari

Vajpayee and the then Home Minister LK Advani attended the programme.

During his speech on May 11, 1951, Rajendra Prasad said that the Somnath Temple proclaimed to the world that anything built on unparalleled faith and love could not be destroyed. He expressed hope that this temple would live in the hearts of people. He also said that the restoration of the temple was a fulfilment of Sardar Patel's dream. And taking that spirit forward, it was important that we restored prosperity to the lives of people. These are important and inspiring messages. This is the path we have been walking for over a decade. I consider it my good fortune that, inspired by the principle of 'Vikas Bhi,

Virasat Bhi', from Somnath to Kashi, Kamakhya to Kedarnath, Ayodhya to Ujjain, Trimbakeshwar to Srisailem, our team has had the opportunity to equip our spiritual centres with the latest facilities while at the same time, preserving their traditional character. This, along with efforts to improve connectivity, ensures more people can visit them. It boosts the local economy, secures livelihoods and deepens the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.'

The struggles and sacrifices of those who laid down their lives to protect Somnath and those who rebuilt it time and again will never be forgotten. Countless individuals from different corners of India contributed to restoring its glory. They saw every part of Bharat as sacred, bound together by

a sense of oneness that transcended geography. In a world often marked by divisions, this spirit of unity is more relevant than ever. Somnath will continue to stand tall in all its glory because the sense of unity and shared civilisational consciousness lives on in the hearts of every Indian. As a tribute to this, remembering the extraordinary courage of 1,000 years, special pujas will be organised at Somnath for the next thousand days. It is gladdening to see several people donating for these pujas. I urge my fellow Indians to travel to Somnath in this special time. When you stand on the shores of Somnath, let its ancient echoes speak to you. You will not only be overwhelmed by devotion but also feel the strong pulse of a civilisational spirit that refuses to fade, that is unbroken and unyielding. You will experience Bharat's unconquerable spirit and understand why, despite every effort, our culture remained undefeated. You will have the opportunity to behold the vision of eternal triumph. It will surely be unforgettable.

Blasts in Punjab: Low-intensity attacks, high-stakes warning

The reflexive blame game may be politically expedient, but it is strategically myopic

PUNJAB'S twin blasts — first outside a BSF facility in Jalandhar and then near an Army cantonment in Amritsar — are too close in time and target to be dismissed as routine disturbances. Even if low in intensity, they carry a high strategic message: India's security grid is being tested at sensitive nodes. The confirmation by Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav that an improvised explosive device was used near a military zone underscores the seriousness of the threat. These are not random acts; they suggest reconnaissance, planning and a deliberate attempt to probe vulnerabilities around defence establishments. Whether the hand behind them is local, cross-border or an opportunistic mix of both, the pattern is unmistakable. Equally troubling is the political reaction. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has blamed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for destabilisation, while the BJP has accused the state government of security failures. This reflexive blame game may be politically expedient, but



it is strategically myopic. Security crises demand coordination, not confrontation. Punjab's history

makes it particularly sensitive to even low-grade disruptions. The state has, over decades, built a reputation for resilient policing and intelligence-led operations. A spate of recent incidents, including three blasts in under 10 days, risks denting that hard-earned credibility. The question is not merely who is to blame, but whether intelligence inputs were missed or responses delayed.

The need of the hour is a unified response: tighter intelligence sharing between Central and state agencies, immediate security audits of defence perimeters, and enhanced surveillance, especially against emerging threats like drone-based infiltration. Public reassurance must follow, but without downplaying risks. These explosions are warnings, not aberrations. Ignoring their pattern or politicising their aftermath would be a costly mistake.

Mythos moment is a wake-up call

AI readiness must become a top-tier priority for governments worldwide

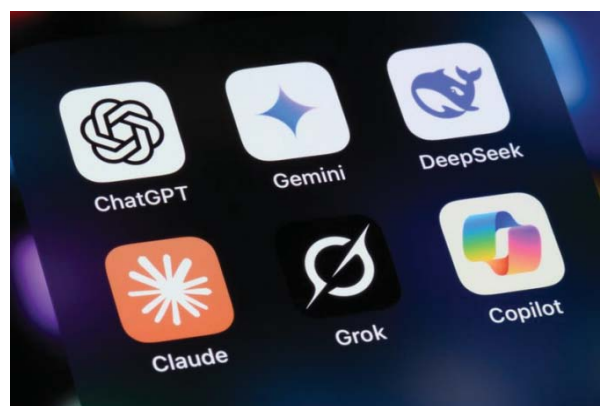
WHEN Anthropic, the San Francisco-based artificial intelligence (AI) company, announced its new frontier model on April 7, the news startled governments and corporations around the world. In pre-release testing, Claude Mythos had autonomously identified thousands of previously unknown software flaws — so-called zero-day vulnerabilities — across every major operating system and major web browser. More striking still, Anthropic chose not to release the model publicly. Mythos was instead made available to roughly 50 partners, including Amazon Web Services, Apple, Google, Microsoft, JPMorgan Chase and the Linux Foundation, under an initiative called Project Glasswing. A week later, OpenAI followed with a similarly restricted release of GPT-5.4-Cyber, a variant of its flagship model trained for defensive cybersecurity work and limited to vetted users.

The decision by two of the world's leading AI companies to withhold their most powerful tools from the public marks an inflection point. For most of the past three years, AI laboratories have competed to put new models in the hands of as many users as possible, as fast as possible. Now, the same firms are acknowledging that some capabilities are too dangerous to release without controls. It is not hard to see why. Large language models have advanced remarkably over the past 18 months. They can draft polished prose, complete in hours research that once took consultants weeks, identify candidates for drug discovery, write code and build production-grade websites and applications. They can operate autonomously for extended periods. On many benchmarks, they now approach the performance of trained professionals. The benefits are real. AI has the potential to lift productivity in agriculture, broaden the reach of public health and education, and transform whole sectors. But the technology is dual-use by design.

The same capabilities that help defenders find and patch software flaws can help attackers exploit them. According to Anthropic's own published assessment, engineers with no formal security training were able to ask Mythos to find remote-code-execution vulnerabilities overnight, and wake up to a complete working exploit. The cost of one such chain was under \$2,000. This matters because cybercrime is no longer a fringe concern. Cybersecurity Ventures, an industry research firm, estimates that global cybercrime damages reached \$10.5 trillion in 2025 — a figure that, were cybercrime a country, would make it the world's third-largest economy after the United States and China. More conservative estimates from outlets such as Cyber Defense Magazine put direct losses in the \$1.2-1.5 trillion range. Either way, AI-driven phishing campaigns, deepfake fraud and adaptive malware are already widespread. SoSafe's 2025 Cybercrime Trends report found that 87 per cent of global organisations had experienced an AI-powered cyberattack in the previous 12 months. The euphoria around 'vibe coding' — the recent explosion in amateur software development enabled by AI — was always going to be tempered by concerns over its mirror image: vibe hacking. If cyberattack tools that once required state-level resources become available at the price of an API (Application Programming Interface) call, the asymmetry between attackers and defenders could shift abruptly.

Whether models such as Mythos will ultimately help defenders more than attackers is unsettled. Anthropic argues that controlled access gives defenders a head start. Independent researchers at AISLE (an AI-native cybersecurity company) have shown that smaller, openly available models can already replicate much of Mythos' analysis. A more difficult question is whether

the world is comfortable with frontier AI capabilities being held by a handful of firms — fewer than half a dozen in the US, with a comparable group in China — and parcelled out to chosen partners. Open-source AI has helped diffuse the technology's benefits globally. Restrictions, however well-intentioned, risk entrenching a tech oligopoly, dulling competition and tempting those in possession of the most powerful



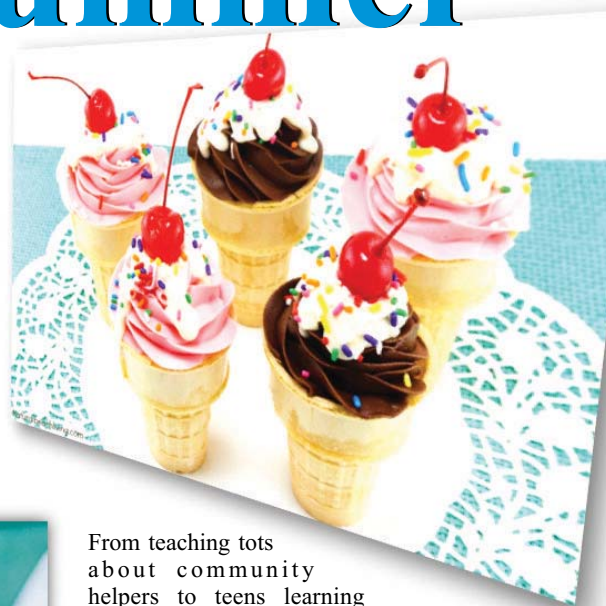
models to use them against perceived adversaries. The history of managing dual-use technologies is not reassuring on this front. A second lesson is that AI readiness must become a top-tier priority for governments. That means three capacities at once: to deploy AI productively across the economy; to research and develop it domestically; and to govern against misuse. The mood in some capitals has turned against regulation, but the global picture is more nuanced. The European Union is implementing risk-based guardrails

through its AI Act. China has moved quickly to address harms to children, including emotional dependence on chatbots. The instruments — legislation, executive guidance or co-regulation with industry — are a sovereign choice. Stepping away from the responsibility is not. Finally, Mythos is a reminder that AI does not respect borders. Its impacts cross jurisdictions at the speed of light, and so must any credible response. The release of DeepSeek R1, a powerful open-source model, from China in January 2025, made it clear that breakthroughs can come from anywhere. Common standards for safety, interoperability and responsible use will not emerge from any country acting alone.

This is the backdrop for the first Global Dialogue on AI Governance, which convenes in Geneva on July 6-7. The Dialogue, established by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in August 2025, is paired with a new Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, tasked with regularly assessing the technology's opportunities and risks. Governments, scientists, civil society and the private sector will, for the first time, meet at the United Nations to debate AI's potential to accelerate development as well as the risks it poses to safety, security, inclusion, cultural and linguistic diversity, and human rights. Building AI capacity in less-developed economies will be on the agenda too.

The Mythos moment will not be the last of its kind. Surprise breakthroughs are arriving every few months. The work of patching vulnerable systems, training defenders and building shared rules of the road has barely begun. There is no time to waste — starting with the weakly protected websites and software that still hold up much of the digital economy.

Make your Kids COOL This summer



From teaching tots about community helpers to teens learning about aeromodelling and graphic novel writing, summer camps get more creative. Gone are the days when summer vacations only meant playing out in the sun. These days, parents believe that children should continue the learning process during the vacations as well. And while earlier, summer camps and workshops would only involve basic art, craft and outdoor game activities, these days, they involve innovative as well as fun-oriented ones. With a range of age groups, interests and



Interestingly, they are also encouraged to step in their shoes by actually performing their duties.

Cooking with shapes Age group: Upto 5 years

Want to teach your tot different shapes as well as hone his/her culinary skills? Through an hour long weekend summer workshop, kids learn about four different shapes and are also asked to create goodies

using those shapes. Meanwhile, weekly workshops where kids are taught about basic nutrition and age appropriate culinary skills through activities like bean snapping, corn husking and melon balling are also finding takers.

Aeromodelling workshop Age group: 4-14 years

A new-age fun activity are aeromodelling work shops are also conducted. Here, children learn the art of designing, developing and flying small aeroplane models. While beginners can start with static models and paper planes, the advanced learners are provided materials to create rubber powered flying models.

Dos and don'ts before you enroll your kid in a summer camp:

The summer camp should include many activities so the child has a choice and you eventually know what interests him best.

Do not decide the hobby, sports or activities that you think would be fun or beneficial. Keep your child's interests in mind.

If you're a working mother, get your friend's kids to join as well.

That way your friends can take care of picking up and dropping off your kid to the camp.

