



Proofs of failure: Rahul Gandhi attacks government over PM's WFH appeal

Reacting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Nation First, Duty Above Comfort" message to the nation, the senior Rahul Gandhi called him "compromised" amid mounting economic pressure, saying the public was being asked "to sacrifice due to government failures."

New Delhi.(Agency)

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday echoed the concerns raised by his party and sounded the alarm over Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging Indians to work from home, avoid foreign travel, and refrain from purchasing gold as part of a list of austerity measures amid the Gulf crisis.

Reacting to the Prime Minister's "Nation First, Duty Above Comfort" message to the nation, the senior Congress leader called Modi "compromised" amid mounting economic pressure, saying the public was being asked "to sacrifice due to government failures." "Yesterday, Modi ji asked the public to

make sacrifices -- don't buy gold, don't travel abroad, use less petrol, cut down on fertiliser and edible oil, use the metro, and work from home. These are not advisories -- they are proof of failure," he tweeted.

Earlier in the day, Rahul's party MP Karti Chidambaram also questioned what the "triggers" were for the alert and called on the Modi government to convene an immediate



session of Parliament to apprise the Opposition and the rest of the country about the "true state of affairs."

"These are very serious 'directives' from the @PMOIndia. What are the triggers for this? The

government must convene Parliament immediately, take the nation into confidence, and inform us about the true state of affairs that has necessitated these 'appeals'," he tweeted.

Just after Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to citizens to use petroleum products carefully, the Congress lashed out at the Centre, saying that even three months into the US-Iran war, he remained unable to ensure India's energy security. The opposition party said it was "shameless, reckless and downright immoral" for the Prime Minister to ask people to face inconvenience instead of putting contingency measures in place to keep the economy insulated from the global crisis. In a post on X, Congress general secretary KC Venugopal wrote, "3 months into the Iran-US war and PM Modi is still clueless about ensuring India's energy security." He added, "It is shameless, reckless and downright immoral that the PM is pushing the common citizen into inconvenience, instead of building

contingencies to ensure our economy is unaffected by this global crisis." Venugopal also said, "When elections and petty politics are the sole priority of the PM, the end result is an impending economic catastrophe."

'Greatest setback for workers' rights since Independence': Cong slams Centre over new labour codes

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said that the Modi government, in its typical cowardly fashion, waited for the assembly elections to conclude before notifying the four "anti-worker" labour codes.



New Delhi.(Agency)

The Congress on Monday attacked the Central government, which has notified the final rules to fully implement the four labour codes, calling them the greatest setback for workers' rights since Independence. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in a statement that the Modi government, in its typical cowardly fashion, waited for the assembly elections to conclude before notifying the four "anti-worker" labour codes through a series of gazette notifications on May 8 and 9, 2026.

"For crores of India's workers, these codes promise a future of hire-and-fire policies, contract employment, and limited space for unionisation," Kharge said in a statement.

It is important to note that the Modi government drafted and implemented these "anti-worker" codes without any consultation, he said. "It has not even convened the Indian Labour Conference since 2015. These codes, which benefit only the prime minister's industrialist friends, are the greatest setback for workers' rights since Independence," Kharge alleged. He said the Indian National Congress remains resolute in its vision for India's workers.

"We are committed to our five-point Shramik Nyaya agenda: restoration of MGNREGA and its extension to urban areas, and national minimum wage at Rs 400 per day, including for MGNREGA; Right to Health law that will provide universal health coverage of Rs 25 lakh; comprehensive social security for all unorganised workers, including life insurance and accident insurance; a commitment to stop contractualisation of employment in core government functions; and to review the Modi government's dilution of labour laws," he said.

After a long wait of over five years, the Central government has fully operationalised the four labour codes by publishing the final rules, ensuring minimum wage and universal social security for all workers.

The four codes -- namely the Code on Wages, 2019; the Industrial Relations Code, 2020; the Code on Social Security, 2020; and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 -- came into effect from November 21, 2025. The four codes were introduced to modernise and consolidate 29 labour laws into a simplified and contemporary framework.

Punjab tops NITI Aayog school education rankings, surpasses Kerala and Delhi

Punjab has topped the latest NITI Aayog rankings for primary and middle school education, surpassing Kerala, Maharashtra and Delhi. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann credited sustained investment in smart classrooms, teacher training and digital infrastructure for the achievement, calling it the result of four years of focused education reforms.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Punjab has overtaken Kerala, Maharashtra and Delhi to emerge as the country's top performing state in primary and middle school education, with the latest NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog report placing Bhagwant Mann Government's education reforms at the top of national rankings.

The report showed Punjab leading in foundational learning, digital infrastructure and school facilities, with the state recording higher scores than Kerala in language and mathematics while dramatically expanding smart classrooms, internet access and computer availability in government schools. Congratulating in a video



message, CM Bhagwant Mann said, "In consonance with the dictum 'You reap what you sow', the state has invested sincerely in education. The state government upgraded primary and

middle school education, strengthened the system, introduced smart classrooms and provided advanced training to teachers. Today, the results of those efforts have started showing. The state government sowed well, so now it is reaping excellent results." Highlighting Punjab's achievement in the NITI Aayog rankings, the Punjab CM stated, "NITI Aayog, one of the Government of India's premier institutions, has released new figures showing that Punjab has surpassed Kerala, Maharashtra and Delhi to secure the number one position in primary and middle school education. In Class 3 language performance, Punjab scored 82% while Kerala scored 75%.

MAHANAGAR METRO EXCLUSIVE

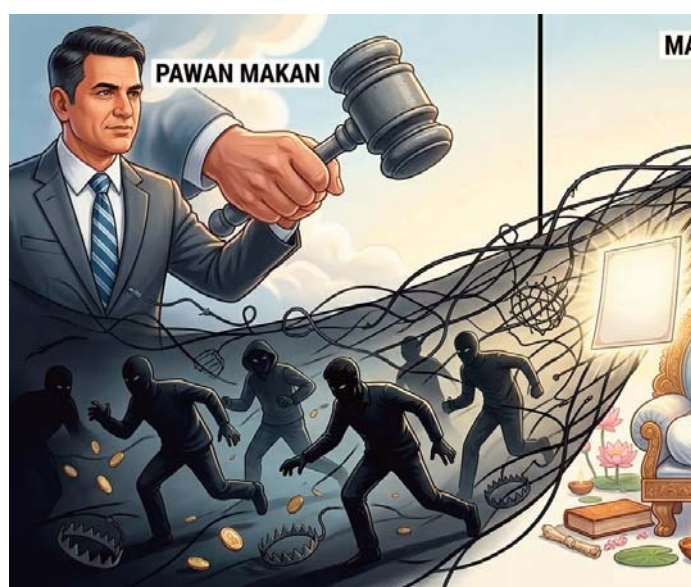
Alleged Multi-Crore Blackmail Syndicate Exposed; Investigation Raises Questions Over FIR Motive and Role of Influential Figures

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Makan

Ahmedabad: A sensational development has emerged in the alleged honeytrap case involving Jain monk Rajatilak Sagarji Maharaj, as fresh revelations point toward what investigators and media sources describe as an organized multi-crore blackmail and extortion syndicate targeting influential religious figures. The controversy, which initially appeared to be a straightforward criminal complaint, has now taken a dramatic turn after purported affidavits linked to complainant Kiran Doshi and his wife surfaced, triggering intense debate within the Jain community and among legal circles. Affidavits Spark New Questions According to sources, the affidavits have raised serious doubts regarding the intent and credibility behind the FIR filed in the matter. The documents allegedly suggest that the case may have been used as a pressure tactic aimed at extracting massive financial

settlements. The emerging questions include: Was the FIR filed as part of a larger strategy to pressure the monk? Who were the real

scrutiny of the entire case. Prominent Names Under Scanner Sources familiar with the developments claim that several



masterminds allegedly operating behind the scenes? Was there a coordinated network involved in targeting religious leaders for extortion? The revelations have reportedly caused significant concern among members of the Jain community and intensified

influential names, including Hardik Hudiya, Jagat Parekh, Vikram Singhvi, and Vikram Bafna, are now being discussed in connection with the alleged conspiracy. While no official charges against these individuals have been confirmed publicly, speculation sur-

rounding their alleged involvement has fueled widespread discussion across Gujarat. Observers believe that as the investigation progresses, more details regarding the alleged network and its financial dealings could emerge. Allegations of Pressure and Intimidation Reports also suggest that as media investigations deepen, attempts are allegedly being made to influence narratives, spread misinformation, and pressure journalists covering the story. In a strongly worded statement, senior journalist and Group Editor Pawan Makan asserted that investigative journalism would continue regardless of intimidation attempts. "Truth cannot be buried under pressure. Every layer of this conspiracy will be exposed before the public." Outrage Within Jain Community The case has sparked anger and concern among sections of the Jain community, with many community leaders demanding a transparent and

impartial investigation. Several voices within the community have stated that any attempt to malign religious figures for financial gain must be dealt with strictly under the law, regardless of the influence or status of those involved. Key Questions Being Raised The unfolding controversy has led to several critical questions: Will investigators uncover the full extent of the alleged blackmail syndicate? Could influential individuals allegedly linked to the operation face legal consequences? Is there a larger network operating beyond Gujarat? Will agencies pursue financial and digital trails connected to the alleged settlement racket? As the investigation continues, the case is rapidly evolving into one of Gujarat's most talked-about controversies involving religion, influence, media scrutiny, and alleged extortion. More revelations are expected in the coming days as the probe deepens.

Kerala CM suspense drags into day 7 amid Congress factional war, poster fights

New Delhi.(Agency)

All other states that went to the polls along with Kerala have already installed their chief ministers. However, seven days after the Assembly election results were announced, the suspense over the Congress's choice for Kerala Chief Minister continues, with the party high command yet to announce its nominee.

The Congress high command is engaged in intense deliberations to finalise a name from among the top contenders -- KC Venugopal, Ramesh Chennithala and VD Satheesan -- amid a fierce factional war, poster campaigns and shows of strength by supporters of each leader over the past few days. According to party sources, an announcement is likely soon.

On Saturday, the Congress leadership convened in Delhi to discuss the matter after observers sent to Kerala sought the preferences of elected MLAs. The three-hour meeting at Mallikarjun Kharge's residence was attended by senior leader Rahul Gandhi, All India Congress Committee general secretary in-charge of Kerala Deepa Dasmunshi, AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, senior state leaders Ramesh Chennithala and VD Satheesan, Kerala Congress chief Sunny Joseph, and senior observers Ajay Maken and Mukul Wasnik.

There was no major development from the Congress high command on Sunday, but Monday is expected to be crucial for the state, which has voted the Congress-led alliance to power with 102 seats in the 140-member Assembly.

Sources said a majority of Congress MLAs favoured Venugopal for the top post, while Satheesan was widely seen as the public's preferred choice. The delay in the party's decision is understood to have arisen from a debate over whether the chief ministerial pick should be based on legislative backing or

News box

MCG chief removes zonal taxation officer amid allegations of irregularities

GURGAON.(Agency)

MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya on Saturday removed zonal taxation officer (Zone 3), Dinesh Kumar, from his post with immediate effect, following serious complaints and alleged irregularities in the creation of property IDs. Officials said that the action was taken after the officer allegedly cancelled more than 300 property ID applications within two days without proper justification. Following this, the commissioner withdrew the officer's charge and assigned the responsibility to acting zonal taxation officer Rajesh Yadav. "We were receiving complaints about irregularities in the branch, and when we noticed that such a large number of property ID applications were reverted without any justification, I took action. For now, the ZTO has been removed from the post," Dahiya told TOI. He added, "My team has been working tirelessly to enhance our revenue from property tax collection, and we aim to achieve the target of Rs 500 crore this year."

Kumar was earlier transferred to Faridabad in 2022 after an inquiry found he had fraudulently transferred a shop to his son under the Svamitva Scheme.

When contacted, Dinesh told TOI, "I recently took charge of the ZTO at MCG on April 16. I have only down-marked the files to the staff since the creation of the new property IDs mandatorily requires site verification. I have not sent back the files to the public/residents. Moreover, there is no public complaint against me." Following reports of large-scale application reversions, the commissioner directed additional commissioner Yash Jaluka to carry out a surprise inspection at the property tax office. The civic body also warned that employees or officers found allowing brokers to bring multiple files into the office could face strict disciplinary action. In an effort to curb alleged corruption and commission-based practices in the property tax wing, the civic body also decided to take a series of structural reforms. As part of the overhaul, employees who were posted in the same positions in the property tax department for an extended period are expected to be transferred, with new staff being

ITMS: 1L challans in 4 months, most to bikers without helmets

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Since the rollout of Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) in Ghaziabad in Jan, over 1 lakh challans worth Rs 5.2 crore have been issued for violations in less than four months from Feb. Riding without a helmet topped the list, accounting for 93% of fines with over 97,000 challans issued, followed by triple riding, with more than 5,000 cases.