Sports week: Get your kid's friends together every evening and organise a sports week camp at a nearby park. You can start off the week by making a team jersey and enjoy a wide variety of non-competitive sport themed activities including soccer, football, golf, basketball and gymnastics.

Make musical instruments: Using materials available at home, encourage your child to make instruments that he/she can use through the week.

Ask him/her to play different tunes and record them on simple recording devices like a phone.

Aquatic life theme: Start off the week by painting a T-shirt with the sea creatures that your child loves. You can go for activities like making penguins out of water bottles that is sure to take up most of your kid's afternoon. For younger kids, fill a bathtub with water and let them enjoy playing with boats and floatable animals under your supervision.

Forensic Science workshop Age group: 7-12 years

If your kid is hooked on to mysteries or loves Sherlock Holmes, get him/her enrolled in this workshop. From searching for the evidence to gathering clues, dusting for fingerprints and analysing handwriting this three-hour workshop is a great way to discover how science can help mystery-solving.

Animation workshop Age group: 10-14 years

If you thought animation films could only be created using digital softwares, think again. At a workshops, children are asked to use paint, clay, paper cutouts etc to create animated characters. Besides, they also get a chance to watch short animated films around the world.

Community helpers' workshop Age group: 3-6 years

Want your child to know about the duties of a newspaper vendor or a postman? Get him/her enrolled in one of the day-long workshops where kids are introduced to four community helpers and understand their job patterns.

9 things never to say to Your child

Being a parent is difficult and so is coming off as a proud child. It's only human to give vent to your rage by using harsh words. However, when the recipient of your outrage is your own child, it might have uncertain and unmanageable repercussions.

We list 9 insensitive things that you should avoid saying to your child.

1. I was much more responsible when I was your age

Comparing your child and giving him an example of what all you were capable of when you were a kid is the first big mistake parents make. Their irritation stems from 'expectations' - expectations of bringing up the 'perfect' kid. Try and recall your shortcomings as a child and what all troubles you bothered your parents with. You are the elder one in the relationship hence you ought to know more. A statement such as this will break your child's confidence.

2. You always end up taking wrong decisions

Don't penalise your kid for being immature. Everyone is allowed to make mistakes and it is in fact a part of the learning process. He might have taken up a field of study that doesn't interest you or perhaps working with a company that you're not very proud of, but that doesn't mean you accuse him of the decisions. Your job as a parent is to guide him, not force him to obey your opinions.

3. Why can't you be more like your brother/sister?

This is once again an unreasonable comparison and a common one at that. Avoid seeding in animosity between your children by comparing their abilities. Doing so may create a fissure between the siblings. You don't want your kid to harbour negative feelings for you, hence avoid assessing your kids.

4. Leave me alone!
Adults have huge responsibilities to take care of, responsibilities that children are innocently oblivious of. And there are times when we want to be left alone too. Kids are incapable of understanding the gravity of such situations. An impatient outburst of 'Leave me alone!' can make your child feel neglected, unwanted and depressed at the same time. Show some patience and avoid saying something bad to him.

5. You should be ashamed of yourself
This statement is outright harsh and saying such an awful thing to any child is simply 'bad'. Yes, there are mischievous kids who go about pestering people with a devil-may-care attitude but that does not mean you reprimand him like this. There are better and milder ways to make the child understand the difference between good and bad.

6. You're just like your father/mother
Not all married couples are happy living together and the bitterness in their relationship often translates into exchange of unkind words against each other. Some relationships end in separation too. Either ways, kids are a

witness to this mutual hostility and criticism. So when you shower your partner's animosity on your kid, that's when he begins to lose respect.

7. You always find ways to hurt me

There are times when children hurt their parents' sentiments by going against their wishes. Most times it is unintentional but there are kids who do so on purpose. However, saying something like the above statement would make your child feel guilty about his/her decision. He might comply with your demands to make you happy but you'd be taking away his right to happiness in the long run. Let your children take their own decisions and let them live a guilt-free life.

8. It's better to be childless than have a kid like you

The above statement is mostly an extreme emotional outburst but can have grave consequences on the kid. Unquestionably, it is the most hurtful thing you can ever say to your child. No matter what the crisis is, saying something like this could make you regret for life.

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How to make the most of your holiday with kids

Outings can be stressful if you are travelling with children, as their expectations differ from that of adults. The stress of finding right activities for each age group and food needs leaves you with no time to relax. Here's how you can keep your brood happy while you enjoy your 'me' time...

According to Girish Sheno, a banker and a father of two daughters (aged eight and three), a vacation with kids is a sure way to get post-vacation stress. "You not only blow your budget with extra add-ons, with each kid demanding something other than what is provided in terms of food and amenities, but also come back tired instead of refreshed," he says. The story is more or less similar for every couple with children.

Shubhra Jaiswal (39) too, came back stressed from her recent holiday as there was nothing much to do for her two kids at the place chosen by her for the family's vacation. "I realised that finding beforehand what activities or fun things are there for your kids is of supreme importance," says Shubhra. She suggests going for holidays which are all-inclusive, so that needs of each and every person of the family is taken care of.

What to do when you are there

- Attend to the needs of the kids first so that they don't complain about being bored. Once they are happy, it is easier for you to take time out for yourself and indulge in your favourite activity, like reading a book on the beach.

- Give a break to the rules that you have made for kids while on vacation. But make sure that they get enough rest in between activities. You don't want to go back home with an ill child as that would really be a downer.

- Many resorts offer in-room babysitting or kids' activities. Make use of the service so that you can have a relaxed evening. If that's not available, order room service when the children are asleep.

- Most all-inclusive resorts have, at least, one buffet restaurant. This makes things easy for

the parents, as kids can eat quickly — without waiting for an order to come — try new foods and serve themselves. But do keep an eye so that they don't waste food.

- Even though resorts offer games at the kids zone, you should carry those that your children enjoy playing at home. Remember, there will be extra charges levied on you at such places. So, having your own game with you will help you save some money.

- Plan your days in such a way that more exciting and tiring activities are done in the beginning of the schedule and restful activities are taken up towards the end, leaving you less



exhausted.

Do some pre-planning before you book

- Inquire about the activities, operational hours and what ages are eligible for admission at kids' clubs in the resort. Also find out about the charges.

- Find out if there are 'adult only' areas and restrictions on certain sites in the hotel or resort. While it can be advantageous as you can have your peace and quiet in those areas, this also eliminates certain restaurants and activities you were looking forward to try with your little ones.

- Try to draw up a rough schedule of things you'd like to do with the kids. It eliminates incessant questions like 'When are we taking a boat ride?' or 'Can I go to the fun zone now?' It is good to have a schedule even on holidays when you have to deal with children.





Your child should not be clueless when she has her first period. And with kids having periods as early as ten years old, it is necessary for parents to make their kids aware. As you start seeing your child having mood swings and getting irritated for no rhyme or reason, it is time that you sit down and have a chat with her.

The period chat with your Daughter



head high when you have the period chat with your daughter, since you don't want her to feel that it is something that she should be ashamed of.

Avoid bombarding her with too much information

Do not give too much information that the child gets confused. In fact, the best time to start is when there is a sanitary napkin ad playing on television. Don't give a long lecture about periods in one sitting. Start with small talk, which is easy for your daughter to absorb. Tell her that these are little changes in the body which every girl undergoes, as she gradually becomes a woman. Find out from your daughter's teachers if they are covering anything about the reproductive system in their school. If they are, it gets easier for you as the mother to explain the topic as you know that your daughter has some information about it. Don't forget to have an age-appropriate discussion with your daughter.

Inform her about basic hygiene

It is important that you teach your child how to use a pad during menstruation and how often she needs to change it. Parents should tell the child about washing her hands thoroughly and to keep her private parts clean so that there is no infection. Teach her the right disposal method.

Common questions that you may have to answer:

- Why do only girls get periods?
- Does it hurt?
- How long does it last?
- Can I play during this time?

Ways to deal with PMS

Pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) can be severe for some girls. Nutritionist Sheela Tanna suggests the following tips:

- She must have at least three servings of calcium-rich food a day, such as low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, fortified orange juice, and soya milk
- Don't stop her from being physically active. Help her maintain a healthy body weight
- Make sure she avoids processed food
- Increase her water intake
- She should avoid junk food

Time for some pet Etiquette

Pets are adorable but they can get equally annoying if not trained properly. We share some tips to turn your pet into a great companion:



A recent study claimed that dog owners get the same surge of emotions when looking at their pooch as mothers do with their infants. While most of the pet owners will nod in agreement, you may find a few disagreeing. "I love my pet but he's such a nuisance. He will bark his lungs out in the middle of the night, chew on everything he gets his hands on and trouble my guests. I don't know what to do with him," says PR executive Aashish Sen who owns Peddle, a Pomeranian.

But you can set aside such worries. Dogs can adapt to human society. We share with you some useful tips to minimize your pet worries:

Exercising pet is a good pet:

Your pet needs regular exercise to get rid of his excessive energy. Do not take him out just to litter, let him run, have fun. "This is the only way to release his excessive energy which if not released could make him irritable. It amounts to building stress which will be exhibited through excessive barking and unwanted pouncing," says Delhi-based senior veterinarian, Dr James Rappai.

No loud business:

When you are feeding or talking to your pet, do not raise your voice. Make him adapt to commands but say it once and say like you mean it. It should be firm not loud. And if you keep saying it, he won't listen unless you snap at him. "Be careful about the commands and the words you use. Don't confuse them. If you use the command 'Sit' to make him sit, do not use 'Heel' instead," says Chennai based dog trainer J Rangarajan.

Attention with care:

Some pets are in a habit to bark to grab your attention. They will bark when hungry, while greeting you, wanting to play with you. Says Pet groomer Geetika Nigam, "This habit must be modified simply by not providing positive reinforcement when he is barking for no reason."

Even your pet needs toys:

If you see your pet chewing furniture or your favourite shoes, don't snap at him. Instead give him alternatives to chew on like pet friendly toys. Spread them all over the floor and if he still goes for your shoes, give him a chewy. Says Delhi-based dog trainer Raju Sinha, "If he still goes, then direct him to a chewy. In a way, your pet is trying to teach you to be more careful with treasured items."

Never hit him:

Don't hit your pet when you are angry with him. The next time you get angry, first tell him firmly that he's incorrect, ignore him, and nudge him off if he comes to you. This will disorient him and he will know that the behaviour is not acceptable. "Remember, you should never resort to hitting your pet," adds J Rangarajan.

Eating habits:

Never feed him while you are eating. This might be taken as a cue that he can take food from your plate.

Make him a social pet:

Don't restrict his exposure just to family else he will get really uncomfortable in front of your guests or might behave awkwardly. And remember never ask your friend if you can get your pet along to a get together or party. If they want him to come, they will say it.

Here are some ways how you can initiate a conversation about periods with your daughter.

Start the chat early

Menstruation is a part of growing up and there is absolutely no harm if you start the talk early, in small portions. It is quite a scary experience for a child to discover one fine day that she is bleeding. Says child counsellor, Ronita Chatterji, "The poor thing may not even know where the blood is coming from. She might think that she is terribly sick and that she is going to die. So, it is important that you begin the chat as soon as you see some changes in your daughter's body like pubic hair and breast development. She might even ask questions about these slight changes. When you are answering such questions you can discuss periods as well."

Prepare yourself first

It is important that you prepare yourself first when you start the conversation. Talk about your own experience and be prepared to answer all questions. You might require to go surf the net to study the female reproductive system. Says psychologist, Seema Hingorani, "Mental preparation for parents is very important when they sit down for a chat with their kids. Make them feel that it is absolutely normal and maintain eye contact while talking about it." Since having periods means the onset of sexual maturity, it is important that you inform your daughter about sex and how to be careful. There are a lot of questions that might come to a child's mind: How much it hurts? How often it happens? Will she be able to play outside with her friends? Clear all doubts that are playing in your daughter's mind. Hold your



Tips to teach table manners to kids

Here are some tips which will help you teach your kids table manners and etiquette

Table manners and dining etiquette are an important aspect every person should have. Starting early with kids can come in handy. Here are some tips on how you can imbibe table manners in your kids early -

Fixed time:

Fix a day and a meal where you can tell your kids about table manners - how to place the napkin, how to eat with a fork, knife and spoon, how to eat with their mouth closed, how to pass food to others, etc.