"The system was introduced in Jan, but we started generating challans from Feb," said municipal commissioner Vikramaditya Singh Malik.

Currently, the ITMS project only tracks four violations — riding without a helmet, triple riding, red light violation and stop line violation. Of the total challans, 9,74,874 were issued for riding without a helmet, followed by 5,245 fines for triple riding. Red light violations and stop line violations accounted for 659 and 461, respectively.

"It is evident now under which heads maximum traffic violations come, and the traffic department will have to devise and enforce traffic rules accordingly," Malik added. Cameras are set to be installed at 78 spots across the city, including stretches like Hapur tri-junction to Mohan Nagar, Mohan Nagar to Seemapuri border, Tulsi Niketan to Nag Dwar, Elevated Road to Hapur Chungi, ALT to Meerut tri-junction, Hapur Chungi to Atma Ram Steels, Old Bus-Stand to Ambedkar Road, and Hapur tri-junction to Lal Kuan. Other key features of the ITMS project include pan-tilt-zoom cameras, red light vehicle detection systems and speed violation cameras. The artificial intelligence component can identify traffic violations such as riding without helmets. Traffic data shows that a total of 4,64,229 fines were issued across the district during the same period last year. These fines covered all traffic violations and all spots across Ghaziabad. On the other hand, ITMS only covers four violations and is only operational in the city or municipal area so far.

No seats, no water, locked washroom: Visitors flag lack of upkeep at SRO

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Residents raised serious concerns regarding the inadequate facilities and mismanagement at the Dadri tehsil sub-registrar office, a crucial location for property registrations in the area, particularly for flats in Greater Noida West. They highlighted challenges faced by countless visitors who flock to this office daily for essential services. Some of these include no waiting area or seats, leaving citizens to queue up in the hot sun, an unusable and locked washroom, and no provision for drinking water, etc. In a letter to the district magistrate, Sector 77 resident Amit Gupta underscored the absence of basic amenities that contribute to an uncomfortable and often distressing experience for the public. The office contains no provision for drinking water or washrooms, he said. "The only restroom available remains locked, causing significant inconvenience," Gupta added. While there are some seating arrangements inside, visitors must endure long waits outside under a lone shed, which offers no protection from the sultry heat. Another resident, Brijesh Singh, criticised the lack of ventilation in the biometric verification area, where the uncomfortable temperatures are exacerbated by an iron shed that traps heat. Safety is another major concern. Broken manhole covers throughout the office premises have been covered with wooden planks, posing a risk of visitors falling in, Gupta said. Two large coolers placed at the front entrance were found out of use, likely in need of repairs. Residents have demanded that they be repaired and that coolers be installed in the outdoor shed to provide the much-needed relief to people waiting in the sweltering heat. "In an office that generates substantial revenue, why are basic amenities such as seating, fans, and drinking water missing?" Gupta said. As temperatures soar, the need for immediate improvements becomes more pressing to ensure that all residents can access essential services in a comfortable and safe environment.

8 months gone, key stretch in Gurgaon dug up for sewer work still not repaired

GURGAON.(Agency)

Eight months after sewer work was completed on an 18-metre-wide road in Sector 9A, residents say the stretch continues to remain unrepaired.

A 900-metre stretch connecting the area near the ESI hospital to the main pumping station was dug up last year for laying a sewer line. However, while the pipeline work has been completed, the road restoration is still pending, leaving behind an uneven surface filled with mud and potholes. Residents say only dense bituminous macadam was done on the stretch and said that, despite repeated assurances over the past several months, no substantial work has been done.

Meanwhile, residents are presented with different reasons for delays. "Earlier, the restoration work was delayed because the quality of the material used by the contractor was found to be substandard. Later, we were informed that samples were collected and sent for testing,



following which the contractor's payment was withheld. Later, officials said the work would be taken up separately following the resurfacing of sector roads. Then they said a water pipeline was yet to be laid on this stretch.

After the pipeline work was completed, they cited issues related to bitumen supply due to West Asia crisis," said Suraj Bhola, general secretary of Sector 9A. Residents said the stretch has become increasingly unsafe for

commuters and pedestrians. During even light rainfall earlier this year, several portions developed deep potholes and accumulated water. With the monsoon around the corner, they fear the situation could worsen.

They have urged civic body to immediately begin proper restoration work before the onset of the rainy season. They said the prolonged delay has caused inconvenience to commuters, school vehicles and emergency services using the road daily. "The road is currently surviving only because of temporary repairs. Once heavy rain starts, the entire stretch may turn into slush. It can become highly accident-prone," Vinod Arora, RWA president. Meanwhile, the MCG official said, "We had rejected the DBM work done by the contractor twice after complaints regarding poor quality.

Thunderstorm, gusty winds likely across Haryana till May 14, Faridabad records season's highest 45.2°C

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Haryana is likely to witness thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds over the next few days under the influence of a western disturbance, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting light to moderate rain at isolated places till May 14.

The weather department said there would be no large change in maximum temperatures during the next three to four days, though intermittent rain activity may provide brief relief from heat conditions in parts of the state.

In Gurgaon, the maximum temperature was recorded at 35.3 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature settled at 25.5 degrees Celsius. NorthCap University AWS recorded a maximum of 37.6 degrees Celsius. Temperatures in several districts remained in the mid-to-high 30s.

Minimum temperatures across Haryana remained near normal despite an average rise of 1.6 degrees Celsius compared with the previous day. Rohtak recorded the

day, day temperatures across Haryana remained 2.4 degrees Celsius below normal on average, according to IMD data.

Faridabad recorded the highest maximum temperature in the state at 45.2 degrees Celsius on Saturday. Among other districts, Bhiwani recorded 42 degrees Celsius, Sirsa 41.4 degrees Celsius, Narnaul 39 degrees Celsius, Hisar 38.7 degrees Celsius and Rohtak 38.5 degrees Celsius. The IMD said a western disturbance as a trough in middle and upper tropospheric westerlies persists over north India and is influencing weather conditions over Haryana and adjoining states. The department has advised people to remain cautious during thunderstorm activity, especially in open areas, and avoid taking shelter under trees during



lowest minimum temperature in the state at 20.6 degrees Celsius. Gurgaon minimum was 21.5 degrees Celsius.

Despite a marginal rise of 0.8 degrees Celsius in the average maximum temperature compared with the previous

Faulty motor leaves Gurgaon's Sushant Lok 2 high and dry, no supply for a month

Noida.(Agency)

Nearly 2,000 families in A and A1 blocks of Sushant Lok 2 have been without GMDA water supply for over a month due to a faulty motor. This has forced residents to depend entirely on borewell water amid concerns over depleting groundwater levels. Residents said the issue lies at the junction where GMDA's main water line connects with the colony's internal distribution network, maintained by MCG. A motor installed there to push water into the internal pipeline system has remained dysfunctional for over a month, disrupting supply to both blocks.

Residents said adjoining sectors and societies continue to receive regular canal water supply, while A and A1 blocks are relying solely on groundwater extraction.

"Every few days, the motor is repaired, but it stops functioning again within hours. There is no permanent solution in place

and the issue is being managed through temporary fixes," said the RWA president of the two blocks, Vinita Sinha.

Residents said the situation is particularly



concerning because of the city's falling groundwater levels. "Why should nearly 2,000 families depend entirely on borewell water when the GMDA supply is

available nearby? Continuous extraction will further worsen groundwater depletion," Sinha added.

According to residents, the motor recently caught fire and was repaired again temporarily. They claimed the existing motor and pipe size are inadequate to draw sufficient water into the colony's internal distribution system and may require replacement or augmentation.

Digvijay Singh, vice-president of the RWA, said repeated complaints have been raised with civic authorities, but no long-term solution has been implemented. "There is no stable system in place at present. Repairs are carried out repeatedly, but the problem resurfaces almost immediately," he said. Residents said MCG officials assured them that the issue would be resolved, but no timeline has been provided for the restoration of regular supply.

How arbitrary bus halts choke NCR eways daily

NOIDA.(Agency)

Every evening, NCR's expressways grind to a halt, not from sheer traffic volume, but from something more mundane—a bus stopped in the fast lane, a passenger hauling luggage over a central divider, traffic braking hard behind them.

The region's highways were mainly built for cars, for speed, for seamless connectivity to the capital. Buses, and the hundreds who ride them, were never quite part of the plan. The result plays out in real time, every day. From Noida's late-night corridors to the flyover ramps of the Delhi-Meerut Expressway in Ghaziabad, and the Iffco Chowk elevated U-turn in Gurgaon, buses stop wherever passengers gather — on fast-moving carriageways, at roundabouts, in the shadow of grade separators that were designed to keep traffic from ever slowing down. Motorists are forced to brake hard while commuters scramble across traffic to board them.

On the DME and NH-9, between Noida's Sector 62 and Indirapuram — barely four kilometres — evening commuters routinely take 40 minutes. The cause is not volume alone. At Chijjars, Vijay Nagar, ABES and Lal Kuan intersections on the expressway, UPSRTC buses and private operators pull over on the main carriageway. Passengers bound for Meerut, Hapur and Baghpat and, on longer runs, Patna, Gorakhpur, Varanasi and Nepal, spill onto the road with trolley luggage and backpacks, queue along the shoulder and median, then make a dash

across moving lanes.

On the four-lane NH-9, the scene tips beyond disorder. Buses line up parallel to each other across the carriageway, resembling a bus terminal that someone forgot to move off the highway. Passengers haul bags over the four-foot central divider and cut through speeding traffic to reach them. Vikram Goswami commutes daily between the Electronic City metro station in Noida's Sector 62 and Shipra Suncity in Indirapuram. The underpass he uses was designed to bypass the Model Town intersection and shave time off the journey. It rarely does. "By the time I reach the NH-9 exit toward Indirapuram, vehicles are already crawling because of buses standing on the road near the CISF cut and people trying to cross through moving traffic," he said.

A kilometre ahead at the Chijjars cut, the pattern repeats. Sumit Sabharwal, who travels daily between Delhi and Ghaziabad, understands why the stops exist — they spare passengers a detour to a terminal — but the cost falls on everyone else. "On an expressway, drivers expect a certain rhythm. But here, a person can appear between buses carrying luggage, or a bus can stop without warning. Drivers slam on the brakes. It creates panic."

Under UP Roadways rules, boarding and deboarding are permitted only at designated locations. On NH-9, these are essentially the service lanes, not the main

carriageway. But on the ground, demand collapses the distinction. Ghaziabad ACP (traffic) Rakesh Tripathi said enforcement was complicated because the halts were officially recognised boarding points. "Traffic personnel are deployed to ensure buses stop in a single lane. Even then, during rush hours, the line extends till the NH-9 exits." The



department has written to NHAI requesting taller dividers on the DME to prevent jaywalking, but awaits a response.

In Noida, chaos after dark On Noida Expressway, the disruption stretches well past midnight. Private buses toward Mathura, Aligarh, Bulandshahr, Lucknow and Patna have spawned informal pickup zones near the Sector 148 cut and at Zero Point, close to the Yamuna Expressway interchange. Food vendors also occupy the stretches,

narrowing the carriageway further.

Omkar Gupta, a sales executive, leaves his Okhla office late, around 9.30 pm, specifically to avoid peak-hour traffic. But it rarely pays off. Congestion sets in 500 metres before Sector 148. "This happens during the night, which makes it even more risky as drivers are moving at high speed," he said. At Pari Chowk in Greater Noida, buses halt at the roundabout as pedestrians converge from multiple directions, producing a nightly tangle of sudden stops and swerving lane changes. GB Nagar ARTO (enforcement) Udit Narayan said pickup and drop were not permitted on expressways. "We conduct drives and issue fines of Rs 5,000 for such violations," he said. Vehicles found in breach of other norms are seized.

Gurgaon's fast-lane gamble A similar scene plays out in Gurgaon. Along the Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway, shuttle buses and long-distance coaches stop on the main carriageway at Shankar Chowk, Cyber Park and near Ambience Mall. Near Signature Towers, buses headed toward Jaipur and Rajasthan halt on the expressway rather than pulling into the service lane. Passengers drag heavy suitcases across oncoming traffic, vault crash barriers and board beneath the Iffco Chowk elevated U-turn.

No more traffic jams at Coastal Road exits? BMC's 10-point plan for the north stretch

From JVPD flyover to Mrunaltai Gore bridge, here's how the civic body plans to decongest the Versova-Dahisar corridor

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is reworking its road network to prevent traffic bottlenecks on the upcoming north phase of the Mumbai Coastal Road Project, which will link Versova with Dahisar. The civic body has charted plans to integrate at least ten key routes with the corridor, from realignments along the JVPD flyover to the Mrunaltai Gore bridge in the western suburbs.

The new coastal road between Versova and Dahisar is being built as an alternate north-south corridor to decongest the Western Express Highway, Linking Road and SV Road. But even with signal-free traffic on the main stretch, commuters face jams at the entry and exit points. "Coastal road moves in one direction and is an example of

linear development, where the entry and exits to the road are planned at one fixed point. Owing to the sole entry and exit locations, all traffic from feeder roads rush towards the coastal road junctions, leading to significant congestion in the area. This creates a bottleneck outside the coastal road, which ultimately also has an impact on the carrying capacity of the road," said a senior BMC official. To fix this, the BMC wants to give drivers multiple ways to get on and off the corridor, rather than funneling everyone through a single point.

"To prevent crowding at sole entry and exit locations, we seek to give the drivers multiple options which will allow them to arrive in and out of coastal road in intermediate sections as well," the official



said.

Data accessed by The Indian Express shows that one key intervention is planned at the flyover over the Juhu-Vile Parle Development Scheme (JVPD). The flyover near the local self-government office will link to the Versova Link Road, which will then connect to the Versova Bandra Sea Link connector and, from there, to the

coastal road.

"It will enable commuters arriving from Gokhale bridge to reach CD Barfiwala flyover, from where the JVPD flyover will commence. Work on the project is underway and the project will enable direct connectivity from the VBSL Versova end point to Western Express Highway," an official said.

The upcoming Versova-Madh bridge will also connect to the coastal road at the Madh interchange near Lokhandwala. From there, commuters can access the Western Express Highway, and the MMRDA is building an extended corridor towards the Jogeshwari Versova Link Road (JVLRL).

Other planned interventions include connecting the coastal road near the

Lokhandwala interchange to an arm of the Mrunaltai Gore flyover up to the Western Express Highway, and linking the upcoming Ramchandra Nullah bridge in Malad to the coastal road at the Mindspace interchange.

Additional connections are planned at the Charkop Interchange at Sector 8 with SV Road near Poisar junction, Link Road at the Gorai Interchange, the Dahisar connector, and the Kandarpada rotary.

Beyond these link-ups, the BMC will also build a new 5.5-km high-speed corridor between Goregaon and Magathane. Running parallel to the Western Express Highway, it will connect the coastal road to the Goregaon-Mulund Link Road and give motorists direct access to the GMLR twin tunnels.

Short news

Chaos after wedding, bride and groom's families attack each other

Maharashtra. (Agency)

A violent altercation erupted after a wedding in Maharashtra's Vasai, with footage of the incident capturing members of the bride's and groom's families engaged in a heated physical brawl.

According to reports, tensions flared between the two groups shortly after the wedding ceremony concluded. What initially began as a verbal argument quickly escalated into a



violent brawl, with several people allegedly assaulting by throwing plastic chairs at each other.

Some individuals sustained injuries and are currently undergoing treatment. The incident took a serious legal turn after both sides approached the police and lodged complaints. While the groom's side filed a case alleging assault, the bride's side registered a more serious complaint under the POCSO Act.

Police have confirmed that cases have been registered by both sides and that some accused persons linked to the incident have been detained for questioning. Investigators are also examining the viral live video as part of the probe.

Delay in supply of subsidised high-yielding paddy seeds leaves Cuttack farmers in a difficult spot

CUTTACK. (Agency)

Farmers in Cuttack district are a worried lot as the state government is yet to supply them with subsidised high-yielding paddy seeds for kharif cultivation.

Owing to the unavailability of the high-yielding paddy seeds, farmers this year began their kharif paddy cultivation on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya on April 20 by using their previously stored uncertified traditional seed varieties.

Akshaya Tritiya is considered the most auspicious occasion for farmers to begin their new cycle of agriculture activities for a good harvest. Previously, farmers used to preserve and sow different varieties of traditional paddy seeds. However, after introduction of hybrid and high-yielding seeds which were made available to them at subsidised rates, farmers preferred to use them instead of the traditional seed varieties.

"Akshaya Tritiya is an auspicious occasion for beginning paddy cultivation. However, as the state government is delaying to supply subsidised high-yielding paddy seeds, we are unable to begin the cultivation cycle in time," said a farmer while urging to ensure that the subsidised paddy seeds are provided to them before Akshaya Tritiya every year.

Contacted, officials of the Odisha State Seeds Corporation (OSSC) said they have already procured 5,462 quintal of paddy seeds against the target of 6,034 quintal for Cuttack district. OSSC zonal manager Satya Prakash Das said the corporation began supplying nine varieties of high-yielding paddy seeds to primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACS) from Friday. Six PACS have already lifted the stock. The nine varieties of high-yielding paddy seeds being supplied include MTU-1318, MTU-1061, CR-1009, Kalachampa, Pooja, S-S-1, CR-1018, Sarala and MTU-1001, he said.

Man shoots elderly mother, brother over property dispute in Banda

Lucknow. (Agency)

A 42-year-old farmer allegedly killed his 62-year-old mother and brother with his licensed rifle in Banda on Sunday following a heated dispute over the distribution of money from the sale of a portion of ancestral land. Police said the violence erupted when the accused, Raj Kishore Mishra, objected to handing over the possession of the property. The incident took place on International Mother's Day.

Police said that Raj Kishore's father, Jagdish Mishra, mother Shanti Devi, and three brothers, including victim Devideen Mishra (44), were in the process of transferring the possession of the land to the buyer when Raj Kishore arrived and clashed with them. The confrontation soon escalated, and police said the accused allegedly opened fire with his licensed rifle, critically injuring his mother and brother. Hearing the gunshots,

nearby residents rushed to the scene and took the injured to the hospital, where doctors declared them dead. Meanwhile, the accused fled the spot.



Banda Superintendent of Police Palash Bansal stated that the accused was enraged by his father's decision to sell the ancestral land, as he reportedly did not receive a share of the sale proceeds. Police believe the bitter family dispute led to the deadly attack. Both bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination. He added that

police teams are conducting raids to arrest the accused.

According to the police, they received information on Sunday afternoon that a man had shot and injured his mother and younger brother in Baberu town, after which a police team rushed to the spot and took the injured to the hospital.

During the preliminary investigation, the police learned that the accused had been unhappy about his family's decision to sell a portion of the ancestral property and had previously argued with them over the matter. He also demanded that the money obtained from selling the land be equally distributed among the four brothers — which his father rejected. His other three brothers also supported the father's decision. On Sunday, upon learning that the buyer had arrived to take possession of the land, he reached the spot and objected.

Row over Khejuri fire; TMC alleges arson, BJP seeks probe

Kolkata. (Agency)

A massive fire that gutted dozens of shops in Khejuri area in Purba Medinipur has ignited a war of words between the ruling BJP and Opposition TMC, with the latter calling it a "barbaric act of state-sponsored arson" and the former calling for a fact-based approach.

According to police, the fire broke out late Saturday night in the Nickkasba GP of Hijli Sharif. Fueled by strong sea winds, the fire tore through a cluster of temporary stalls, destroying between 50 and 60 shops overnight. Though initial rumors circulated regarding an LPG cylinder blast, officials have found no evidence to support that claim.



"What unfolded in Khejuri's Nickkasba GP, Hijli Sharif is nothing short of barbaric. Over 60 shops were torched by BJP-backed miscreants, destroying the livelihoods of innocent people overnight... Hindu-owned shops, Muslim-owned shops—it made no difference. This

was not an attack on any one community; it was a calculated assault on Bengal's social harmony," TMC National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee wrote on social media. Local authorities and BJP representatives have urged for a fact-based approach.

Local BJP MLA Subrata Paik dismissed the allegations of arson, pointing to the early findings of the investigators.

"Early findings show a short circuit caused the fire. However, we demand a full police probe to ensure the facts are clear. Let the police investigate the exact cause," he told reporters. Preliminary police reports indicate that the fire was likely caused by an electrical short circuit.

66% of Odisha's informal workforce paid below minimum wage, says SBI report



BHUBANESWAR. (Agency)

Odisha has emerged as one of the states with the highest incidence of minimum wage violation among casual workers, with 66 per cent of the workforce reportedly earning below the statutory minimum wage, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)-2025 has revealed.

The report released by State Bank of India on May 8, 2026, based on unit-level labour data merged with statewise minimum wage rates for 2022 sourced from the chief labour commissioner (central) said Odisha ranked among the worst-performing states in wage compliance, behind only Chhattisgarh where nearly 70 per cent of casual workers were found to be underpaid. Jharkhand followed closely with 65 per cent of casual workers receiving wages below the legal threshold.

The study highlighted "substantial interstate disparities" in minimum wage compliance across India's informal labour market. Maharashtra and West Bengal also recorded significant levels of non-compliance, with nearly one-third of casual workers earning below mandated wage levels.

Using a logistic regression model to assess wage violations, the SBI report estimated that nearly 25 per cent of casual workers across the country were paid less than the statutory minimum wage, underscoring major gaps in labour law enforcement and wage protection mechanisms.

For Odisha, the findings assumes significance given the state's heavy dependence on informal employment. The report noted that around 70 per cent of Odisha's workforce falls under the informal category, placing the state 10th in terms of informal workforce share nationally.

Paneer paratha, sparse classrooms, meditation room: A university in India, but with 'a very Australian flavour'

The first offshore campus of an international university in India has 23 students in its second batch, and offers business analytics and cybersecurity courses

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Jayam Patel, 23, had completed a one-year postgraduate diploma in computer studies and was aiming for a "foreign education experience" in the United States after earning a master's degree from Gujarat University last year, until he read about the "volatile employment situation" there. His parents, too, considered it risky for him to go abroad. For them, Deakin University came as a timely answer. Barely 30 kms away from where he lives in Ahmedabad, the institute offers the cybersecurity course, which Jayam had been wanting to pursue with a foreign university to enrich his resume, he tells.

The grey box-like building opens into the first offshore teaching campus of an international university in India. Launched in 2024 with 42 students, who graduated in March, the campus is located

in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in a special economic zone (SEZ).

Visitors must present their IDs at the security desk near the entrance, which opens into a space with a colourful wall and where the Tricolour and the Australian flag stand side by side. Soon after, there are sparse, quiet classrooms. In one of them, a small group of students is huddled around a professor over a desk. Some with headphones and laptops can be seen working in the comfort of desks placed in the corridors. This smaller version of its parent campus feels different from other Indian colleges, where classrooms are set in rows and buzz with students and staff.

A grandstand with large cushions is a

common space for events and gatherings. Students say they can even grab internship and job offers over a table



tennis match at this co-working space that is used by startups, too.

Ruhani Patel, a business analytics student who completed her graduation from the

Pandit Deendayal Energy University (PDEU)—a private university located nearby in Gandhinagar, vouches for the "active learning method" followed at Deakin over the 'dictating of notes' by teachers in her former college. "This is not where 50-60 students fill a class. There was also a stark change in the teaching methodology. Rather than being dictated notes, students come to the class prepared. Also, we are evaluated on our assignments, and not exams," says Ruhani. "I prefer this setup over any other Indian university or even the Deakin University campus in Australia.

With this teacher-student ratio, it feels more like personalised teaching. We have the freedom to approach any faculty at any time to clear our doubts."

Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven

The huge, and sometimes violent, protests in Noida last month by factory workers and domestic helpers over the increase in minimum wages.

The refusal of a High Court judge to recuse herself from a case in which her children are employed by one of the parties, and she herself is reported to have attended functions organised by that party's affiliates. A "gherao" of judicial officers (appointed as adjudicators for appeals by deleted voters) by thousands of such disenfranchised voters in a district of West Bengal.

The deletion of names of almost 30 lakh voters in West Bengal, who had voted in previous elections and possessed all the required documents, because of an opaque, algorithm-driven "logical discrepancy" feature not provided in any law or used in any other state.

The holding of polls without deciding the pending appeals of these 30 lakh unfortunates, and the callous indifference of the Supreme Court to their constitutional right to vote, saying that they could vote in the next election!

The imposition of a casteist bail condition on accused (but not convicted) Adivasi Dalits by an Odisha court to the effect that they should clean police stations every morning for two months, demeaning their dignity and making a mockery of the law. The defection of seven Rajya Sabha MPs, led by one Raghav Chadha, from the AAP to the BJP. A poor tribal in Jharkhand being compelled to carry the corpse of his dead sister to a bank in order to prove her death, just so that the meagre balance in her account could be transferred to him as the heir. The KYC converted from Know Your Customer to Know Your Corpse. The dismissal of cases of hate speech against leaders of a political party by a court on the grounds that their utterances did not amount to expressing hate or inciting violence. One of these speeches included the now infamous exhortation: *Desh ke gaddaron ko, goli maro salon ko*. The other was a video of a Chief Minister pointing a rifle at a target with a picture of a Muslim man. The incidents differ in context, content, import and location, but they all contain one common element: the complete collapse of what makes a developed country — governance, common law, societal values, empathy, the rule of law, trust in the government or its institutions, the idea of equity and even-handed justice.