When you're out:

If you are dining out with your family, choose a kid-friendly restaurant. Let your kids order food for themselves, help them if required. This will make them feel grown-up and responsible.

Avoid the phone:

Avoid using your cellphone or tablet or any other technology

while dining with your family. Kids mostly see and learn. You don't want them to grow up to talk on their phone while eating.

Politeness works:

Teach them to use words like 'please' and 'thank you' while asking for food or passing it to others even at a family meal. They will make a habit out of it when you go

out with others for a meal.

See and learn:

Take out time to teach your kids more about food and cooking also, as this will help them understand food better. Talk to them while you are cooking, teach them bits and pieces, make them help you with small matters in cooking.

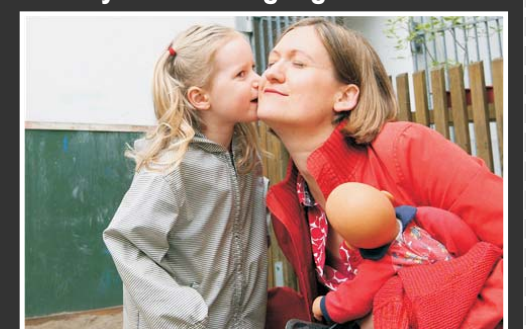
3 signs you are spoiling your kid

- The first sign is that you never use the word 'No' when it comes to your little one. Perhaps you don't have the heart to but whenever they ask for something that isn't a necessity or could be bad for them, you give in because you can refuse them. This will eventually become a habit and when they grow up, they will expect that things will always be the way they want, because they have never been refused or denied it.

- You buy them too many toys and gifts. Sure, it's their birthday and they want that big doll house or the latest iPad, but spending big money on your child doesn't mean you love them more. It's the time that you give them and the moments that you share together that count.

- They constantly whine and are never happy with the things they have. Even if you are doing everything you can for them and giving them the world, if you see that your kids are always complaining about things that they don't have, it is

You might want to give your children the best, but in this process are you raising a spoilt child? Read on to identify the warning signs.



time to realise that you have over pampered your child.

Did SIR Impact West Bengal Results? What Election Commission Data Says

The numbers suggest that while there were indeed large-scale deletions of "ineligible" electors during the SIR process, there were also equally significant additions.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls emerged as one of the most politically contentious issues in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections. Months before polling, the exercise triggered fierce opposition from the Trinamool Congress and several opposition parties, which alleged that the revision drive was aimed at disenfranchising minorities, migrants and economically weaker voters. Protests were held across the state, the Election Commission came under sharp criticism, and opposition leaders repeatedly claimed that lakhs of legitimate voters were being deleted from the rolls.

However, post-election data released by the Election Commission paints a far more

complex picture. The numbers suggest that while there were indeed large-scale deletions of "ineligible" electors during the SIR process, there were also equally significant additions of eligible voters before nominations closed. More importantly, many of the constituencies that saw the highest deletions eventually voted in favour of the very parties that had opposed the SIR process most aggressively.

No Impact In Seats With The Highest Deletions

According to Election Commission data, the highest deletions during the SIR exercise took place in constituencies concentrated in the Malda and Murshidabad belt. Sujapur recorded the



deletion of 1.50 lakh electors, followed by Raghunathganj with 1.30 lakh, Samserganj with 1.25 lakh, Ratua with 1.23 lakh and Suti with 1.20 lakh deletions. These constituencies were at the centre of the political storm surrounding SIR, with opposition parties

alleging that minority-heavy areas were being selectively targeted.

Yet the final election results did not support the narrative that the exercise had electorally weakened the opposition. All five of these constituencies were won by the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC). In other words, despite massive deletions during the revision process, the ruling party retained its dominance in these politically sensitive regions.

Additions After SIR

The data becomes even more revealing when additions after the SIR are examined. Data shows that the same constituencies also witnessed some of the highest additions of eligible electors between February 28, 2026 and the last

date of nomination under Section 23(3) of the Representation of the People Act. Sujapur alone saw 1.14 lakh additions after the final SIR list. Raninagar added nearly 76,000 electors, Harischandrapur over 74,000, Chanchal more than 72,000 and Ratua over 71,000. These figures suggest that a large number of voters whose names were initially removed either completed documentation later or were restored after adjudication. The Election Commission had maintained throughout the controversy that the exercise was intended to remove duplicate, shifted, deceased or otherwise ineligible electors, while eligible citizens would continue to be added through the legal process. The post-SIR additions appear to support.

Desilting done, New Delhi Municipal Council plan for monsoon care in place

New Delhi.(Agency)

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Friday announced details of its comprehensive Monsoon Action Plan 2026, covering pre-monsoon preparedness, emergency response during heavy rainfall and restoration of damaged infrastructure after the season. NDMC Chairperson Kuljeet Singh Chahal said the civic body has already completed 100% desilting work in the first phase by March 31, while the second phase is scheduled to be completed by June 15.

He said GIS mapping of underground drainage networks, including bell mouths, gully traps, connecting pipes, manholes and brick barrel drains, has been initiated to improve monitoring of waterlogging-



prone areas. According to the NDMC, extensive cleaning and desilting of drains and stormwater channels are underway along with repairs of damaged roads, potholes, trenches, manhole covers and drainage infrastructure.

Chahal said dewatering pumps, DG sets, manpower and control rooms have been arranged at vulnerable points. At present, only five major waterlogging-prone locations remain in the NDMC area — Purana Quila, Dayal Singh College area, Panchkuian Road, Hanuman Mandir and Satya Sadan. He added that CCTV cameras and sensor-based monitoring systems are being installed at these locations for quicker response during heavy rainfall.

Delhi rolls out real-time tracking of road pollution, dust hotspots

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) launched a road pollution control programme to increase monitoring and control of sources of dispersed air pollution across the city. It has deployed 13 dedicated field surveyors to survey roads daily, with a total coverage of nearly 18,000 kilometres of roads across MCD, PWD, NDMC, and Delhi Cantonment Board areas.

Surveyors will use the MCD-311 mobile app to log a minimum of 70 geo-tagged, photographic pollution issues per day per surveyor, with a citywide target of around 1,000 identified issues daily. The entire road network of Delhi will be comprehensively covered every month, with each surveyor assigned a minimum of 20 kilometres of roads to be covered daily.

Titled Road RADAR, or Real-time Air Pollution Detection across Roads, the DPCC programme is aimed at improving road cleanliness, reducing dust, and strengthening measurable air-quality outcomes in the city. The environment ministry said the new monitoring system includes built-in safeguards to ensure zero duplication of reported issues, so that every complaint corresponds to a unique and actionable pollution source.

Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said the fight for clean air must be won on the ground, lane by lane and road by road. "Through Road RADAR," he said, "the government is introducing a scientific system of daily surveillance, real-time reporting, and direct departmental accountability, so that pollution sources are not ignored, repeated, or allowed to linger."

The programme will track 11 categories of air pollution issues: road dust, such as unpaved roads, broken footpaths, dividers, and potholes; sand or loose material piled on roadsides; unsurfaced and unregulated parking lots; garbage, including overflowing dhalaos and dumped roadside waste; biomass and garbage burning on roadsides; plastic burning on roadsides; construction and demolition waste dumped on roadsides; barren roadsides requiring greening; greening needs on central verges; dust from construction sites; and other dispersed sources of air pollution identified during field surveys.

Municipal Corporation of Delhi ready with proposal to start RFID-based 'free-flow' toll system

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is set to place a proposal before its Standing Committee to introduce an automatic number plate recognition (ANPR)-based toll collection system at the capital's border entry points, officials said on Friday. The proposal is likely to be discussed during a Standing Committee meeting scheduled later this year.

According to officials, the civic body plans to introduce a multi-lane free-flow tolling mechanism similar to the FASTag system used on national highways. The system will use ANPR cameras and RFID technology to automatically deduct toll tax without requiring vehicles to stop at plazas.

"We are moving towards an ANPR

camera-based toll collection system along the lines of highways. The details are being finalised, and everything is being done as per the directions of the Supreme Court,"



an official said. Under the proposed mechanism, cameras will identify vehicles passing through toll points, while RFID tags installed in vehicles will enable seamless toll tax collection.

Officials said the move is aimed at reducing long queues and traffic congestion at toll plazas and border entry points, especially during peak hours.

"With the new system, vehicle owners will not be required to stop, and taxes will be deducted automatically, similar to the FASTag system on national highways," official said.

The development comes after the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's toll tax department was asked to revise a proposal related to appointing a new agency for operating 156 toll plazas and generating minimum annual revenue of '900 crore.

Meanwhile, the civic body has granted a six-month extension to the existing concessionaire until a new agency is finalised, officials added.

Reimagining Delhi shared responsibility: LG Taranjit Singh Sandhu

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi has always represented the spirit of India as a diverse, resilient, dynamic and aspirational city, Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu said on Friday. Speaking at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), he said the challenges before the capital required coordinated action.

"The task before us is not easy," he said, citing urbanisation, environmental pressures, population growth, mobility challenges and resource management as key concerns.

"Reimagining Delhi is a shared responsibility. Let's work together to build a Delhi that is environmentally conscious, culturally vibrant, economically dynamic, technologically progressive, and deeply humane," Sandhu added. He said that the future must be built on five essential pillars, with sustainability being the first. He stressed that

no city could aspire to global leadership without addressing environmental challenges with urgency. Cleaner air, rejuvenated water bodies, enhanced green cover, effective waste management, adoption of renewable energy and sustainable mobility must become central to Delhi's urban vision, he said. The second pillar is inclusion. A truly global city is one where growth is shared and opportunities are accessible to all. The third pillar, he said, is culture. As we modernise Delhi, we must ensure that we do not lose its cultural memory, he said.

"The fourth pillar is innovation and economic growth. Delhi has the potential to emerge not only as an administrative capital but also as a leading centre for knowledge, startups, tourism, hospitality, the creative economy, and the wider service sector.



Summer vacation in Delhi coincides with remedial classes beginning May 11

New Delhi.(Agency)

The initiative aims to provide additional academic support to students, particularly those who require extra attention.

Delhi government has announced summer vacation for all government schools from May 11 to June 30. However, remedial classes for students of Classes 9, 10, and 12 will be held from May 11 to May 23 to help improve learning outcomes and strengthen conceptual understanding.

According to a circular issued by the directorate of education, these special classes will be conducted based on the availability of teachers and school infrastructure. The initiative aims to provide additional academic support to students, particularly those who require extra attention.

The remedial classes will be conducted from 7.30am to 10.30am and each period will last for one hour. For classes 9 and 10, schools have been directed to focus mainly on science and mathematics. Heads of schools, though,



may include other subjects based on academic performance, result analysis and teacher availability. For Class 12 students, subjects for remedial teaching will be decided by the schools according to students' needs.

The circular says that schools must ensure special attention for academically weak students. Wearing a school uniform during remedial classes has been made mandatory,

and attendance will be marked online. Schools have also been instructed to obtain parental consent before students attend the classes.

Library facilities will also remain open. The directorate has directed heads of schools to ensure the availability of clean drinking water and other basic amenities on campus. Guest and contractual teachers may also be engaged if regular teachers are unavailable.

Meanwhile, the last-minute directive raised concerns among teachers and students, as it coincides with ongoing census duties. The order, issued late on Thursday evening just a day before schools closed for summer break, disrupted plans of many students, particularly those from migrant families who had scheduled travel to their native places. Principals were asked to inform students via WhatsApp, leaving little time for adjustments.