Taken together, these point to the breakdown of something cumulatively more precious — democracy itself. It vindicates the far-sighted and cautionary words of Dr Ambedkar: that democracy in India was only a thin layer of top soil which could be blown away easily and should not be taken for granted. A devil's wind is blowing through the country these days, removing the top soil and exposing the outcrop of power, lust, greed, religious bigotry, casteism, violence that have always underpinned our society. We had expected that progressive governments, democratically elected, would over time erode and disintegrate these negative features of our civilisational landscape, but the opposite has happened. Successive governments, more so the one we have had for the last 12 years, have only reinforced these flaws and fault lines; these have been made the driving force behind national (even international) policies; these are being embedded in laws and educational curriculum; these have become unapologetic instruments of state policy; these constitute the agenda on which elections are being fought.

The defection of Raghav Chadha only confirms this terminal decline because it shows that a liberal upbringing and foreign education is no shield against the unscrupulousness of India's politics, and it vindicates the mounting distrust of politicians in general. The executive has even managed to brutalise our society to a point where the top 10 per cent care only for their own comforts and privileges, leaving the other 90 per cent to survive as best as they can. We are among the most inequitable countries in the world, and proud of it. Democracy is the last thing which can emerge from this witch's cauldron.

A decade in Iran and how it shaped me and my family

There was a sense of connectedness, of shared humanity that seemed to be inextricably intertwined with Iranian culture.

I was toddler when my family moved to Iran and much of what I recall takes one of two forms — visual snapshots or sounds and rhythms. Music is said to be the echo that stays even when the words have faded and one pre-revolutionary memory that stands out in my mind is a Farsi children's poem, 'Ma Golhoye Khandanim' (We are the smiling flowers). It is a poem celebrating children as the future of Iran, their joy, innocence and national pride, a poem rendered particularly poignant by what confronts the people and children of Iran today. Here is an English translation: The truth is that Iran was an accident, but quite possibly the most wonderful accident that could ever have befallen our family. It was the 1970s and my father was working as an English language specialist at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad, when a recruitment team from Tehran University arrived, seeking instructors. My father was quite settled and what with a baby — my baby brother — on the way, he had no plans for change. But then, the hand of fate intervened in the form of a well-meaning older colleague who persuaded my father to attend an interview. If nothing else, the colleague argued, it would be good practice and help to hone my father's interviewing skills.

I often wonder what our lives would have been like if my father had refused. But as it was, he not only attended the interview, but was also offered a job on the spot! My mother saw it as a wonderful opportunity to expand our horizons, to explore the unexplored, and so it was that after my brother was born, we moved to Tehran, Iran.

Iran is an experience that touches the heart and soul in ways that are hard to describe. Rabindranath Tagore expressed it thus: "The spirit of Persia has always been a spirit of beauty and harmony. It is a land where the soul of the poet finds its home." The country welcomed us with open arms and the extent of warmth and hospitality that we experienced there I have never encountered anywhere since. People we had just met invited us into their homes for meal after meal. The feeling of community and generosity of spirit was there for all to see, and I cannot recall ever feeling like an outsider. There was never any sense of being 'the other'. The sizeable expatriate community, particularly Indians, played a part in this, of course. But it was more than that. There was a sense of connectedness, of shared humanity that seemed to be inextricably intertwined with Iranian culture. Initially enrolled in a British-run international preschool, my brother and I then moved to the Indian School in Tehran, where we learned Hindi, Punjabi and Farsi, switching between them with ease. Of these my favourite was Farsi, a charmingly lyrical language that is pleasing to the ear. One of the most surprising things for

me as a child — other than realising that it snowed in Iran, of course — was finding out just how much Indian and Iranian culture had in common, from language to food. The mouth-watering naan, pulao and faloodeh savoured in Iran I would later find in India. In language, I delighted in the discovery of shared words between Hindi and Farsi — words like *zindagi*, *jaan* and *azad*. And Iranians were always thrilled to learn that we were Indian. "Same culture, same civilisation!" they would enthuse. Keenly aware of their history, they knew of the deep historical and cultural ties that bind us, something I would learn about from my father, who was something of a history buff: how we came from the same family in the Steppes of Central Asia before migration separated us into Indo-Aryans and Iranians; how later, the highly



Persianised Mughal rulers of India adopted Persian as their court language, influencing languages like Urdu and Hindi; how Sanskrit and Avestan from ancient Iran were sister languages, branches of the same tree. I would also learn that the paternal grandfather of Iran's first Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini was born in Uttar Pradesh and fled India to escape British colonialism, eventually settling in Khomein, Iran in the 1830s. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, "Few people have been more closely related in origin and throughout history than the people of India and the people of Iran."

In fact, Iran's connections were not restricted to India.

Ancient Iran (Persia) was the dominant nation of West Asia for over twelve centuries, with Persian models of administration, trade and inclusiveness influencing Western nations as well. Pre-dating the Magna Carta by over 1,700 years, the Cyrus Cylinder is a Persian clay artefact from 539 BC that records Cyrus the Great's decrees on religious tolerance and the restoration of displaced peoples to their homelands, including the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. Cyropaedia, a classic Greek study of Cyrus's leadership, influenced Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers of America, helping shape his ideals of tolerant and enlightened government. And the Iranians we met were both aware and proud of their rich cultural heritage and its contribution to other civilisations. More recently, I was reminded of this by the

response of Iranian diplomat, Mojtaba Ferdosipour, to the American threat to destroy Iran's 3,000-year-old civilisation. In an interview with the Associated Press, he was quoted as saying "...no fool would cut off the branch of a tree he is sitting on because he himself would fall first, and it is the sturdy tree that always stands, not the branches and appendages that have grown from it..." Regardless of one's political inclination, the sense of pride is unmistakable. Iranians' pride in their past was balanced by an attitude of humility and curiosity towards learning. It was almost as if knowing where they had come from gave them the strength to explore and grow, like the spreading branches of a tree anchored by strong roots. Nowhere was this clearer than in my father's students who seemed extremely eager to learn. Many of them sought extra classes and tuition in English, as did professionals like doctors and engineers who, despite being well-established in their fields, were keen on self-improvement. And when they came to our home for lessons, they were never empty-handed. Instead, they came bearing gifts for their Ustaad, because teachers

and scholarship have always been highly regarded in Persian culture. My family lived in Iran for a decade and in the early years, thanks to the Shah's alliance with the West, American influences were everywhere, shaping everything from fashion to television programs and music. Young Iranians, like their Western counterparts, often dressed in bell-bottoms and mini-skirts. Our neighbours were fans of Boney M and loved playing their music and dancing to their songs. I remember watching 'Charlie's Angels' and 'The Six Million Dollar Man' — or 'Marde Sheesh Million Dollar' as it was known in Farsi — and as a young girl, was particularly delighted when 'The Bionic Woman' made her television debut!

Drug deaths : NCRB data shows the net is only widening

Similar to Punjab, the drug issue now dominates the political discourse in Tamil Nadu

IT may not give the entire picture and there is no denying that drug overdose deaths often go unreported, but the significance of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data lies in the insights it provides. According to the latest report, of the 978 drug overdose deaths reported across India in 2024, Tamil Nadu accounted for 313, followed by Punjab at 106. Punjab has shed the dubious distinction of leading the tally, but the situation on the ground remains worrying. The number of deaths has gone up from 89 in 2023, when the national tally was 654. What's more alarming, the drug net is widening. Himachal Pradesh reported 31 deaths, up from 21, and Haryana three, from zero a year earlier. Each death denotes a failure at many levels, most of all the inability to prevent the supply lines and offer de-addiction



support at critical moments. Similar to Punjab, the drug issue now dominates the political discourse in Tamil

Nadu. In 2021, the southern state led the national tally with 250 deaths of a total of 737. It managed to bring the numbers down sharply, but the reversal points to the vulnerability. No region is safe. The fight against drugs loses sting in the absence of relentless, coordinated crackdowns against the kingpins, and not just the peddlers. With a focus on supply reduction, there is negligible policy push on demand reduction by addressing the causes of addiction and offering solutions. Punjab has the second-highest NDPS Act crime rate at 29 cases per lakh population and the fourth-highest number of cases. Kerala tops the list in both categories. It's an unfair assessment that the governments in Punjab have ignored the drug menace.

What's inescapable is that they have largely failed. Clearly, the strategies are not working.

Touchstones: Giants we must celebrate

Forget Hindu-Muslim, we are now so sycophantic that even those not connected to politics are denied their due

The world celebrated the centenary of two extraordinary men in the past week. Let me talk first of Sir David Attenborough, a living treasure and someone whose quiet, yet watchful, presence leaves no footprints except those on the ground. Which one of us has not been mesmerised by his television series on Nature and the natural world? From the Earth to the oceans and deep forests, this recorder of the wonders of the world that we are often blind to — or unaware of — has opened our eyes and hearts. His brother, the equally gifted filmmaker Richard Attenborough, was another genius. His 'Gandhi' is one of those classic films that one never tires of seeing. Like these remarkable siblings, two talented storytellers here in India (RK Laxman and RK Narayan) have left their own footprint for us to remember them by. 'Malgudi Days' (RK Narayan's exquisite gems of a small imaginary town and its delightful population) is unforgettable, as are the brilliant cartoons that his brother RK Laxman created for The Times of India for decades. The Common Man, Laxman's eyes and ears, never spoke a word but he saw it all. With a few deft lines, Laxman managed to catch the quintessential soul of the characters he drew — capturing the imperious Mrs G with her hooked nose and tilted chin, or the loveable Nehru with the rose in his sherwani. Even long after their demise, the RK brothers (like the Attenboroughs) have not been bettered.

While on the subject of century tributes, I want to pay a deep homage to another cartoonist who brought a smile to several generations of Indians. Mario Miranda (who would have turned 100 on May 2) also preferred to stay away from public gaze yet his characters have lingered on as delightful memories. Among them are Godbole in a dhoti and shabby coat, holding a rolled-up umbrella, the bosomy secretary Miss Fonseca in a polka-dotted dress tightly stretched over her generous curves, the



corrupt politician Mr Bundalass and his sidekick Moonaswamy and the unforgettable Miss Rajni Nimbupani, the dumb but sexy Bollywood bimbo.

Unlike RK Laxman, Mario's cartoons did not have a clever turn of political phrase but his characters needed no words, except generic ones like 'Saar' to convey a certain mood and situation that needed little else. For years, Mario was the central attraction of The Illustrated Weekly of India and had a loyal following of admiring editors — Khushwant Singh, Frank Moraes and Vinod Mehta, to name just a few. Along with his acolyte Gerson de Cunha, Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes and Alyque Padamsee, he set up what can be called the Bombay

school of irreverence, producing clean fun that was inoffensive but sharp, and lines to make stereotypes that imprinted them on the reader's mind.

Do try and get a copy of Mario's 'To Goa with Love', dedicated to his lovely wife, Habiba, to revisit those innocent times when we had not sanitised our natural responses to such a level of political correctness that the fun went out of humour. What we have also lost is the generosity to pay homage to those who are not from the same political gene pool as us. Forget Hindu-Muslim, we are now so mealy-mouthed and sycophantic that even those who were not in any way connected to politics are not given their due. Look no further than The

Tribune territory to remember all those whom we have not acknowledged sufficiently. The redoubtable MS Randhawa, Chandigarh's first Chief Commissioner, planting the beautiful trees that still stand as a testimony to his unerring taste in greenery, the collection of Kangra paintings and Gandhara sculptures in the Chandigarh Museum and at the Panjab University museum, the famous agricultural university in Ludhiana, the one who started the Van Mahotsav when we are encouraged to plant trees over a week, the Green Revolution... how many other wonderful initiatives were undertaken by this remarkable man who was an author, botanist, civil servant and art historian. I mentioned the university's museum to remember another legendary art scholar, Prof BN Goswamy, whose reputation as an authority on Pahari paintings made him respected across the world.

Dr Randhawa ensured that the collection of Gandhara sculptures from the Lahore Museum came to Chandigarh as India's share. I shudder to think if these worthy people had not been there when Chandigarh was being created. And yet, while every worthless political lightweight and charlatan is decorated with the highest civilian awards, the Bharat Ratna is largely bestowed only on this lot. Think of how many philanthropists, industrialists, writers, academics and scholars are overlooked when we think of celebrating the lives of those Indians who shaped this country, had the courage to speak up fearlessly and quietly did what was right. They spoke through their work and made their long lives an opportunity to create lasting institutions and lay down traditions that would inspire generations after them. There are so many lives which have gone unsung and unacknowledged but their work, like the fragrance from dried roses, refuses to die out. May they always be remembered with bowed heads and deep reverence.

She has just been placed in a small manufacturing firm, as an associate manager-production. On her first day at the office, the first thought that strikes her is: "Is manufacturing really my cup of tea?" With labourers operating their machines around her and a production manager sitting right across her to explain the plan of operation and the schedule of production, she feels ambivalent. Not that she lacks interest, but she knows somewhere that male-dominated industries pose serious challenges for a woman's career progression. She suddenly remembers those peppy words by Marilyn Monroe: "I don't mind living in a man's world as long as I can be a woman in it."

According to research by Catalyst, an NGO focusing on expanding business opportunities for women, talent management systems are often susceptible to pro-male

biases that expectedly result in smaller and less varied employee pools. The lesser the diversity (read the lesser the females), the more stereotypical it gets. This is the reason why women may find progressing and outpacing in these industries can be riddled with hurdles.

It is not very hard to enter a male-dominated profession, but it's tougher to survive in there. Among other obstacles, many women struggle with pre-set notions that certain jobs demand skillsets that are linked to masculinity. To inject some positivity here, let's take a look at 5 ways that women can come into their own in any profession.

Self-analysis

Career development is a continuous process that starts with self-assessment. This critical first step is the foundation step for personal and professional personality development. A routine self-assessment helps keep an individual informed about her strengths and weaknesses at varied stages of life. A comprehensive self-analysis would include doing the SWIPE test, which helps you analyse four core elements of your personality— strengths, weakness, interests, potential development and emotional quotient. Examining these four areas will help you understand your personality in distinct spheres, so you know which parts of your life need further development and which attributes play to your strengths.

Networking

According to Adam Small, CEO of Strategic Business Network, "Networking is the single most powerful marketing tactic to accelerate and sustain success for any individual or organization." It is a powerful tool if you do it the right



5 ways to succeed in a male-dominated Workplace

Rina, 23, has just completed her MBA in production management, and dreams of a corporate career.

way and with the right people in your industry. However, according to a study published in the Harvard Business Review women are often unable to exploit the power of their connections despite their sociability. For women to benefit through networking, they need to engage in interactions that include exchanges about their skills, talents, and potential development. When looking for groups to network with, give preference to those whose members are well-connected over groups that are simply large or well-publicised. Collaboration is the key.

Promote your own self

Be your own "man"! Speak for yourself. Got a new idea or a cost-saving suggestion? Put it on the table. Women have a tendency to underestimate their own performance, especially when they find themselves in a minority, but confidence is a must. So, pave that track with blazing confidence and remember that it's perfectly alright to be wrong or fail sometimes. Just don't dwell on it. Also acknowledge the fact that people around you will, whether intentionally or unknowingly, underestimate you.

There will be times when you will be your only cheerleader. Manage what you can, work hard, follow your gut, stay true at heart and be rational, and things will fall in place.

Research bears out that women who are more aggressive and assertive when the situation calls for it are more likely to be promoted.

Beware of stereotypes

"It's not done that way", "You are new in this field so you probably you don't know"... No! Do not let these kind of statements give you an inferiority complex. Be prepared to assert yourself at all times. This does not mean being rude or uncooperative, but having the confidence to stand your ground and defend your convictions. Success has traditionally been considered acceptable for women only if it's in a field that is judged as appropriate for them and is viewed as off-limits in fields that are male-dominated. You need to fight those conventions.

Find a mentor

Many women must have walked the same path as you and have figured out how to overcome the obstacles along the way. Instead of simply winging it and risking more mistakes, approach them for their guidance. Connect with one or two women you admire and seek their advice when needed. If you do not know of someone directly, use social websites to connect with people in similar fields.

Just remember that there are many successful women out there and most of them are proof that being hardworking, resolute, smart and thick-skinned in the face of critical reviews at their work; have enabled them to rise to the top, with or without familial support. Go on girl! You can be a shero too!

Here's why prioritizing Work is important

The typical work day of a professional is becoming more complex and demanding by the day.

The multitude and variety of tasks can become overwhelming; many employees are unable to handle the stress and face a dip in their productivity. Prioritization skills become a handy tool in such cases and allow professionals to plan their day in a manner that not only creates value, but creates the right value.

Why is prioritizing of workload necessary at all? Abhijit Nimgaonkar, India capability & expertise centre head and office managing principal (Delhi), ZS, answers, "The classic situation faced by employees today is simultaneous urgent requests from multiple stakeholders. In the context of a global marketplace (different time zones), increasing compensation (higher expectations), many communication channels (request reach and immediacy), prioritising daily, weekly, monthly tasks is key to effective responsibility management. Working faster is not the solution; instead, working on the right tasks is essential."



A broad categorization of all tasks is essential to bring prioritization in motion. Srinivas Ghanagam, head HR, Freudenberg India, explains, "Being able to distinguish between 'urgent' and 'important' tasks is one of the best known ways of dealing with a flood of emails, projects and presentations, the former being less critical than the latter. The focus should, therefore, be placed on 'important' work, which is usually more strategic in nature; losing focus of the same can be the undoing of an up and coming executive."

Manuel D'Souza, director - HR, Serco Global Services, tells us how such measures also allow work-life balance, "Time spent on planning activities saves sufficient time in execution. On a regular basis, prioritizing not only makes a person more efficient at daily work-related activities, but also gives them the latitude to focus on their personal goals. It helps strike the right balance to handle both, their professional and personal life."

How can one's prioritization skills be honed? Rajiv Naitani, associate VP HR and L&D, GlobalLogic, gives suggestions:

- Make a work list: Pen down every possible thing you can do in a day;

- Categorize urgent vs important: See if you have any tasks that need immediate attention and if not completed soon, will have serious negative impact on business and people;

- Evaluate value importance: Scan the list and identify highest value-adding tasks. Determine the amount of efforts expected to be invested on each activity and set the order accordingly;

- Be compliant and flexible: Don't forget that change is certain and be prepared for work that will come above your set order of priorities;

- Cut the cord: You probably can't get to everything on your list. Focus on the priorities that you know you must and can complete for the day.

Mehul Shah, MD, Collabera, describes the Pareto principle in the context of prioritization of workload, "The Pareto principle states that of the things you do during your day, only 20 per cent produce 80 per cent of your results. It emphasizes on putting more energy in prioritizing your tasks in the first hour at work and focus on the 20 per cent that matters. When the fire drills of the day begin to sap your time and something in the schedule has to slip, make sure it's not part of that 20 per cent." Prioritization also enables employees to maintain clarity on the ultimate goals of the organization. Sailesh Shetty, VP human resources & services, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, explains, "Organisations should make every employee understand the role he or she is playing in solving the issues important for the organisation. Employees should have clarity on what is expected from them; this enables them to prioritise better. When the employer engages employees every day in analysing and solving problems, they feel highly motivated." Thus, prioritisation can make a lot of difference in employee efficiency and productivity.

Tips to crack your job Interview

The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question.

Here are a few tips on how you can sail through your first job interview.

The foremost issue all organizations face is that candidates do not match up to the needs of the job. Many job aspirants look at their careers from a myopic view of brands and fancy designations coupled with fat salaries. The first five years of one's professional life are formative, which is why this period should be utilized to gather profound professional experience. This is not the time to hunt for a cozy post.

The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self-assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question. Visualise yourself as a part of the organization:

How confident do you feel about being there? Is the work in line with your interest and natural abilities? The inner call, backed up by research, is crucial before you choose to go for the

interview. There is a job for everyone; they just need to home in on the right place.

- A lot of engineers may actually do well in creative positions than technical roles. If technical expertise is your area of interest and prowess, go for it. Evaluate which subject or activity you are best at. It shows your interest and natural inclination. If the inner call says, 'choose an alternative career,' please do so. Do not succumb to social pressure. It is better to succeed than to 'ape' and remain mediocre.

- The interviewer has been entrusted with the task of hiring the best in a competitive environment. It is thus your responsibility to convince him/her of your capabilities.

Data and facts always help, so converge on tangible information rather than abstract points. However, the statistics must be focused on

competencies.

- Provide information on your strengths with evidence of its practical application in real life.

- Talk about your extracurricular activities and the difficult choices you made in life; it shows leadership attributes and job-fit skill sets.

- Talk about facts that show you make your choices and are not led by others alone. Highlight team activities you have undertaken - it shows your ability to collaborate.

- Elaborate on situations that make you feel proud - it shows confidence and self-motivation.

- Discuss instances when you have helped others - it is a sign of empathy. Finally, in a positive way, share instances of personal challenges that brought you where you are today - it exhibits strength of character.

- Speak about your career vision. When you know how the job fits in the grand picture of your career, the interviewer is most likely to choose you because it creates certainty.

This is rare because many engineering graduates are disillusioned and openly talk about being explorers. Be clear where you wish to go. Employers would not like to waste time, money and effort on individuals who are continually exploring. If that is the case, go for career advice or seek other professional help before interviews.

In the case of engineers, interviewers' expectations are going to be specific. They look for thought leadership, precision in all you do, the ability to comprehend a problem and create solutions, an innovative mindset and critical thinking. As an engineer, your ability to lead a team will carry tremendous weight. Above all, one must "look and feel" like an engineer and not a casual person from nowhere.

Lastly, understand that rejection has nothing to do with you personally. It is about an understanding that your abilities do not suit the job. So, gear up for the next opening.





Risk-taking and planning can go Hand in hand

Managing work-life balance

Based on my personal experiences, I firmly believe it is necessary to take out time for things other than work. I actively take out time to pursue my passions and be with my family. This allows me to excel in my work and home.

Being a fit man

I go for some form of exercise every morning; be it a gym workout, swimming or equestrian sport.

Energy high and happiness

Being able to help others gives me a great sense of satisfaction and happiness. It can be charities or helping out friends and family. I also feel the same way when I am learning something new or travelling to new cities, picking up a new skill or discussing an

innovative idea with my team.

Risk-taker or micro-planner

Risk-taking and micro-planning aren't mutually exclusive. They can go very well together as traits in an individual. I am more of a micro-planner but risk-taking is also an inherent part of life. I think I will be always looking to increase my appetite for risk.

Spiritual diet

I try to meditate daily, though it doesn't always happen. I find it useful in keeping myself centred. I also enjoy taking time to travel to centres of spirituality. Being physically present in such places always rekindles some kind of desire to progress spiritually in life.

Handling failure/success

Handling failure is something that I will always

be working on. I feel that the outcome is a result of the effort put in. Any kind of success or failure only reflects the amount of work gone into the project. I also think that successes and failures inevitably have to be faced in life, but it's very important to remain grounded and learn from your mistakes. I try to derive the major learnings from any kind of success or failure.

Crisis management

This is tricky. During a crisis, it is most important to be level-headed and understand the core problem. The solution will present itself eventually. I try to get good counsel from my advisers or well-wishers too. A few times, I've found very inspiring solutions from the most unlikely of sources.

Juggling work

Why you should avoid

Are you one of those who loves to do many things at the same time? Chatting on the phone, cradling baby and cooking in the kitchen — all at the same time. Or maybe, texting while crossing a busy road, checking emails during meetings. If you feel you are being extra efficient doing all this and more, think again.

Research says that while multitasking is an admirable quality, it can have an adverse effect on your health. Here are some reasons that might want you to go easy on it...

It takes longer to get work done

Multitasking doesn't exactly save time, but might just slow you down. It prevents you from meeting your deadlines as you go about trying to complete all tasks at the same time. Every task requires a different mindset and specifics to get the work done. So, it is much better to focus on one task, and finish it before going on to the next one.

Scatters your attention in all directions

Come to think of it, multitasking may result in a waste of time. This happens when your attention is divided into more than one activity at the same time, thus affecting productivity. You are just not able to give any task your complete attention.

You may tend to make more errors

Switching between two or more tasks also

cause a person to make unnecessary mistakes. This is more obvious when the task at hand involves critical thinking and analysis. The more the tasks you attempt at the same time, the more the number of mistakes you are bound to make.

Causes an increase in stress

Juggling two tasks at hand is bound to cause stress and an increase in the heart rate. The physical impact is more obvious when you see the results of what you finished doing. This in turn can lead to lower self-confidence and depression.

It could turn out to be dangerous

If you are busy on the phone while keeping an eye on what's cooking on the gas, or texting or talking on a cell phone, while driving it is dangerous. It can lead to accidents and put lives, other than yours, at risk. Crossing the road while talking on the cellphone or even listening to music with your ear phones on, these are dangerous habits that can be avoided in your bid to multitask.

Causes you to overeat

Take the example of watching television and reading a book while eating, it causes a

confusion in your brain and send misleading signals. This leads to overeating. Instead eat and pay attention to what you have on your plate and the portion, and chew on food and enjoy the meal.

There is no room for creativity

Constant multitasking may also hamper your creativity as it tends to use up temporary brain storage memory entirely. There is too much pressure to perform the tasks at hand and finish them faster too, thus making it difficult to think creatively when it comes to problem solving.

Results in bad memory

If you have the tendency to watch television and read a book at the same time, it means you have to constantly shift your focus from a moving image to a still one, forcing your brain to adapt to the fast and slow impacts of the same. Constantly doing that will result in you not being able to remember details of either of them.