Delhi government plans treated water use expansion



New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi government is working on a policy for the use of treated sewage water in construction activities and irrigation works as part of efforts to conserve groundwater, officials said on Friday. Water from sewage treatment plants (STPs) operated by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is already being used extensively for horticulture purposes. Addressing the issue, Delhi Public Works and Water Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said a policy is being framed by the DJB to ensure that large quantities of treated water from Sewage Treatment Plants are utilised in activities where potable water is unnecessary.

The Jal Board is actively promoting the use of treated effluent, and around 89 million gallons per day (MGD) is currently supplied for non-potable purposes to agencies such as the Central Public Works Department, Delhi Development Authority, New Delhi Municipal Council and Municipal Corporation of Delhi, officials said.

However, with regard to wider use of treated wastewater — especially in government construction works and irrigation of parks — the Delhi government is now considering a comprehensive policy. Officials further said that other applications, including firefighting, may also be explored.

Treated water from Sewage Treatment Plants is likely to be used first in construction activities undertaken by government agencies. Later, the possibility of supplying it to private firms at affordable rates may also be explored, officials said.

Meanwhile, technical aspects related to the use of treated water in construction activities will also have to be examined, as the Bureau of Indian Standards has prescribed guidelines in this regard. Water with a pH level between 6 and 8.5, and total dissolved solids not exceeding 2,000 parts per million, is considered suitable for construction purposes. Officials said poor-quality water can damage iron and concrete and affect construction quality. In addition, parks maintained by various government agencies and resident welfare associations may be supplied treated water through pipelines connected to STPs.

Not Buying Kandla Transmission, Says Reliance Industries Ltd

Mumbai.(Agency)

Mumbai, May 8 (UNI) Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has informed the stock exchange through a regulatory filing that it is no longer in the race to buy a 100% stake in Kandla GHA Transmission Limited (KGTL) from PFC Consulting Limited.

Reliance informed the stock exchange that even after receiving approval for the pre-acquisition bidding process, PFC Consulting Limited sent a letter to RIL, cancelling the bidding process.

"The company has received a letter from PFC dated May 6, 2026, informing it of the cancellation of the ongoing bidding process. Therefore, the company will not acquire any stake in KGTL," Reliance said in an exchange filing.

In an earlier stock exchange filing last year on April 25, Reliance had announced that its Board of Directors had approved the acquisition of Kandla GHA Transmission Limited (KGTL) from PFC Consulting Limited.

According to the Reliance board decision, the total consideration for purchasing Kandla GHA Transmission Limited (KGTL) from PFC Consulting Limited, was not to exceed Rs 20 crore.

Kandla GHA Transmission Limited (KGTL) is a special purpose vehicle (SPV) established to develop infrastructure to supply power to green hydrogen and ammonia manufacturing facilities in Kandla, located in Gujarat. The project focuses on the transmission of 3 GW of renewable energy, designed to support large-scale green energy projects and reduce carbon emissions.

Reliance wanted to buy Kandla GHA Transmission since RIL is in the process of setting up a huge ecosystem in Gujarat to produce green hydrogen, green ammonia as well as green chemicals.

Reliance plans to indigenise all critical technologies of the green energy transition, namely solar, battery energy storage systems as well as electrolysers, under a 'Make-in-India' framework.

By 2030, Telangana will emerge as India's undisputed Aerospace & Defence Capital: Minister Uttam Kumar

Hyderabad.(Agency)

Telangana Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday said the state is firmly positioning itself as a national leader in aerospace and defence manufacturing and expressed confidence that by 2030, it would emerge as India's undisputed Aerospace and Defence Capital.

He recalled his own association with the defence services as a fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force and shared his experience of serving as ADC to the President of India after retiring from active flying following a forced ejection from a fighter aircraft.

Addressing the gathering during the post-lunch session of "MSME Spark 3.0 - Aerospace & Defence Manufacturing" conference organised by the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), in association Telangana state Industries & Commerce Department here, Uttam stated that aerospace and defence are among the priority sectors identified by the Telangana Government under its industrial policy framework.

Describing Hyderabad as one of the world's most cost-effective aerospace destinations, he highlighted the city's strong ecosystem comprising defence laboratories, research institutions, advanced manufacturing facilities, and a vibrant MSME base.

He informed that nearly 1,500 MSMEs in Telangana are currently part of the aerospace and defence supply chain ecosystem. Uttam also highlighted the Telangana Government's focus on skill development and future-ready education initiatives, including the proposed TG Young University, which he said would significantly contribute towards strengthening India's defence equipment manufacturing ecosystem and developing a skilled workforce for emerging technologies. Speaking on the occasion, FTCCI President R. Ravi Kumar, said "MSME Spark 3.0 reflects FTCCI's commitment to strengthening MSMEs by connecting them with emerging opportunities in aerospace and defence manufacturing."

No layoffs, hikes deferred by at least a quarter: Air India management

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a morale booster for employees, loss-making Air India on Friday said it does not anticipate any layoffs even as the airline has been battling a series of black swan events for a year now. However, annual increments "will be deferred by at least one quarter in light of the uncertain economic environment". Addressing a Town Hall Friday, outgoing CEO Campbell Wilson and CHRO Ravindra Kumar GP are learnt to have spoken about the "tough times" and the need for employees to suspend discretionary spending and defer non-critical expenditures to cut costs.

The Town Hall follows an AI board meeting on Thursday during which cost-cutting measures were discussed as the airline has lost over Rs 22,000 crore last fiscal due to multiple factors, including closure of Pakistan airspace since Operation Sindoor, then the tragic Ahmedabad AI 171 crash, the US-Iran war that has led to further lengthening of western routes along with a sharp hike in jet fuel prices and the rupee crashing. Sources say the issue of Wilson's successor was not finalised during Thursday's board meeting. The CHRO reportedly said AI will proceed with variable pay for FY26, continue with planned promotions while annual increments will be deferred by at least one quarter due to current uncertainty. "We don't anticipate layoffs," Kumar said.

SBI Q4 results: Beats expectations on net profit but not on net interest margin

The largest bank in the country beat investor expectations on net profit for the Jan-March quarter or Q4 of FY26. However, it did not perform as spectacularly on other parameters such as net interest margin, which is the difference between the interest earned and paid by the bank.

Kolkata.(Agency)

The country's biggest bank, SBI announced its Q4 results posting 6% Y-o-Y increase in its net profit during the Q4 period of FY26. Importantly, SBI's Q4FY26 domestic net interest margin slipped to 2.93% from 3.14% a year earlier. Analysts attributed it to rate cuts in December 2025 and rising costs. The net profit touched Rs 19,683.75 crore against Rs 18,642.59 crore in the same period a year ago. A significant point was that in excess of 66% of savings bank accounts opened digitally through YONO in FY26.

Profitability indicators

FY26 PAT 80,032 crores, marking growth of 12.88% YoY

Q4FY26 PAT Rs 19,684 crores

FY26 operating profit for FY26 1,23,015

crore, making growth of 11.25%

FY26 ROA 1.12%

FY26 ROE 18.57%

FY26 Net Interest Income rose by 4.08% (YoY)

Bank's NIM for FY26 2.91%

Domestic NIM for FY26 3.03%

Business volume

Total business exceeded Rs 109 lakh crore

Deposits Rs 59.8 lakh crore

Advances Rs 49.3 lakh crore

Asset quality parameters

Gross NPA Ratio at 1.49%, marking improvement of 33 basis points (YoY)

Net NPA Ratio at 0.39%, making improvement of 8 basis points (YoY)

Provision Coverage Ratio at 74.36%

SBI share performance

The SBI share settled at Rs 1,018.40, down

declined 2.17% and rose 7.07% in the past

six months. The shares rose 30.69% in the past one year. The 52-week high and 52-week low of the SBI stock is Rs 1,234.70 and Rs 755.50 respectively.

Past brokerage view

Significantly, major brokerages such as Jefferies, Motilal Oswal and Nuvama assigned Buy signal on the stock after the Q3FY26 results mainly on expectations of credit growth, improving asset quality and growth in earnings. Investors were advised to take advantage of dips and buy.



Rs 73.60 or 6.74% at close of trade on May 8. In the past one month the share

dips and buy.

Two inspections, one pattern: Labour off the books

New Delhi.(Agency)

It was a large factory, its products in demand nationwide and its machines running round the clock. On paper, everything was in order.

A regular inspection conducted in January 1988, covering July 1986 to December 1987, had reported no major omissions. The unit was later assigned to me for a special inspection, which I conducted on June 20, 1988.

The gaps were visible at the gate. Workers moved about without uniforms or safety footwear, unusual for a factory of that scale.

Instead of heading to the office, I stopped and began asking a simple question: "Do you have an 'atta'?" the term workers locally used for the ESI identity card.

"Ille" (no), came the answer repeatedly. I began noting names.

The industrial relations advisor, who had received me and was accompanying me, grew visibly uncomfortable. "Why stay out in this heat? Come inside. We'll

give you everything." But the answers were not in the office. They were on the shop floor.

A WORKFORCE WITHOUT RECORDS

Supervisors were asked to produce their "notebooks." These were, in effect, the



real system.

Across departments, over 200 workers existed only in these informal records. They had no entries in wage registers, no attendance logs and no statutory coverage. In effect, they did not exist in the eyes of the law.

CONTRACT LABOUR OFF THE GRID

The factory relied heavily on contract

labour across glass, processing, unloading and security operations.

At least 56 workers were immediately identifiable outside the legal framework:

15 in glass

35 in processing

5 in unloading

1 in security

And this was only the visible layer.

This was the position in a single shift. With three shifts in operation, the scale of exclusion was clearly far greater.

The list of contractors produced during inspection revealed a pattern. Vacuuming work had been split among four contractors, while the manufacture of double-wall refills had been split among nine.

The structuring appeared intended to keep the number of workers under each contractor below 20, thereby avoiding the applicability of the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act.

India-EU Summit gave fresh momentum to strategic partnership, says Nirmala Sitharaman

The 27-nation bloc and India recently marked a breakthrough on 27 January by announcing the conclusion of negotiations for the FTA, a deal widely celebrated as the "mother of all deals".

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the 16th India-EU Summit held in New Delhi in January gave fresh momentum to bilateral strategic ties, taking the partnership to a higher level.

Addressing the Europe Day 2026

celebrations in the presence of EU Ambassador Herve Delphin, Sitharaman noted that the outcomes of the summit signify a transformative phase in the engagement between the two powers.

"The 16th India-EU Summit held at New Delhi in January 2026 has given a decisive new momentum to our Strategic partnership, taking it to a newer level," the Finance Minister said on X.

The Minister emphasized that the successful conclusion of negotiations for the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), alongside the signing of the Security and Defence Partnership and the adoption of the Comprehensive Framework on Cooperation on

Mobility, represents a new chapter in Indo-EU relations.

"The joint roadmap adopted at the Summit - 'Towards 2030: India-EU a



Joint Comprehensive Strategic Agenda' provides a clear and ambitious vision for our cooperation over the coming years," the Ministry of Finance quoted her as saying.

Petrol and diesel prices likely to be hiked before May 15

Petrol and diesel prices in India are likely to be hiked before May 15 as state-run oil marketing companies face rising financial stress amid a sharp surge in global crude oil prices, sources told.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Petrol and diesel prices in India will be hiked before May 15 as oil marketing companies (OMCs) face mounting financial losses estimated at nearly Rs 30,000 crore per month amid soaring global crude rates, sources told.

"OMCs are facing under-recoveries of nearly 30,000 crore per month," sources said, pointing to a sharp mismatch between retail fuel prices and rising input costs. The strain has intensified after crude oil prices surged from around USD 70 to USD 126 per barrel amid the ongoing Middle East war.