Those around you may feel ignored

When you have your family, friends, kids and loved ones around you, trying to give attention to things other than them might affect your relationship with them. They may not like your behaviour, which may lead to friction in your interaction. Paying attention to those around you makes a big difference to bonding, as they feel loved and respected.



Tips to cultivate a Happy workplace



Swooshing deadlines. Office politics. Disappointing appraisals. Disagreements with boss. Workplace can indeed be a very tough place. But it is important to not get caught up in worries, but work towards making things work. Agree or not, a happy workplace is a crucial component for a happy you. If you are happy, you are bound to attract happy people and happy emotions. Dr Rupa Batra, an International celebrity consultant of corporate vastu, Feng shui and numerology explains, "Office is a high energy area, so we need to keep ourselves safe and away from such energies."

Go green: Get plants that need less maintenance and place them in your cabin. Plants are excellent in absorbing carbon dioxide and keeping the environment cool. Avoid flowery plants as flowers may wither off if not take care of. Milky plants should be avoided too. In case you have a small cubicle, then you can consider bonsai. They are designed for smaller areas only.

Clear the mess: Take time out and clear the mess from your table. Clutter takes away all good energies. Not only will it impart negativity but will leave a poor impression.

Invest in a motivating piece of art: Motivation is the key in any

profession. If your office doesn't have enough motivational paintings or photo frames, buy yourself one and keep it close to you.

Feng shui tortoise and coin: Place a Feng shui tortoise in your cash box is good for business people. Feng shui coins are an age old medium to add extra luck to the cash flow. But if you are working, you can use the Feng shui coins in your drawer. It will help maintain the cash reserves.

Keep a diary: Keep a mini diary in your office bag. This diary should have your to-do list, which you should maintain daily. It should also have reminders about brisk walk during lunch break or in the evening. This is known as sharpening of the axe. When we forget to sharpen our axe, we render no result even if we put in lots of efforts.

Alarm clock for your desk: This is an extremely efficient tool in reminding you that you need to put in quality work. People remember how well you did a job, rather than how quickly you did it. Remind yourself with these alarms that your work quality can actually suffer if you submit a project in rush.

Centre may tweak Bengal wildlife stretch to fast-track Varanasi-Kolkata Expressway

With the Mamata Banerjee government gone and a freshly elected BJP government in place, the Centre is now looking to fast-track the process, as the Bengal cabinet's repeated demands for revisions to the original alignment had slowed down the ambitious project for which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone in 2024.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Centre is looking to speed up the Rs 35,000 crore Varanasi-Kolkata Expressway project, though environmental concerns and delays linked to the alignment, land and wildlife clearances in West Bengal could lead to changes in parts of the proposed route, government sources told.

With the Mamata Banerjee government gone and a freshly elected BJP government in place, the Centre is now looking to fast-track the process, as the Bengal cabinet's repeated demands for revisions to the original alignment had slowed down the ambitious project for which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone in 2024.

advertisement

The 610-km six-lane greenfield corridor, also called the Kashi-Bengal Expressway, is expected to improve freight movement and connectivity across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Once the expressway becomes operational, travel time between Varanasi and Kolkata is expected to come down from 12-14 hours to about six hours. The corridor is also expected to connect major economic and cultural centres, including Varanasi, Gaya, Ranchi and Kolkata, and improve logistics efficiency, trade and regional economic activity across eastern India.

Government sources said progress in the other states is moving much faster than in



West Bengal. "Work in Uttar Pradesh is nearly 50 per cent complete, construction activity is ongoing in Bihar, and forest clearances have already been received in Jharkhand," a source said. The Bengal stretch, however, remains behind schedule because of alignment revisions, land acquisition processes and environmental

clearances.

Sources told India Today that the Centre is considering contingency options, including possible changes to parts of the Bengal alignment, if wildlife-related concerns are not addressed in time. Officials said issues linked to wildlife movement and forests in parts of West Bengal have emerged as major concerns during the clearance process. In this scenario, government sources told India Today that the Centre may tweak the Bengal route amid wildlife concerns.

The proposed alignment passes through parts of Purulia, Bankura, Pashchim Medinipur, Hooghly and Howrah districts. To address ecological concerns, the National Highways Authority of India

has proposed multiple wildlife underpasses along the route.

When the issue was raised last August in the Rajya Sabha, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said construction work had already been awarded in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand, but progress in West Bengal had slowed after the state government sought revisions to the original alignment. Gadkari said the original Varanasi-Ranchi-Kolkata alignment was approved by the Centre and received consent from the West Bengal government on January 3, 2023. He added that the revised alignment sought by the state government was approved only in October 2024, delaying further execution processes.

Follow traffic rules, cooperate with police to ensure safe movement in Delhi: L-G Sandhu

New Delhi.(Agency)

Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Sunday urged people to follow traffic rules and cooperate with the traffic police in ensuring safer, smoother movement on city roads. In a post on X, Sandhu said adherence to traffic regulations is an essential civic responsibility and important for reducing congestion, preventing accidents and lowering air pollution caused by vehicles stuck in traffic snarls.

"I have directed the traffic police to expand its enforcement drive across Delhi. You can also empower this movement by using the 'Traffic Prahari' app to report these violations and earn rewards for your contribution to road safety," he said.

The L-G appealed to people to avoid wrong-side driving, signal jumping and dangerous jaywalking, while also stressing responsible parking and the use of helmets and seatbelts.

"Simple actions such as responsible parking and wearing helmets and seatbelts reflect our concern for fellow citizens as well as our own families," he said.

Sandhu said a decongested and safer Delhi could be achieved through collective efforts and a commitment to basic traffic discipline. He also called upon residents to support the authorities in building a "better capital for all".

Sandhu had earlier said that the challenge of rapid urbanisation in cities needs to be addressed with commitment, innovation, and ethical clarity by officials. "We are living in an era of profound transformation," he said. The L-G said, "We are currently traversing the 'Amrit Kaal', a defining period where our actions today will determine the India of 2047." Addressing a recruitment day ceremony of the DDA, Sandhu had said that the new officials are becoming part of an institution (DDA) that plays a central role in shaping Delhi's future.

Railways approves Haiderpur-Badli rail overbridge widening in Delhi

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Railways has approved the widening of the existing Railway Over Bridge (ROB) located on the Outer Ring Road at Haiderpur Badli, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Sunday. The move is aimed at alleviating traffic congestion at Mukarba Chowk. The proposed elevated loop connecting Shalimar Bagh to Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar, which crosses over the railway tracks, has also been approved.

Gupta noted that both these North-West Delhi corridors have long been burdened by heavy traffic movement. Once completed, the projects are expected to substantially reduce congestion and provide faster connectivity.

The Public Works Department (PWD) had submitted the required technical proposals for both projects. After detailed scrutiny, the Railways found the proposals technically feasible and issued an in-principle No Objection Certificate (NOC) with the approval of the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM). The CM added that the Railways has mandated that construction work must be carried out under prescribed safety standards and technical supervision to ensure that railway operations and traffic movement are not adversely affected.

Gupta said the government is working to identify major traffic bottlenecks across the city and develop long-term solutions for them. She pointed out that Mukarba Chowk, Outer Ring Road and the Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar area are among Delhi's busiest transport corridors.

The implementation of these projects, she said, will strengthen connectivity, reduce travel time and provide major relief to commuters. She said infrastructure and transport reforms in Delhi are gaining momentum through the coordinated efforts of the 'double-engine government', and that the capital is being developed in line with 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Viksit Delhi', with a focus on modern, seamless and future-oriented transport infrastructure.

Somnath Temple To See First-Ever Spire Kumbhabhishek. What It Means

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Somnath Temple is set to witness a historic spiritual milestone on May 11, marking the "Somnath Amrit Parv 2026" with a ritual never before performed on the reconstructed shrine's spire in Gujarat. For the first time in its modern history, a sacred Kumbhabhishek will be conducted atop the temple's 90-metre-high Shikhar using holy water gathered from 11 prominent pilgrimage sites across the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to lead the ceremony, which commemorates the 75th anniversary of the temple's restoration.

The centrepiece of this historic event involves a massive vessel (Kumbh)

filled with sacred water being hoisted to the summit of the spire via a specialised 90-metre crane.

Accompanied by the rhythmic chanting of Vedic mantras, priests



will perform the ritual bathing of the spire, a purification tradition known as Kumbhabhishek.

While this practice is common in the grand temples of South India, where it is typically performed every 10 to

12 years, it marks a significant liturgical debut for the Somnath Temple since its reconstruction was completed.

Shri Hemalbhai Bhatt, President of the Teerth Purohit Sompura Brahmin Samaj, highlighted the rarity of the occasion, noting that the community is filled with immense enthusiasm for this unprecedented tradition.

The ceremony will take place following a grand Mahapuja of Somnath Mahadev performed by the Prime Minister. This spiritual milestone is part of a larger celebration that honors the civilisational resilience of the shrine, blending ancient Vedic traditions with modern engineering to honor 75 years.

Second wife not needed in first wife's maintenance case: Delhi High Court

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court has said that a second wife is neither necessary nor a proper party in the maintenance proceedings initiated by the first wife and her children.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma made the observation while dismissing a plea filed by a woman seeking to be impleaded as a party in a petition filed by the first wife against her husband, who demanded revision of the maintenance awarded by a family court. The family court had denied her maintenance, while granting Rs 10,000 each to the two children.

During the pendency of the petition, the man divorced his second wife, who then sought to be impleaded in the maintenance proceedings initiated by the first wife, claiming that any order passed in the matter could adversely affect her rights and financial interests.

The first wife opposed her plea, claiming that the dispute was confined to maintenance claims between herself, the

children, and the husband, and no relief had been sought against the second wife.

The judge agreed and said, "The proceedings under Section 125 (maintenance of wives, children, and parents who are unable to maintain themselves) of the CrPC are confined to the rights and obligations inter se the petitioner and the respondent, and the status or claims of the applicant, if any, do not have any direct or substantial bearing on the adjudication of such rights."

The court rejected the contention that the second wife's financial dependence on the husband justified her impleadment, saying that accepting such a plea would open the door for every dependent person to seek intervention in maintenance proceedings. Dubbing it "untenable" in law, the judge rejected the second wife's contention that her non-impleadment would amount to a violation of the principles of natural justice.



UP man kills pregnant sister-in-law, threatens to blow up house as cops near

New Delhi.(Agency)

An intoxicated man in Saharanpur allegedly killed his pregnant sister-in-law with a spade inside their home. He then held off family members and police with the weapon and an open gas cylinder before being arrested.

A house in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur turned into a scene of bloodshed when a drug-intoxicated brother-in-law allegedly killed his pregnant sister-in-law with a spade. Then, soaked in her blood, the accused, Aamir, wielded the spade to keep his brother and others from approaching him. When Aamir's brother returned with the police, he was standing there with a gas cylinder valve open, threatening to blow up the entire house. The sight of Aamir holding a blood-stained spade and a gas cylinder sent chills through the entire neighbourhood.

The deceased, identified as Sana Naz, had married Salman in a love marriage about six months ago. After the marriage, the couple had been living with their family, and life was reportedly normal until Sunday evening turned tragic.



According to family members, Salman's younger brother Aamir arrived home under the influence of drugs. A dispute broke out between him and his sister-in-law, Sana Naz. The argument quickly escalated, and Aamir picked up a spade kept in the house and attacked her. He struck multiple blows on her head, neck, and abdomen. Naz, who was pregnant, collapsed in pain, and her screams

echoed through the entire neighbourhood.

When husband Salman rushed in to save his wife, the accused stood near the body holding a blood-stained spade and prevented anyone from entering. Terrified locals gathered outside but none dared to approach.

The accused's aggression was so severe that he initially did not allow police to enter the house either. Salman somehow escaped and informed the police. Upon receiving the alert, police reached the spot, where Aamir was seen standing inside the house wielding the spade.

During this, he also opened a gas cylinder and threatened to set it on fire, causing chaos in the area. Residents locked themselves inside their homes in fear. A tense standoff continued for nearly two hours between police and the accused. After extensive effort, persuasion, and encirclement.



New Delhi.(Agency)

AAP Aadmee Party (AAP) on Sunday alleged that the Delhi Police have been harassing the parents of the 3-year-old rape survivor in the Janakpuri case, questioning whether the political links of SS Mota Singh School were influencing the investigation.

AAP Delhi president Saurabh Bharadwaj said that the child's mother had stated that the school had political connections asking why the DCP was threatening the parents and making the family sit for hours at the police station.

Addressing a press conference at AAP headquarters, Bharadwaj noted, "It has come to light that a grand event was held at SS Mota Singh School last month, where education minister Ashish Sood and chief minister Rekha Gupta were present. The minor had stated that the class teacher took her to the basement and she was raped in front of the teacher," he said.

Bharadwaj continued, "Despite this, no action has been taken against the class teacher or the

school, while the offender was granted bail by the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) court within five days."

Targeting the L-G and the Chief Minister, Bharadwaj said, "Greetings to the LG and the Chief Minister on Mother's Day. A mother, whose three-year-old daughter was raped in a private school, is stating that the DCP of the Delhi Police was threatening the victim's parents. Their SHO and police staff harassed the child and her family. What has the L-G done about this?"

He added that when a three-year-old child goes to school on the first or second day, the child is naturally very scared and has many fears and questions in mind and added, "But when that child comes home and tells her mother that she was raped there in front of a teacher, it becomes horrifying," he stated.

The doctor had confirmed to the mother that the child's hymen had ruptured. "The DCP, instead of helping the family was summoning and threatening them," he noted.

8th Pay Commission: Why government employees want family unit revised from 3 to 5

New Delhi.(Agency)

For lakhs of central government employees, salary calculations still depend on a formula built around a much smaller Indian household. Now, employee unions are asking the 8th Pay Commission to rewrite that formula, arguing that modern families can no longer survive on assumptions made years ago.

One of the demands has to do with something called the "family unit" formula, one of the least discussed but most important factors used in deciding minimum salaries under every Pay Commission.

In its continued reporting on the 8th Pay Commission negotiations and union demands, IndiaToday.in has learnt that employee bodies are now pushing for the current "3-family-unit" formula to be revised to "5 family units", arguing that the old system no longer reflects the realities of rising healthcare costs, expensive education, urban rents and the growing burden of supporting ageing parents. The issue has come up during the ongoing 8th Pay Commission consultations and memorandums submitted by employee organisations, including the All India NPS Employees Federation (AINPSEF).

The 8th Pay Commission had earlier held meetings with employee unions and staff representatives in Delhi between April 28 and April 30. It is now set to hold another round of consultations with organisations linked to the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Railways in Delhi on May 13 and 14.

WHAT IS THE 3-FAMILY-UNIT FORMULA?

Most government employees know about fitment factor and dearness allowance (DA). But far fewer know that minimum salaries are first calculated using a "family unit" model.

Jio IPO: Reliance Industries switching to a fresh shares-only mode, says report

New Delhi.(Agency)

While Dalal Street waits for the mega IPOs such as Jio Platforms and NSE in a tepid primary market, reports have stated that Reliance Industries is altering the contours of the mega IPO by switching from a combination of fresh shares and OFS to a fresh only shares. Any investor, as a matter of principle, prefers a fresh-only shares IPO to a combination of OFS and fresh shares. The reason is investor disagreements on pricing, reports have stated. It said that the decision prioritises protection of retail investors by allowing market determination of post-listing prices. Moreover, the entire IPO proceeds will accrue to the company and will help the business to pursue growth. OFS proceeds never go to the company but line the pocket of the existing shareholders who company choose to dilute their holding.

Quandry of Jio IPO pricing

Jio happens to be the country's largest telecom operator by market share. Talks about its IPO was in the public forum for more than a year now. In August 2022, Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani announced that Jio will target listing by the first half of FY27. It was said that the issue could mobilise more than Rs 40,000 crore. Reports have said that Jio has been discussing the contours of the IPO with global technology firms for more than a month. Sovereign wealth funds and private equity investors were also involved in the discussion to finalise the pricing of the issue. "There is an inherent conflict of interest, which is unique to Jio... Shareholders want to price the issue as high as possible.

Sensex, Nifty dive in early trade; check prominent gainers and laggards

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Indian stock market dived in early trade on Monday, May 11 with both BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 registering sharp falls. While BSE Sensex dropped to 76,365.62, down 962.57 points or 1.24%, Nifty 50 fell to 23,912.90, down 263.25 points or 1.09%. The markets seemed to be responding to the US and Iran sharply disagreeing with a peace plan in West Asia drafted in Washington and the price of crude oil which jumped on Monday. GIFT Nifty was also down this morning.

Gainers and laggards on NSE

The gainers on NSE around 9:25 were only a handful. These were TATACONSUM, MAXHEALTH, APOLLOHOSP, SBILIFE and SUNPHARMA. Among the top laggards in early trade were TITAN, INDIGO, SBIN, ETERNAL, JIOFIN, SHRIRAMFIN, M&M etc. In the Sensex basket, Titan, InterGlobe Aviation, SBI, Eternal, Bharti Airtel and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the biggest laggards. The only gainers in the morning were NTPC and HCL Tech.

Rupee falls vs the dollar

The rupee fell by a massive 139 paise and hit 94.90 against the US dollar in early trade. This directly mirrored the jump in crude oil prices after the fate of the latest peace proposal. The greenback strengthened and the FPI outflows went on unabated. According to reports, at the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 94.97 against the US dollar before moving up to 94.90, down a staggering 139 paise compared to its previous close.

Two headwinds

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments told the media that there will be two adverse pressures on the stock market today. "One, the expected resolution of the West Asia crisis has again slipped away following US President Trump's rejection of Iran's letter. Consequently Brent crude has again spiked to USD 105 potentially aggravating the current account deficit. ... Two, PM Modi's appeal to the nation to curb the consumption of petrol/diesel, gold, chemical fertilisers and edible oil and refrain from avoidable foreign.

Gold, jewellery stocks plunge over 10% after PM Modi urges investors to delay purchases

New Delhi.(Agency)

Shares of Titan Company, Kalyan Jewellers India, Senco Gold, Sky Gold and Diamonds, PC Jewellers and other gold and jewellery stocks crashed on Monday morning after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people to postpone gold purchases among other measures to save foreign exchange due to the West Asia crisis.

Titan's share price declined over 7% to hit a low of Rs 4,153 while Kalyan Jewellers, Sky Gold and Senco Gold tanked more than 10% each on the exchanges. This comes as a big setback for investors in gold & jewellery stocks who were anticipating a recovery after the dismal festive season of 2025.

Meanwhile, benchmark indices - BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty50 - were down more than 1% each on Monday morning. The Sensex fell about 1,100 points to hit an intraday low of 76,236.70.

Amid the foreign exchange crisis, PM Modi urged citizens to postpone gold purchases and foreign travel for a year to conserve reserves. "We have to save foreign exchange by any means," he emphasised, noting that the West Asia conflict has sharply driven up petrol and fertiliser prices.

He added that supply chain disruptions are intensifying challenges, even as the government implements various measures to mitigate them.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments said that market will face pressure from two headwinds today. One, the expected resolution of the West Asia crisis has again slipped away following President Trump's rejection of Iran's letter. Consequently Brent crude has again spiked to \$105 potentially

aggravating the current account deficit. "Two, PM Modi's appeal to the nation to curb the consumption of petrol/diesel, gold, chemical fertilisers and edible oil



and refrain from avoidable foreign travel is a crisis management response to the current account deficit problem caused by high crude prices. This call for austerity

has a slightly negative implication for economic growth in FY27. Particularly, the industries related to the austerity call like petroleum, chemical fertilisers, gold, air travel, hotel and related sectors will be sentimentally impacted," added Vijayakumar.

India's forex reserves fell by \$7.794 billion to \$690.693 billion during the week ended May 1, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week ended April 24, the overall reserves had declined by \$4.82 billion to \$698.487 billion.

The kitty had expanded to an all-time high of £728.494 billion during the week ended February 27 this year before the beginning of the West Asia crisis, which led to several weeks of a drop as the rupee came under pressure and the RBI had to intervene in the forex market through dollar sales.

Sensex plunges 800 points at open as crude oil jumps on US-Iran tensions

New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened lower on Monday, starting the week on a weak note as fresh tensions sparked in the West Asia war with Iran-US failing to reach peace terms.

The S&P BSE Sensex was down 847.62 points to 76,480.57, while the NSE Nifty50 lost 249.65 points to 23,926.50 as of 9:27 am.

Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said that the market will face pressure from two headwinds today.

"One, the expected resolution of the West Asia crisis has again slipped away following President Trump's rejection of Iran's letter. Two, PM Modi's appeal to the nation to curb

the consumption of petrol/diesel, gold, chemical fertilisers and edible oil and refrain from avoidable foreign travel is a crisis management



response to the current account deficit problem caused by high crude prices," he added.

After the opening bell, HCL Technologies Ltd and NTPC Ltd were the only gainers among the

Sensex stocks, rising 0.21% and 0.01%, respectively.

Titan Company Ltd saw the sharpest fall, dropping 6.37%. Indigo Ltd declined 2.81%, State Bank of India Ltd was down 2.78%, Eternal Ltd slipped 2.65%, and Bharti Airtel Ltd fell 1.91% in early trade.

"PM Modi's call for austerity has slightly negative implications for economic growth in FY 27. Particularly, the industries related to the austerity call like petroleum, chemical fertilisers, gold, air travel, hotel and related sectors will be sentimentally impacted. Sectors like pharmaceuticals which will not be impacted in any manner will remain resilient," said Vijaykumar.

Rupee crashes 139 paise to 94.90 against US dollar in early trade

Mumbai.(Agency)

The rupee crashed 139 paise to 94.90 against the greenback in early trade on Monday after President Donald Trump rejected Iran's response to the US's peace proposal, following which crude oil prices surged rapidly. A strengthening US dollar and steep FPI outflows further pressured the local unit, according to forex traders.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 94.97 against the US dollar before inching up to 94.90, down a staggering 139 paise from its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee pared its losses and ended with a sharp gain of 71 paise at 93.51 against the greenback. Iran has sent its response to the latest US ceasefire proposal via Pakistani mediators and wants negotiations to focus on permanently ending the war, Iran's state-run media said on Sunday.

Trump rejected Iran's proposal to end the months-long war as "totally unacceptable" without sharing details even as a key Republican leader urged him to consider the "military option". "After US President Donald Trump rejected Iran's response to the US Peace proposal, Brent oil rose higher, dollar index also higher and risky assets lower.

Israeli attacks on Lebanon continued while Hezbollah said it struck Israeli army camps with drones while the UAE also intercepted drones from Iran," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said. "Thus the war continues keeping oil prices higher and accordingly rupee opened lower than Friday's close.

On Friday, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was present near to 94.70 levels taking the closing of rupee higher to 94.48," he said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 98.20, up 0.20 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose sharply by 4.17 per cent to USD 105.5 per barrel in futures trade.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex plummeted 810.35 points, or 1.05 per cent, to 76,517.84, while the Nifty tanked 225.40 points, or 0.93 per cent, to 23,950.75. Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth Rs 4,110.60 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. India's forex reserves dropped by USD 7.794 billion to USD 690.693 billion during the week ended May 1, the RBI said on Friday.

May 2026 tax deadlines: These key TDS, TCS dates taxpayers should not miss

New Delhi.(Agency)

May is shaping up to be a busy month for taxpayers, businesses and organisations handling tax compliance. From depositing Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) and Tax Collected at Source (TCS) to issuing certificates and filing important statements, several deadlines are lined up through the month.

Missing these dates could lead to penalties, late fees or compliance issues. That is why taxpayers, employers and businesses may want to keep a close eye on the calendar and complete filings on time.

MAY 15, 2026



By May 15, 2026, taxpayers and businesses must issue TDS certificates for tax deducted in March 2026 under Sections 194-IA, 194-IB and 194M of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

These sections mainly relate to tax deductions on property purchases,

rent payments and certain payments made by individuals or Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs).

Government offices that processed April's TDS or TCS without a challan must also submit Form 24G by this date. Besides this, stock exchanges are required to submit monthly reports on client code modifications made during April 2026. Recognised associations must also report system-level client code changes for the same period. Another important requirement due on May 15 is the quarterly statement for TCS deposited for the quarter.

Stock markets tumble in early trade; Sensex crashes 1,000 points

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 845.68 points to 76,482.51 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 237.90 points to 23,936.85.

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Stock markets tumbled in early trade on Monday amid rising crude oil prices after the US and Iran failed to reach a peace deal to end the West Asia war. US President Donald Trump has dismissed Iran's response to the latest US peace proposal as 'totally unacceptable', dampening hopes of an immediate diplomatic breakthrough, an expert said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 845.68 points to 76,482.51 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 237.90 points to 23,936.85.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Titan,

InterGlobe Aviation, State Bank of India, Eternal, Bharti Airtel and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the biggest laggards.

NTPC and HCL Tech were the only winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 432 per cent higher at USD 105.7 per barrel.

"Fresh concerns emerged after Donald Trump reportedly dismissed Iran's response to the latest US peace proposal as 'totally unacceptable', dampening hopes of an immediate diplomatic breakthrough.

The development has once again brought the Strait of Hormuz and broader risks of supply disruption in global energy markets back into focus," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.

In Asian markets, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index were trading lower, while South Korea's benchmark Kospi and Shanghai's SSE Composite index

quoted higher. US markets ended higher on Friday.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said, the market will face pressure from



two headwinds today.

"One, the expected resolution of the West Asia crisis has again slipped away following US President Trump's rejection of Iran's letter.