Despite the global oil shock, India has so far kept retail fuel prices largely stable, with both the government and OMCs absorbing a significant portion of the burden. "The government and OMCs are currently absorbing up to Rs 24 per litre on petrol," sources said. Global crude prices have surged from around USD 70

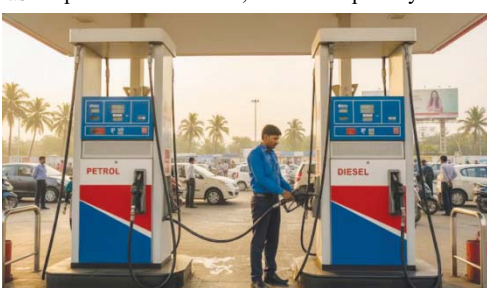
per barrel to nearly USD 126 per barrel in recent weeks amid concerns over supply disruptions, shipping risks and prolonged instability in the Middle East. The Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 20 per cent of the world's oil supply passes, has remained heavily disrupted due to the war, triggering a wider global energy shock.

If the hike is approved, petrol and diesel prices in India could rise by around Rs 4-5 per litre, while domestic LPG cylinder prices may see an increase of Rs 40-50. This would mark the first major revision in petrol and diesel prices in nearly four years, with retail rates having remained largely frozen since 2022.

While several countries introduced emergency measures to tackle the fuel crisis, including rationing in Bangladesh, reduced working days in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and fuel price caps in South

Korea, India managed to avoid shortages, long queues or rationing.

Government and industry sources said India responded quickly after the crisis escalated by ramping up domestic LPG production from 36,000 tonnes per day to



54,000 tonnes per day and reducing excise duties on petrol and diesel to shield consumers from rising global prices.

At peak crude prices, the government and oil companies were effectively absorbing

nearly Rs 24 per litre on petrol and Rs 30 per litre on diesel, according to industry estimates. Even after excise duty cuts, Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum are estimated to have collectively suffered losses of nearly Rs 30,000 crore per month.

India also diversified its crude imports by sourcing larger volumes from Russia, the US, West Africa and other regions, while refineries reportedly operated at over 100 per cent capacity to ensure uninterrupted fuel supplies. Officials said the government is closely monitoring developments in West Asia and evaluating multiple options regarding the timing and extent of any fuel price revision. The focus, sources said, is on balancing the financial stress on oil companies while ensuring that any increase does not significantly fuel inflation.

Short news

Farmers demand paddy procurement amid rain threat in Telangana

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Farmers staged a protest and locked the gates of the agricultural market yard in Narsampet on Friday, demanding that officials immediately begin procurement of their paddy stock. Unseasonal rains that lashed several parts of Warangal district on Thursday night damaged paddy stocks kept at the market yard while farmers were awaiting government procurement. Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds were reported at isolated places across the district. K Sambaraju, a farmer from Kammepally village in Narsampet mandal, said he had brought his paddy to the market yard for government procurement. He alleged that officials had failed to take timely measures for the procurement of agricultural produce. "With the threat of unseasonal rains and hailstorms looming large, officials should purchase the paddy at the earliest to prevent further losses," he said.

Another farmer, B Raj Reddy, said he had been waiting for nearly 20 days to sell his produce at the market yard. He alleged that the recent rains damaged the paddy stocks and accused officials of failing to provide gunny bags and tarpaulin sheets to protect the produce from rain.

However, officials of the Warangal district civil supplies department refuted the allegations, stating that soaked paddy was being procured from farmers and shifted to parboiled rice mills. They also denied claims that tarpaulin sheets were not supplied to farmers at the market yard.

Telangana KGBV students explore AI, robotics during exposure visit to Amazon

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

In an initiative aimed at promoting advanced learning and nurturing talent among students of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), the Telangana government facilitated an exposure visit for 50 students to Amazon, where they were introduced to emerging technologies such as AI and robotics.

According to the education department officials, the students, currently attending advanced camps at three designated Institutes of Excellence, participated in interactive sessions conducted by Amazon volunteers, who guided them in building robotic motor vehicles.

The programme provided the students with practical experience in assembling and operating robots, helping them understand technological concepts through hands-on activities. As part of the visit, a robotic vehicle race was organised among student teams after the completion of the workshop.

Speaking about the experience, Kumari Lasya Shri from Mancherial and Kumari Shri Chandana from Hanumakonda said they enjoyed building robots and competing in the race. Telangana Education Secretary Yogita Rana appreciated the efforts of Amazon authorities in organising the visit for students.

Odisha: Pregnant woman dies allegedly due to delay in blood transfusion

SAMBALPUR.(Agency)

The action taken report submitted to the Health department has indicated that even though the blood bank at Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) was well-stocked, a pregnant woman admitted to the department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology died allegedly due to delay in the process of donor exchange at the required time. The revelation has surfaced amid an ongoing probe into the seven maternal deaths reported at VIMSAR within the first week of May, triggering concern across western Odisha and prompting scrutiny over the functioning of the premier government-run healthcare institution.

Official sources informed the report submitted to the state Health department acknowledged that despite adequate blood in stock at the blood bank, one of the women could not receive blood in time, allegedly leading to her death. However, it is yet to be known whether the report has recommended action against any individual or department over the lapse.

The report, however, stressed the need to make the hospital helpdesk more active and responsive. It also directed officials and staff to remain in close coordination with patients' attendants and extend necessary assistance during treatment and emergency situations. Director in-charge of VIMSAR, Lal Mohan Nayak confirmed that the report has been submitted but hospital authorities refused to comment on the contents of the report.

Punjab recorded 106 drug overdose deaths in 2024, much higher than neighboring Haryana, Himachal: NCRB report

Ludhiana.(Agency)

At least 106 people in Punjab died of alleged drug overdose in 2024, way more than similar deaths recorded by Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Union Territory of Chandigarh, as per latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report. As per the report, released by the union ministry of home affairs (MHA), Himachal Pradesh recorded 31 such deaths in 2024, Haryana three and Chandigarh seven. Nationally, Punjab recorded second highest number of such cases, behind Tamil Nadu where 313 people died of drug overdose. Punjab was followed by Madhya Pradesh (90), Rajasthan (69) and Mizoram (65). A total of 978 drug deaths were reported across the country in 2024, up from 654 in 2023.

The number of drug deaths in Punjab have increased from 89 in 2023 to 106 in 2024. In 2023, Punjab had recorded the highest number of drug overdose deaths while Tamil

Nadu was placed second.

NDPS cases: Punjab not among top-3

Punjab recorded 29 NDPS Act cases per lakh population, second only to Kerala, with 75.5



cases per lakh population, as per the report. But, compared to Punjab, the neighboring Haryana (10.8) Himachal Pradesh (22.8) and Chandigarh (7.2) have lower crime rate for drug offences. Punjab's crime rate under drug offences is way higher than national average of 7.8.

When it comes to registration of cases under the NDPS Act, Punjab was placed fourth nationally with 8973 cases. The list is led by Kerala (27,149), followed by Maharashtra (15,641) and Tamil Nadu (11,037). However, Punjab witnessed way higher cases than neighboring Haryana (3,325), Himachal Pradesh (1,715) and Chandigarh (90). The country recorded 1.09 lakh cases under the NDPS Act in 2024.

Punjab tops in drug trafficking, Kerala in personal consumption

While Kerala tops the country in possessing drugs for personal consumption, Punjab witnessed the highest cases in the country for drug trafficking. Punjab, in 2024, registered 6,060 cases for drug trafficking, followed by Uttar Pradesh (3,219), Rajasthan (2,758), Tamil Nadu (2,753) and Maharashtra (2,324). In neighbouring Haryana 2,046 trafficking cases were registered, while Himachal Pradesh recorded.

China confirms on-site support to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor: Reports

Beijing.(Agency)

China, for the first time, has confirmed that it provided on-site technical support to Pakistan during the four-day conflict with India last year, official media reports here said.

China's state broadcaster CCTV on Thursday aired an interview with Zhang Heng, an engineer from the Aviation Industry Corporation of China's (AVIC) Chengdu Aircraft Design and Research Institute, a key developer of China's advanced fighter aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicle design. Zhang had provided technical support to Pakistan during the four-day conflict last May, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported, quoting CCTV. Pakistan's air force operates a fleet of Chinese-made J-10CE jets, produced by an AVIC subsidiary. "At the support base, we frequently heard the roar



of fighter jets taking off and the constant wail of air-raid sirens. By late morning, in May, the temperature was already approaching 50 degrees Celsius. It was a real ordeal for us, both mentally and physically," Zhang said. What drove his team was the "desire to do an even better job with on site support" and to ensure their equipment could "truly perform at its full combat potential", Zhang told CCTV.

"That wasn't just a recognition of the J10CE; it was also a testament to the deep bond we formed through working side by side, day in and day out," he said. Chinese foreign ministry and military officials have either parried or played down allegations of China's support for Pakistan during the conflict. There was no official reaction to India's Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt General Rahul R Singh's assertion that Beijing provided active military support to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, using the conflict as a "live lab". In an address at a seminar organised by industry chamber FICCI in July last year, Lt Gen Singh suggested that China used its satellites to monitor Indian military deployment as the Pakistani military was getting live inputs on it during the DGMO (Director General of Military Operations)-level phone talks.

Irrigation Calendar with foundation, project execution deadlines announced

The calendar extends to June 2028, with the Vedavathi Lift Scheme, Bhairavani Tippa, and the Upper Pennar Project among the final targets.

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced a first-of-its-kind Irrigation Calendar, setting clear deadlines for the completion and foundation laying of major irrigation projects across Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking at the District Collectors' Conference on Friday, Naidu said the calendar reflects the government's commitment to transparency and its determination to deliver irrigation infrastructure on time. The Chief Minister listed 25 key projects with timelines stretching from June 2026 to June 2028. Among the early targets are the Cotton Barrage gates (June

2026), Polavaram Left Main Canal (July 2026), Guntur Channel modernisation (July 2026), and



Veligonda Phase-I (August 2026). Other major milestones include the Neradi Barrage foundation (November 2026), Polavaram Project completion (June 2027), Nagavali-Champavathi river link (June 2027), and Budameru flood

protection works (June 2027).

By December 2027, projects such as the Neeva Branch Canal up to Moolapalli, Moolapalli Lift, Madakasira Branch Canal widening, and Janjhavathi Reservoir are scheduled for completion. The calendar extends to June 2028, with the Vedavathi Lift Scheme, Bhairavani Tippa, and the Upper Pennar Project among the final targets.

Officials noted that no previous government had ever announced such a detailed irrigation calendar. Naidu's move is being seen as a demonstration of the government's clear intent and accountability in delivering irrigation benefits to farmers across the State.

Defreeze KSOU's bank accounts: Karnataka Governor's office

BENGALURU.(Agency)

R Prabhu Shankar, secretary to Governor Thaaarchand Gehlot, who is chancellor of Karnataka State Open University (KSOU), has written to the state government asking them to withdraw the communication issued to banks and defreeze the bank accounts of KSOU. The letter stated, "I draw your attention to the letter of even number dated 27-03-2026 in connection with the direction of the Hon'ble Governor and Chancellor to the State Government to withdraw the communication dated 24.03.2026 issued to SBI Bank to freeze the bank accounts of Karnataka State Open University.

Freezing of bank accounts directly impacts academic activities, payment of salaries, disbursement of scholarships, and discharge of statutory obligations, thereby seriously prejudicing the interests of students, faculty, and the public at large (sic)."

The letter added, "Hence, I am directed by the Hon'ble Governor and Chancellor to request the State Government to withdraw the communication issued vide letter to the General Manager, State Bank of India to debit freeze the University Accounts and to send an action taken report in compliance with the direction of the Governor and Chancellor at the earliest (sic)."

On March 27, the state government and the higher education department had ordered banks to freeze the accounts of KSOU stating financial irregularities in KSOU Mysuru, and the matter is under inquiry. Also, to safeguard public funds and ensure integrity of the inquiry, the secretary to the government, higher education department, has been requested to freeze (debit freeze) all bank accounts of the university.

Anti-sacrilege Law Row: Remove 'objectionable' provisions within 15 days: Akal Takht to Speaker

Anti-sacrilege law row intensifies as Akal Takht gives Punjab government 15 days to amend provisions it says hurt Sikh sentiments.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Kuldip Singh Gargajj on Friday Punjab government 15 days to remove certain provisions from the anti-sacrilege law, which, he said, are "against the Guru Granth Sahib, the Khalsa Panth and the sentiments of the Sikh community". He also questioned the motive behind Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's ongoing 'Shukrana Yatra', especially at a time when the Akal Takht had summoned Vidhan Sabha Speaker Kular Singh Sandhwan for a "clause-by-clause" discussion on the law.

"Mann should have avoided the 'ego Yatra' being taken out for political gains. Such an Yatra amounts to a direct challenge to the



Akal Takht," Jathedar said. Mann is on a state-wide Shukrana Yatra to express "gratitude" for the implementation of the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Act, 2026, which has provision of stricter punishment, including life imprisonment

and fines upto Rs 25 lakh for any act of sacrilege against the Guru Granth Sahib. As per the summons issued to him, Speaker Sandhwan appeared before Gargajj at the Akal Takht Secretariat. Both sides held clause-by-clause discussions regarding the law, and the Jathedar sought answers from the Speaker over objections raised by Sikh institutions, Panthic scholars, legal experts and other Sikh bodies regarding the legislation.

Emerging from the meeting, Sandhwan declined to comment on the proceedings, but defended the law saying that the stringent legal framework was a necessity. "The issue of sacrilege is a significant one. Even those convicted would come out on

bail. So, the new law was needed," he said. On Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee's (SGPC) claims that the community was sidelined during the drafting process, Sandhwan said that the government had sought public input. "Advertisements were placed in newspapers, and phone numbers and email IDs were provided for feedback," he said. After deliberations, Gargajj told Sandhwan that within 15 days the government must remove those provisions from the Act which are against the Guru Granth Sahib, the Khalsa Panth and the sentiments of the Sangat (Sikh community), and which were incorporated into the law without consultation.

NEWS BOX

Yuzi Chahal should be behind bars: Ex-spinner slams PBKS star after alleged vaping row

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India spinner Laxman Sivaramakrishnan slammed Yuzvendra Chahal, saying that the Punjab Kings star should be behind bars for allegedly vaping. A video that has gone viral across social media platforms allegedly features the Punjab Kings spinner using an e-cigarette during the team's journey to Hyderabad.

In the clip being shared online from Arshdeep Singh's podcast, the leg-spinner can be seen sitting among teammates on the flight. However, India Today has not been able to independently confirm the authenticity of the video or verify whether Chahal was actually vaping in the footage. The use and sale of e-cigarettes is prohibited in India. A Twitter user put out a latest rumour suggesting that Arshdeep had been banned from making vlogs with the PBKS squad and Chahal has



been let go with a strict warning. This drew the attention of Sivaramakrishnan, who slammed the PBKS spinner and asked why he wasn't being punished. The former Indian cricketer also said that fining 25 percent of match fees is peanuts. "Vape is banned in India. Should be behind bars. What is the point in having Laws and not implementing them. 25% of match fees is peanuts. What if a regular person had done this, What would the action be?" said Sivaramakrishnan on X. The Chahal vaping row came after the Riyan Parag incident where the RR skipper was caught using an e-cigarette in the dressing room during the match against PBKS. Riyan was handed a 25 percent match fee fine and given no ban from the competition.

BCCI COMES HARD ON VAPING

The BCCI rolled out a new set of directives for the IPL teams and players, where they put a ban on vaping at all venues, dressing rooms and dugouts.

Not money or parades, just want to know India is watching us: Badminton star Satwik

Rome. (Agency)

Novak Djokovic has admitted that physical struggles have become "a new reality" as the 24-time Grand Slam champion reflected on his shock early exit from the Italian Open and his uncertain build-up to the French Open. The Serbian great suffered a surprise first-round defeat in Rome on Friday, going down 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 to 20-year-old Croatian qualifier Dino Prizmic in his first



competitive match in two months. The loss came as Djokovic returned from a right shoulder issue that had kept him out since his defeat to Jack Draper at Indian Wells in March.

Speaking candidly after the defeat, the 38-year-old acknowledged that arriving at tournaments carrying some form of physical concern has become increasingly common in recent years. "Yeah, I mean it's not an ideal preparation, to be honest. I don't recall the last time I had, in the last couple years, a preparation where I didn't have any kind of physical issues or health issues coming into the tournament," Djokovic said.

"It's always something. It's kind of a new reality that I have to deal with."

Djokovic looked in control early against Prizmic, taking the opening set comfortably and appearing sharp in his movement. But the momentum quickly shifted, with the six-time Rome champion visibly struggling as the match wore on. He was seen wearing tape on his right shoulder and repeatedly glanced towards his team as discomfort appeared to set in. Despite the frustration, Djokovic made it clear that stepping onto the court remains his own choice, even when his body is less than ideal. "Yeah, it is frustrating, but at the same time, it's my decision to still perform in that kind of state and conditions and it is what it is," he added.

Spinning a web: How KKR spinners have bounced back to reignite team's fading hopes

IPL 2026, DC vs KKR: Kolkata

Knight Riders beat the Delhi

Capitals by eight wickets after

their spin trio of Sunil Narine,

Varun Chakravarty and Anukul

Roy put their best foot forward at

the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Kolkata Knight Riders have always prided themselves on possessing a strong spin attack, a factor that played a massive role in their title-winning campaigns in 2012, 2014 and 2024. The likes of Sunil Narine, Varun Chakravarty, Piyush Chawla and Shakib Al Hasan have helped Kolkata build a reputation as one of the premier spin-bowling sides in IPL history. IPL 2026 has once again highlighted why spinners remain

central to KKR's success. Whenever their slow bowlers have struggled, Kolkata have often looked short of answers. KKR were completely out of sorts during the first half of the tournament as their spinners endured a lean patch. The team went six matches without a victory and appeared destined for an early elimination. However, once the spinners rediscovered their rhythm, KKR managed to completely transform their campaign. The franchise has now strung together four consecutive wins, clawing its way back into playoff contention after once staring at the possibility of an early exit.

On Friday, KKR defeated Delhi Capitals by eight wickets at the Arun Jaitley Stadium to extend their winning streak to four matches. The spin unit has played a defining role in that turnaround and will need to continue delivering if KKR are to secure a place in the top four. HOW KOLKATA SPINNERS FOUND THEIR BEST

In the first six games, KKR spinners struggled to a large extent, taking only 10 wickets at an economy rate of 8.65. Among them, Sunil Narine was economical with an economy

rate of 6.89, but taking only four wickets. Chakravarty was enduring a nightmare, taking two wickets from four games at an economy rate of 10.69. Anukul Roy was leaking runs at 9.18, giving KKR enough



headache.

But the story has changed since the RR game. In the last four matches, KKR spinners have improved drastically, taking 18 wickets at an economy rate of 6.82. Chakravarty, who had made a torrid start, made a strong comeback, being KKR's top wicket-taker in the last four games. In this period,

Chakravarty has taken eight wickets at an economy rate of 6.93.

Narine also improved significantly with an economy rate of 6.06 and taking six wickets. Anukul also saw improvement, taking four

wickets at an economy rate of 8.28. Delhi Capitals got a bitter taste of the venom in KKR's bowling attack. After being asked to bat first, the Capitals made a strong start, scoring 49 runs in the first five overs. However, they managed only 93 runs in the remaining 15 overs as the spin trio of Varun Chakravarty, Anukul Roy and Sunil Narine gave them absolutely no breathing space.

Between the 10th and 17th overs, Delhi failed to hit a single boundary across 38 deliveries as KKR's spinners completely tightened the screws. The home side scored just 11 runs between the 12th and 16th overs, the lowest by any team during that phase in the IPL. DC also played out 51 dot balls, accounting for nearly half of their innings.

Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shafali Verma served notice for missing dope tests: Sources

BARCELONA. (Agency)

India cricketers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shafali Verma have been handed their first "missed test" notices by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), sources told India Today. The notices were issued under the whereabouts failure rule after they were not found at their declared locations for scheduled dope tests.

Both players have been given an opportunity to explain themselves, with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) also kept informed of the development. The notices mark the first recorded whereabouts failures for the two cricketers, who are part of NADA's Registered Testing Pool (RTP).

WHAT THE RULE SAYS

Athletes included in NADA's Registered Testing Pool are required to provide a designated time slot and location where they will be available for out-of-competition dope testing. A Doping



Control Officer (DCO) can arrive during the declared period to collect samples, and failure to be present at the specified location can result in a missed test under anti-doping regulations. According to the notices, a DCO attempted to conduct Yashasvi's dope test on December 17 last year, while Shafali's scheduled test was on November 7. In both cases, the players were not found at the locations they had declared.

NADA later sought explanations from the players on February 18 and 20 respectively, but neither responded, leading to the registration of their first missed tests. A single missed test does not amount to an anti-doping violation. However, three whereabouts failures within a 12-month period can constitute a violation of anti-doping rules. If a player is unable to successfully defend themselves before NADA's hearing panel, they could face a suspension of up to two years.

CRUCIAL TIME FOR BOTH JAISWAL, VERMA

The development comes at a crucial time for both players. Jaiswal is currently in action for Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League, with the franchise still in the hunt for a play-off spot.

Stuttering Rajasthan Royals take on resurgent Gujarat Titans in key Jaipur encounter

Lucknow. (Agency)

Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Titans meet at Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Saturday with both sides locked on the fringes of the top four, separated only by net run rate. Rajasthan has the batting to hurt any opposition but have surrendered two totals above 220 in successive matches, pointing to a side not yet clicking as a unit. Gujarat arrives in far better shape. Three wins on the trot, Kagiso Rabada leading a potent pace attack and Jason Holder adding flexibility in both departments. Prasad Krishna's absence remains unexplained, but they have not missed a beat. Off the field, Rajasthan will wear their special all-pink jerseys as part of the Pink Promise initiative, with every six hit powering homes across rural Rajasthan through solar energy. Form, stakes and purpose all in one evening at Jaipur. RR vs GT: Can the Royals get their act together?

Rajasthan have the runs, just not the results. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Dhruv Jurel have all contributed with the bat, but the team's inability to defend totals north of 220 twice in a row points to something deeper than a bad night.

Jurel is a case in point. Gifted and important, but not yet shifting gears when it matters.

Scores of 42 off 30, 16 off 20 and 42 off 30 in his last three outings suggest a batter doing enough rather than taking games away from opponents. The bowling, particularly in the middle overs, has been far too easy to target. Riyan Parag's side have the firepower to post big scores but not yet the discipline to



protect them. Until those two things align, Rajasthan will keep finding ways to lose matches they should be winning.

RR vs GT: The Pink Promise Saturday's match carries meaning beyond the points table. Rajasthan will wear their all-pink jerseys as part of the Pink Promise initiative, now in its third season, which uses IPL matches to drive women-led social change across rural Rajasthan.

No Instagram following, no LPL: Sri Lanka League sets odd criteria for players ahead of new season

SEVILLE. (Agency)

The Lanka Premier League has introduced an odd benchmark ahead of its sixth season. Instead of categorising players purely on their T20 pedigree and ability, the Sri Lanka-based league has decided to bring social media popularity and commercial appeal into the equation as well.

According to the latest player regulations released by the league, overseas cricketers hoping to enter the top tier Icon category will now need more than just cricketing credentials. Players are required to have featured in at least 75 T20Is, played more than 100 franchise T20 matches, and appeared in 30 games in the last 18 months. Alongside that, the league has also mandated a social media following of more than 250,000. The same social media threshold has been applied to the Star

category as well. Players in that bracket must have featured in at least 50 T20Is, played more than 100 franchise T20 games,



and participated in a minimum of 30 matches in the last 18 months, while also maintaining more than 250,000 followers across social platforms. WHEN INSTAGRAM TAKES OVER CRICKET For the Gold category, the criteria have been

slightly relaxed. Players are required to have played at least 30 T20Is, more than 75 franchise T20 matches, and 20 matches over the past 18 months. However, they too must cross a popularity benchmark, with the league demanding a social media following exceeding 150,000.

Even the Classic category guidelines include non-cricketing considerations. Apart from needing 20 T20Is, more than 50 franchise appearances, and 20 recent matches, players must also demonstrate a "reasonable fan base and commercial appeal," according to the regulations. The move marks one of the rare instances of a franchise cricket league formally integrating social media influence into player classification rules, highlighting the growing importance of marketability in modern T20 cricket.

Not the next IPL: India Basketball League wants its own court, own culture

India's first professional basketball league is not trying to become the next IPL, and that may be its smartest move.

The IBL wants to build a sustainable ecosystem, giving young players a genuine career pathway instead of chasing cricket's blueprint.

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Every new sports league in India eventually gets hit with the same question. "Can it become the next IPL?" The people behind the India Basketball League (IBL) do not even want to entertain that idea. And honestly, that might be the smartest thing about the project so far.

India's first-ever professional basketball league, launched in 2025 and expected to begin competition by early 2027, is not

trying to copy cricket's biggest machine. No forced "mini IPL" packaging. No obsession with becoming cricket with sneakers. Speaking exclusively to India Today, league commissioner Jeremy Loeliger made it very clear that trying to directly compete with the IPL would simply be "foolish."

"If we tried to become another IPL, we would fail," Loeliger said.

That line probably tells you everything about how the league wants to position itself. Because for years, Indian sports leagues outside cricket have often walked into the same trap. Some tried borrowing IPL-style auctions. Others copied formats, branding structures or presentation styles hoping the cricket audience would automatically transfer across. Most struggled to build a long-term identity. The IBL seems determined not to make that mistake.

Loeliger's biggest argument is actually pretty simple. Basketball already naturally fits the kind of audience modern sports leagues are trying to attract.



Fast pace. Constant scoring. Music during breaks. Short attention spans. Indoor arenas. Fans sitting almost on top of the court. Social media-friendly moments every few minutes. Basically, the exact reasons why T20 cricket exploded globally.

"Basketball is already the kind of fast-paced, high-energy sport that T20 cricket was

designed to replicate," Loeliger said while speaking to India Today. And unlike cricket, basketball already comes with a naturally global ecosystem attached to it.

That matters in modern India.

Young fans today do not just watch one sport anymore. They move between NBA clips, football reels, UFC knockouts, F1 highlights and IPL games all on the same phone screen. The IBL knows that audience already exists. Because the irony is basketball has always quietly existed inside Indian school culture. Courts are everywhere. Inter-school competitions are common. Plenty of kids grow up playing the sport seriously. The problem always came after that. There was nowhere to really go professionally. Now, the league believes there finally can be.

THE BIGGEST WIN MAY NOT EVEN BE THE LEAGUE ITSELF

The interesting part about the IBL project is that it is not just launching a tournament and hoping things somehow work out later.





Sonam Kapoor

Pens Romantic Note On 8th Wedding Anniversary With Anand Ahuja: 'The Calm In My Chaos'

Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja, one of the most loved and popular couples of B-Town, are celebrating their eighth wedding anniversary today. What makes the occasion even more special is that it also marks a decade of togetherness for the couple. On this occasion, the actress shared a heartfelt, romantic note expressing how much she loves her hubby, and also shared unseen glimpses from their day-to-day life with their sons.

Sonam Kapoor Wishes Anand Ahuja A Happy Anniversary

On May 8, Sonam Kapoor shared a collage of unseen pictures with Anand Ahuja. One of the adorable photos shows Sonam holding their newborn son in her arms, while Anand is seen with their three-year-old son Vayu as they both put the children to sleep. In her caption, the actress wrote, "A decade with you. Eight years married. Three cities. Three homes. Two beautiful boys. Countless dreams built from scratch. So many risks taken, lessons learnt, businesses created, failures survived, victories celebrated and moments where we held each other a little tighter through the uncertainty of it all."

Sonam Kapoor Calls Anand Ahuja 'The Calm In My Chaos'

She further added, "And somehow, through every version of life we've lived together, one thing has only become more certain...my love, respect and compassion for you have only grown deeper. You are still the first person I want to speak to in the morning and the last person I want beside me at night. The calm in my chaos. The person who makes me feel safest, strongest and most myself."

Sonam then expressed her love for Anand Ahuja and wrote, "Ten years later, I love you more gently, more intentionally and more completely than I knew was possible when we first began. Thank you for building this life with me. For the laughter, the friendship, the resilience, the family and the kind of love that evolves instead of fades. There's nobody else I'd rather do this life with. Happy anniversary my love. #everydayphenomenal." Sonam Kapoor and businessman Anand Ahuja got married in 2018. Their wedding took place in Mumbai and it was a star-studded affair. Almost the whole of Bollywood such as Kareena Kapoor, Saif Ali Khan, Rani Mukerji, Ranveer Singh, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and others were a part of the wedding festivities. The couple welcomed their first child, son Vayu, in August 2022. They welcomed their second son in March 2026.



Shakti Kapoor SLAMS Fake Death Rumours, Threatens Cyber Complaint: 'I Am Healthy And Happy'



Veteran Bollywood actor Shakti Kapoor has strongly reacted to fake rumours about his death that recently surfaced on social media. The actor shared a video message on Instagram and dismissed the reports as 'completely fake'. He also warned that he would file a cyber complaint against those responsible for spreading the misinformation online.

'My Death News Is Fake': Shakti Kapoor

The rumours began circulating widely across social media platforms, leaving fans shocked and concerned. Soon after the reports went viral, Shakti Kapoor released a video message on Instagram clarifying that he is safe and healthy. In the video shared online, the actor said, "My death news is all fake. I am healthy and happy. Please ignore it." Shakti Kapoor further stated that he intends to take action against those circulating the fake news. "I am going to do a cyber complain about it. But this is not good. It's not good," he said, in the video, urging people to avoid forwarding unverified information.

Last year, Raza Murad faced a similar ordeal when false reports about his death surfaced online. The actor later filed a complaint at Andheri Police Station after a social media post wrongly claimed that he had passed away. Speaking to ANI, Murad revealed that the post not only spread fake news about his demise but also suggested that despite spending decades in the film industry, no one remembered him. He said, "This should stop now. It is not only about me. Celebrities are often declared dead while they are still alive. This is wrong, and whoever does this should be punished."

About Shakti Kapoor

Coming back to Shakti Kapoor, the veteran actor remains one of the most recognised names in the Hindi film industry. Best known for his comic timing and memorable negative roles, Kapoor enjoyed immense popularity during the 1980s and 1990s, especially through his collaborations with late actors Asrani and Kader Khan. Some of his most loved films include Raja Babu, Andaz Apna Apna, ChaalBaaz, Coolie No. 1, Judwa, Satte Pe Satta and Bol Radha Bol, among others.

Twinkle Khanna Has A Hilarious Reaction To Karan Johar's MET Gala Look: 'Come Over Wearing This And...'



Actor-author Twinkle Khanna shared her hilarious reaction to filmmaker Karan Johar's recent appearance at the prestigious Met Gala. Taking to her social media account, Twinkle shared a picture of Karan from the fashion event and couldn't help but admire his dramatic and artistic ensemble.

She wrote, "Wah! Now come over wearing this and I will hang you up on my wall you piece of art @karanjohar." For the uninitiated, Karan made a statement on the red carpet of Met Gala on Tuesday.

The filmmaker was seen in an elaborate black outfit featuring intricate embroidery, regal detailing, and a cape-like silhouette that instantly grabbed attention. As he made his MET Gala debut, Karan Johar penned a note of gratitude on his social media, saying that life really does come full circle in the most unexpected ways. Karan wore an ensemble inspired by Raja Ravi Varma's art designed by Manish Malhotra for the MET Gala theme "Costume Art."

"From loving cinema and costume as a wide-eyed dreamer to standing on the steps of THE Met Gala...life really does come full circle in the most unexpected ways.

This moment wasn't just about fashion for me," Karan wrote. "About taking the legacy of Raja Ravi Varma and letting it live again... this time, not on canvas, but in motion. To representing India and our culture, our art and our storytelling on the global 'steps'. Thirty years of friendship and collaboration with Manish Malhotra and still creating firsts together - so grateful to you and your team for this core memory."

For the uninitiated, Twinkle and Karan have known each other for decades. Both belong to Bollywood families, with Karan Johar being the son of filmmaker Yash Johar and Twinkle the daughter of late superstar Rajesh Khanna. Karan, in an episode of the reality show Koffee with Karan, the filmmaker had admitted to having a crush on Twinkle while growing up.

Tanishaa Mukerji

Calls Her Bigg Boss Experience 'Traumatic': 'People Went After My Family'

Tanishaa Mukerji, who was the first runner-up of Bigg Boss 7, recently opened up about her time on the reality show, describing the experience as 'traumatic' and emotionally overwhelming. The actress revealed that she entered the controversial reality show without fully understanding its nature. She said that she

Boss, I don't think I spoke out as much because I wasn't very comfortable with the language." She said that while it's embarrassing to admit, most of her communication was in English and not Hindi, and that her Hindi is much better now than it was 10-12 years ago. "At that time, a lot of my communication was cut from the show because I spoke in English," she said.

Tanishaa Claims Co-Contestants Were Using Her Family's Name For Screen Time

She further added that she consciously chose not to speak about many things, as she did not want to get into fights or situations that could invite backlash against her family. However, she said that people were just finding reasons to speak about her and her family. "I had no idea until I came out of the house that people were using my name, my sister's name, my brother-in-

law's name just to get screen time. That was my naivety. Today, I would never put myself in that position again where anybody feels they have the right to say anything about my family because of me," she said.

She said that she never resorted to attack contestants personally or never brought up their families during arguments. "That experience definitely made me a lot more guarded because people really did go after my family. Even the channel upset me at times," she said.



was extremely naïve back then, and hadn't even watched the show before entering the BB house. She further claimed that several contestants used her sister Kajol, brother-in-law Ajay Devgn's name to gain screen time during the season.

Tanishaa Mukerji Recalls Her 'Traumatic' Bigg Boss Experience

While speaking with Mamaraazzi, Tanishaa said, "A lot of people still remember me from Bigg Boss and say things like, 'Tanisha is so cool, entertaining and honest.' But definitely on Bigg



NEWS BOX

Mojtaba Khamenei emerges as key power figure in Iran, directing war strategy and diplomatic talks

Washington. (Agency)
Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei has emerged as a key figure in shaping Iran's war strategy during the conflict and in directing officials involved in diplomatic negotiations with the United States to end the war. Despite sustaining serious injuries in the same strike in which his father, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed along with several senior Iranian military commanders on the first day of the attack launched by the United States and Israel, Mojtaba has reportedly remained deeply involved in shaping Iran's wartime strategy, directing military operations, and guiding diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a settlement with Washington, according to assessments by U.S. intelligence officials. CNN reported that Mojtaba suffered severe burns across his face, arm, torso, and leg. US intelligence believes he is playing a pivotal role even as he recovers largely out of public view, communicating exclusively through in-person meetings or handwritten notes carried by couriers, deliberately avoiding any electronic communication. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian confirmed this week that he had held a two-and-a-half-hour face-to-face meeting with Mojtaba, the first publicly confirmed encounter between the new supreme leader and a senior Iranian official since the attack. Mazaher Hosseini, head of protocol in the office of Iran's Supreme Leader, said on Friday that Khamenei is recovering from his injuries and "is now in complete health."

Transparency International Bangladesh exec director alleges 'well-known journalists' instigated attacks on offices of media houses Prothom Alo, Daily Star

Dhaka. (Agency)
Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman has alleged that the December 18 attacks on the offices of prominent Bangladeshi media outlets Prothom Alo, and The Daily Star last year had help from within the media community, alleging that some "well known journalists" were involved in instigating the attacks. Speaking at the inaugural session of the Bangladesh Journalism Conference 2026, organised by MRDI at the Radisson Blu Water Garden hotel, he said, "Enemies within the media, alongside external forces, also worked behind these attacks. "There is documentary evidence that some well known media personnel were among the instigators, and certain quarters expressed glee over the incidents." He further criticised the former Md Yunus led interim government's silence, indifference, and inaction of law enforcement agencies and the army over the attacks, adding that journalism remains one of the most hazardous professions globally, with 26 journalists in the country killed within the past decade. The outlets were attacked by mobs due to their supposed "pro-Hasina", and "pro-India" stance, following the death of vocal anti-India spokesperson Sharif Osman Hadi, with his Islamist group, the Inqilab Moncha being at the forefront of the attacks. Additionally, critics and social media reports have questioned the role of Faruk Wasif, who was appointed Director General of the Press Institute Bangladesh (PIB) shortly before the attacks, alleging that he acted as an "influencer" whose rhetoric may have contributed to the climate of hostility against these specific media houses.

Iraq rejects US allegations of Deputy Oil Minister Ali Bahadil helping Iran evade sanctions

Baghdad/Washington. (Agency)
Iraq has rejected US allegations against its Deputy Oil Minister Ali Maarij al-Bahadli, who Washington hit with sanctions following allegations he was helping Iran evade sanctions on its oil exports. Announced late Thursday, the sanctions are the latest tool used by the US State Department as part of its broader pressure tactics to force Baghdad on curbing its supposed ties with Iran-linked networks and militias. According to the State Department, Bahadli "abused his government position to divert Iraqi oil in support of the Iranian regime and its terrorist proxies." US officials accused him of helping facilitate the fraudulent blending of Iraqi and Iranian crude oil in order to disguise the origin of sanctioned Iranian shipments and move them onto international markets. Pushing back against the US allegations, the Iraqi oil ministry releasing a statement said that it "denies the accusations" against Bahadli, and stressed "the importance of transparency in addressing all ... accusations on the basis of evidence and facts," according to the INA state news agency. It added that Iraqi authorities were prepared to investigate the matter, but argued that the deputy minister's official responsibilities do not include "crude oil export operations, marketing, loading onto tankers, and related procedures." The dispute comes amid growing tensions between Washington and Tehran following the outbreak of war earlier this year. The United States has intensified efforts to crack down on networks suspected of helping Iran bypass sanctions, particularly through oil exports and maritime trade.

Trump says expecting Iran's response to latest US proposal tonight

Donald Trump said he expected to hear from Iran by Friday night on Washington's latest proposal to end the war, even as Tehran indicated it had not yet finalised its response and was still

World. (Agency)
US President Donald Trump said on Friday that he expected to hear from Iran by the night on Washington's latest proposal aimed at ending the war, even as Tehran indicated it was still reviewing the offer and had not yet finalised its response. "I'm getting a letter supposedly tonight. So we'll see how that goes," Trump told reporters outside the White House before departing for his golf course in Sterling,

Virginia. When asked if Iran was intentionally slowing the process, Trump replied: "We'll find out soon enough." According to CNN, citing Iranian media, Iran is still reviewing "messages" sent by the United States through Pakistani mediators and has not yet reached a final decision on the proposal. The proposed agreement is a one-page, 14-point memorandum designed to halt the conflict and open formal negotiations between Washington and Tehran. Under the plan, Iran could pause nuclear enrichment activities, while the United States may ease sanctions and release billions of dollars in frozen Iranian assets. The proposal also reportedly includes steps by both sides to reduce restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global oil transit route that has remained at the centre of recent military tensions. The agreement would begin with a 30-day negotiation period intended to pave the way for a broader long-term deal. **FRESH TENSIONS IN HORMUZ**

The diplomatic push comes amid continued military friction in and around the Strait of Hormuz. An Iranian military source warned that clashes could resume if the

Iran's Fars news agency earlier reported "sporadic clashes" between Iranian forces and US naval ships in the strategic waterway. The escalation followed statements from US Central Command (CENTCOM), which said American forces struck two empty Iranian-flagged oil tankers allegedly attempting to breach an ongoing US blockade by entering an Iranian port through the Gulf of Oman. CENTCOM also said US forces carried out strikes on Iranian military targets after Tehran's forces attacked three American destroyers transiting the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday. "US forces intercepted unprovoked Iranian attacks and responded with self-defense strikes as US Navy guided-missile destroyers transited the Strait of Hormuz to the Gulf of Oman," CENTCOM said. Iran's central military command, however, accused Washington of violating the ceasefire.



WHO confirms 6 Hantavirus cases, 3 deaths linked to Spain-bound cruise ship

The WHO has confirmed a hantavirus outbreak linked to a cruise ship after eight people fell ill and three died. The agency said the wider global risk remains low, though the onboard risk is moderate.

World. (Agency)
The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Friday confirmed a hantavirus outbreak linked to the cruise ship MV Hondius, with eight people falling ill and three deaths reported so far. The agency said six of the infections have been laboratory-confirmed as Andes virus, a type of hantavirus, while two other cases are considered probable. According to the WHO, the confirmed infections were identified through PCR testing. The outbreak was first reported on May 2 when the vessel had 147 passengers and crew members on board. Authorities said another 34 individuals had already left the ship

before the outbreak came to light. The cruise ship departed from Cabo Verde on May 6 and is currently heading toward Spain's Canary Islands, where passengers are expected to disembark. Health authorities are continuing to monitor passengers and crew as the vessel proceeds on its route. Of the infected individuals, four remain



hospitalised in South Africa, Netherlands and Switzerland. Another suspected patient who was transferred to Germany later tested negative for the virus, the WHO added. The UN health agency assessed the risk to the wider global population as low,

but described the risk to passengers and crew on the ship as moderate due to the confined environment and close contact among travelers. Investigators believe the first patient may have contracted the infection before boarding the cruise ship, possibly while travelling in Argentina and Chile. Subsequent transmission is believed to have occurred on board the vessel. Hantaviruses are typically spread through contact with infected rodents, their urine, droppings or saliva. The Andes virus strain is of particular concern because it is one of the few hantaviruses known to spread from person to person in limited circumstances. Symptoms can initially resemble flu-like illness, including fever, muscle aches and fatigue, but severe infections may lead to respiratory complications and death. The WHO said it is working with national authorities to trace contacts, monitor exposed individuals and strengthen surveillance linked to the outbreak.

Russia, Ukraine agree to 3-day Trump-mediated ceasefire, prisoner swap

SEOUL. (Agency)
Russia and Ukraine confirmed on Friday that they had agreed to a three-day ceasefire announced by US President Donald Trump, with the truce set to run from May 9 to May 11 amid ongoing diplomatic efforts to end the more than four-year-long war. Trump, posting on Truth Social, said the ceasefire would include a complete halt to "all kinetic activity" as well as a major prisoner exchange involving 1,000 prisoners from each side. "This request was made directly by me, and I very much appreciate its agreement by President Vladimir Putin and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy," Trump wrote. "Hopefully, it is the beginning of the end of a very long, deadly, and hard fought War." Trump added that negotiations aimed at

ending the conflict were continuing and progress was being made every day. US President Donald Trump later said he would like to see a ceasefire in



Russia's war in Ukraine extended beyond three days. According to Reuters, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed the agreement in a Telegram post, saying the ceasefire had been arranged through US-mediated negotiations and stressing

that humanitarian issues remained a priority. "That is why today, within the framework of the negotiation process mediated by the American side, we received Russia's agreement to conduct a prisoner of war exchange in the format of 1,000 for 1,000," Zelenskyy said. In a symbolic gesture, Zelenskyy also issued a tongue-in-cheek decree "allowing" Russia's May 9 Victory Day parade to proceed, saying Ukrainian weapons would not target Moscow's Red Square during the commemorations. Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov, speaking on behalf of Russian President Vladimir Putin, confirmed Moscow's participation in the ceasefire initiative and said the agreement had been reached during telephone discussions with the US administration.

Gulf fighting flares as CIA report says Tehran can resist blockade for 4 months

World. (Agency)
Efforts to end the war between the US and Iran appeared to lose momentum on Friday as both sides exchanged fire in the Gulf, while a CIA assessment suggested Tehran could endure a naval blockade for several more months. According to a US official familiar with the intelligence analysis, Iran would not face severe economic pressure from a US blockade of its ports for around four months, indicating Washington's leverage over Tehran may remain limited despite mounting military and economic pressure. The assessment, first reported by The Washington Post,



came as tensions sharply escalated in and around the Strait of Hormuz, where some of the heaviest clashes since the April 7 ceasefire were reported this week. The United Arab Emirates also faced renewed attacks on Friday, with authorities saying air defences intercepted two ballistic missiles and three drones launched from Iran. Three people suffered moderate injuries, officials said. Washington is awaiting Tehran's response to a US proposal aimed at formally ending the conflict before negotiations begin on broader issues, including Iran's nuclear programme. "We should know something today," US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters in Rome, according to Reuters. "We're expecting a response from them." However, Iran's foreign ministry said Tehran was still considering its response, with no formal reply announced by late Friday. **CLASHES CONTINUE IN STRAIT OF HORMUZ** Iranian and US forces were involved in sporadic clashes in the Strait of Hormuz on Friday, according to Iran's semi-official Fars news agency. Tasnim later quoted an Iranian military source as saying the situation had calmed, though further confrontations remained possible. The US military said it struck two Iran-linked vessels attempting to enter an Iranian port, with a fighter jet targeting the ships' smokestacks and forcing them to retreat. Iran has largely restricted non-Iranian shipping through the strategic waterway since the conflict began with joint US-Israeli airstrikes across Iran on February 28.

US sanctions China, Hong Kong firms over Iran drone and missile supplies

The United States has sanctioned 10 individuals and companies accused of helping Iran procure drone and missile components. The move signals possible wider action against foreign networks supporting Tehran as regional tensions remain high.

World. (Agency)
The US Treasury on Friday imposed sanctions on 10 individuals and companies, including entities based in China and Hong Kong, accusing them of helping Iran procure weapons components and raw materials used in Shahed drones and ballistic missiles. The move comes as efforts to end the war with Iran remain stalled and days before US President Donald Trump is scheduled to travel to China for talks with President Xi Jinping. In a statement, the Treasury Department said it remained prepared to take further economic action against Iran's military-industrial base to prevent Tehran from rebuilding its production capabilities. The department also warned that it could target foreign companies and financial institutions supporting illicit Iranian

commerce, including those linked to China's independent "teapot" oil refineries and airlines aiding Iran's activities. Among the entities sanctioned were China-based Yushita Shanghai International Trade Co Ltd, accused of facilitating Iran's attempts to acquire weapons from China, and Dubai-based Elite Energy FZCO, which allegedly transferred millions of dollars to a Hong Kong company involved in procurement operations. Hong Kong-based HK Hesen Industry Co Ltd and Belarus-based Armory Alliance LLC were accused of acting as intermediaries in the procurement network, while Hong Kong-based Mustad Ltd allegedly facilitated weapons procurement for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran-based Pishgam Electronic Safeh Co was

sanctioned for procuring motors used in drones, while China-based Hitex Insulation Ningbo Co Ltd was accused of



in the Strait of Hormuz and regional allies. Iran shut the Strait of Hormuz following US and Israeli strikes on Iranian targets on February 28. The closure has severely disrupted shipping through the strategic waterway, through which roughly one-fifth of global crude oil and liquefied natural gas supplies pass, pushing energy prices sharply higher. According to the British government-funded Centre for Information Resilience, Iran has the industrial capacity to manufacture around 10,000 drones per month. Erickson said the latest sanctions remained narrowly targeted, giving Iran time to adapt its procurement routes, and noted that Washington had not yet targeted Chinese banks that continue to support Iran's economy.