Consequently Brent crude has again spiked to USD 105 potentially aggravating the current account deficit.

"Two, PM Modi's appeal to the nation to curb the consumption of petrol/diesel, gold, chemical fertilisers and edible oil

and refrain from avoidable foreign travel is a crisis management response to the current account deficit problem caused by high crude prices," he added.

Emphasising that the Centre is trying to shield people from the adverse impact of the conflict in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called for judicious use of fuel, postponement of gold purchases and foreign travel, among other measures, to strengthen the economy. Addressing a rally organised by the Telangana BJP in Hyderabad, he suggested reducing petrol and diesel consumption, using metro rail services in cities, carpooling, increased use of electric vehicles (EVs), utilising railway services for parcel movement, and working from home to conserve foreign exchange amid the crisis in West Asia.

Stressing the need to save foreign exchange due to the crisis, Modi called for postponing the purchase of gold and foreign travel for one year. "We have to save foreign exchange by any means," he said, adding.

Short news

Retired Army man chases, kills son after dinner fight, dies by suicide in Punjab

Ludhiana. (Agency)

A retired Indian Army man allegedly chased his son on the street, shot him dead and then died by suicide by consuming poison in Punjab's Ludhiana late Sunday.

According to the Ludhiana police, Surinder Singh alias Fauji, who was in his sixties, shot dead his son Gursharan Singh Ginny, 40, after a heated argument during dinner. Police sources said the argument occurred after Gursharan objected to his father's proposal of a second marriage. Surinder's wife died some years ago, and he wanted to get married again, but his son was against it, said a police source. According to the police, Surinder lived with his unmarried son, Gursharan, while his two daughters are settled abroad.

"After the argument escalated, Surinder opened fire at his son with this 12-bore double-barreled gun, but it misfired. His son started running to save himself, but Surinder chased him down in the street and shot him. He then dumped his injured son in the street and returned home. He locked himself in the house and consumed a poisonous substance," said Vijay Kumar, Station House Officer, Sarabha Nagar Police Station.

"Some passersby noticed Gursharan lying injured in the street and informed the police. Later, we broke open the door of the house and found Surinder lying unconscious. Both were taken to the hospital but died during treatment," said Kumar. The inspector said that, according to neighbours, they used to argue and quarrel often over dinner.

From sermons in mosques to bulldozers: 1st month of J-K's anti-drug drive sees different strategies, 444 arrests

Srinagar. (Agency)

From sermons in mosques warning against the dangers of drug abuse to bulldozers tearing down residential and commercial buildings linked to alleged drug peddlers and the publication of "rogue galleries" featuring the photos and names of "traffickers", the Jammu and Kashmir administration's 100-day Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir (Drug-free Jammu and Kashmir) campaign has had an eventful first 30 days.

These 30 days, the J&K Police arrested hundreds of alleged drug peddlers and registered as many cases. According to numbers released by the Kashmir Divisional Commissioner, since the launch of the campaign on April 11, the J&K Police arrested 444 alleged drug peddlers in the Kashmir Valley and registered 441 FIRs under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in the same period. The figures further revealed that 378 kg of contraband substances have been recovered in the Valley in the first 30 days of the campaign. The government also said it destroyed poppy cultivation in over 165 kanals (a little over 20 acres) of land in the Valley. The highest number of NDPS cases, 108, were registered in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, where police have also seized 22 vehicles and cancelled eight driving licences and vehicle registrations.

A mother's desperation: Why a UP woman pawned jewellery to contract her son's killing

Lucknow. (Agency)

Driven to the brink by prolonged harassment, abuse and violence, a 48-year-old woman in Uttar Pradesh's Amroha allegedly pawned her jewellery to raise token money allegedly paid to a local gangster hired to kill her own son. The police said the gangster, Jogendra alias Jolly, had been arranged by the victim's younger brother, Sankit Singh, 29.

On Saturday, the police recovered the body of Dushyant Singh, 35, from dense undergrowth near a dry canal in Shyampur village, bringing to light a deeply troubled family tragedy. The police said Dushyant had a criminal history and that his family had allegedly been pushed to the brink by years of repeated harassment, violence and abuse, as he was accused of frequently assaulting family and subjecting them to intimidation over minor matters.

During the investigation, the police found that Dushyant's brother Sankit, and his mother Maya Devi had allegedly hired a gangster to eliminate him. The family allegedly struck a deal worth Rs 5 lakh with Jogendra alias Jolly (30s), while Dushyant's mother pawned her jewellery to raise Rs 55,000 as token money for the contract killing.

On Sunday, the police arrested Dushyant's father, Preetam Singh, and his brother, Sankit Singh, in connection with the case, said Superintendent of Police, Amroha, Lakhan Singh Yadav. He added that efforts are underway to arrest Maya Devi, Jogendra alias Jolly, and his two unidentified associates.

Union Education Minister Pradhan launches 47 projects worth Rs 194 crore in Odisha's Sambalpur

SAMBALPUR. (Agency)

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 47 projects worth around Rs 194 crore aimed at holistic development of Naktideul, Rairakhol and Jujumura regions of Sambalpur district.

Of the total projects, 16 were inaugurated while foundation stones were laid for the rest 31. Among the major announcements was the laying of foundation stone for an eco-tourism project at Bhima Mandali with an estimated cost of Rs 8.5 crore. The foundation stone for a new community health centre (CHC) at Naktideul, to be built at a cost of around Rs 16.5 crore, was also laid on the occasion.

Addressing a large gathering at Naktideul, Pradhan reiterated the commitment of both the Centre and state governments towards strengthening infrastructure, healthcare, tourism, agriculture and education in the region. He announced that a new mini



stadium worth Rs 20 crore would be constructed at Naktideul to encourage sports and nurture rural talent.

Highlighting the predominantly agricultural profile of the region, the minister said Naktideul has been included in the Centre's Aspirational Block programme. He directed the administration to facilitate CSR support for a proposed scheme to distribute 100 cows among beneficiaries to promote dairy farming. Stressing the need for irrigation development, Pradhan called for

construction of small water projects and check dams to address water scarcity issues. He requested Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Rabi Narayan Naik to ensure that drinking water reaches villages of Naktideul and Rairakhol by 2027.

Speaking at the event, Naik announced that the state government is committed to providing safe drinking water to 381 villages in Naktideul, Jujumura and Redhakhol through piped water supply by March 2027. He also informed that 37 villages would receive all-weather road connectivity under Mission Power and PMGSY-4 schemes. During the programme, financial assistance worth lakhs of rupees was distributed among beneficiaries of various welfare schemes. Under labour schemes, 154 beneficiaries received assistance amounting to over Rs 1.02 crore. Under Mission Shakti and OLM initiatives, revolving funds worth Rs 26.28 lakh were sanctioned for 148 women self-help groups.

Activists demand immediate arrest of Bandi's son in alleged POCSO case

HYDERABAD/HANAMKONDA. (Agency)

Activists of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi Vidyarthi (BRSV), the student wing of the BRS, tried to lay siege to the office of the Director General of Police (DGP) in Hyderabad on Sunday, demanding the immediate arrest of Bandi Bhageerath, son of Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, in connection with a POCSO case involving a minor girl. The protest turned tense as police detained several BRSV leaders, including its state president Gellu Srinivas and vice-president Thunga Balu, during the flash demonstration. Protesters raised slogans demanding the dismissal of Bandi Sanjay as the MoS, alleging that his position could influence the investigation into the case.

The BRSV leaders alleged that despite the registration of a case under the Protection of



Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, no concrete action has been taken against Bhageerath.

The student leaders further accused the BJP leader of supporting his son despite the allegations and questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the BJP's "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" slogan.

Meanwhile, a group of women activists staged a separate protest outside the

Petbasheerabad police station on Sunday, demanding immediate arrest of Bhageerath under the POCSO Act. They called for strict action against the accused in accordance with the provisions of the POCSO Act.

Mahila Congress stages protest

Telangana Mahila Congress president Errabelli Swarna also demanded immediate arrest of Bandi Bhageerath. Activists of the women's wing of the Congress staged a protest at the Congress Bhavan junction in Hanamkonda.

Speaking to the media, Swarna demanded stringent action against Bhageerath in connection with the alleged sexual harassment case involving a minor girl. She stated that Sanjay should immediately resign from his post on moral grounds. She questioned the BJP leadership, which promotes the slogan "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao," asking what answer.

Haryana civic body polls record 54.5% voter turnout; counting on May 13

Polling began at 8 am and continued till 6 pm at 817 polling booths set up across the state. According to the Haryana State Election Commission portal, out of 8.73 lakh eligible voters, nearly 4.75 lakh exercised their franchise.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Haryana witnessed an overall voter turnout of 54.5 per cent in the civic body elections held across the state on Sunday. Polling was conducted peacefully amid tight security arrangements, officials said. Voting was held for the municipal corporations of Ambala, Panchkula and Sonapat, besides municipal councils, municipal committees and several Panchayati Raj Institution posts.

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State Election Commissioner Devinder

Singh Kalyan said the elections were conducted in a "peaceful, fair and transparent manner," with elaborate arrangements made to ensure smooth polling and strict adherence to the



Model Code of Conduct.

The elections covered the Municipal Corporations of Ambala, Panchkula and Sonapat; the Municipal Council of Rewari; and the Municipal Committees of Dharuhera, Sampla and

Uklana.

By-elections were also conducted for various wards in municipal councils and committees in Tohana, Jhajjar, Rajound, Taraori, Kanina and Sadhaura. In addition, general and by-elections for Panchayati Raj Institutions were held for the posts of Zila Parishad members, Panchayat Samiti members, Sarpanches and Panches in several districts. Among the three major municipal corporations, Ambala recorded a voter turnout of 54.4 per cent, while Panchkula registered 52.7 per cent polling. Sonapat saw the lowest turnout among the three at 47.9 per cent. Higher polling percentages were recorded in smaller urban bodies, with Hisar reporting 75.7 per cent turnout, Rewari 66.1 per cent and Rohtak 79.2 per cent.

Kochi corporation plans new outlets, cloud kitchen for Indira Canteen

KOCHI. (Agency)

With the cooking gas shortage and price hike pushing hotels and restaurants into a crisis, Kochi corporation is initiating steps to launch a centralised cloud kitchen for the Indira Canteen project launched in March. With expansion plans afoot, this is expected to help prepare and distribute food to multiple outlets from a single facility.

"The proposal is to construct a centralised cloud kitchen in Edappally. We need to consider the availability of LNG in the area. Also, since the corporation owns a property next to the Indira Canteen outlet there, planning and construction will be easier," said mayor V K Minimol, adding that space constraints at Samridhi@Kochi were also a reason for planning a centralised kitchen.

The first Indira Canteen outlet was set up at the corporation's Edappally zonal office, with the aim of offering affordable meals throughout the day. However, the LPG crisis has significantly pushed up Samridhi and Indira Canteen's operating expenses.

"In the past month itself, the cost of running the facilities went up by '12-15 lakh. We have been looking at cutting extra expenditure. It is a Kudumbashree project aimed at the welfare of the public, and we are offering food at an affordable price. We have held discussions with the state government for subsidised LPG. However, we are yet to receive a response," she said. The corporation is also planning to set up a second Indira Canteen in Mattancherry.

Festive mood takes over Chennai as Vijay takes oath

Huge crowds gather to watch live screenings arranged by GCC; stalls near LED screens see surge in patrons.

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The shrill of whistles, smoke from firecrackers and chants of 'Vijay Anna' filled the city's air on Sunday. It was not an ordinary weekend as thousands had gathered under the scorching summer sun to watch the swearing-in ceremony of TVK chief C Joseph Vijay as the new chief minister, through the giant LED screens installed at 23 locations across the city. From Kathipara Junction to Marina Beach, supporters — many draped in red-and-yellow shawls and dressed in Vijay's trademark white shirt and beige pants — had overwhelmed the venues. Many children were also spotted at these venues.

TVK supporters carrying yellow-red coloured whistles, hand fans, and posters bearing Vijay's image were visible at all the venues. The roads leading to Nehru

Stadium were barricaded, allowing entry only to those with passes, while hundreds without passes gathered outside or watched the ceremony on mobile phones. Supporters also distributed laddoos across the city. "I came all the way from Madurai for the event, but they wouldn't allow us without passes," said a woman supporter. Supporters from districts including Tiruvannamalai were also stopped.

The city corporation had arranged shamianas and seating at all screening venues. However, while seating was available for only around 150 to 200 people at several locations, turnout far exceeded expectations, as nearly 400-500 people gathered at some spots. Others watched the event standing.



The loudest cheers erupted when Vijay began his oath with the words, "C Joseph Vijay ennum naan."

The moment triggered whistles, applause, and emotional celebrations among the public.

At Chennai Central Railway Station, the air was full of celebration as women were dancing during Vijay's speech, while travellers from Kerala, Karnataka, and

even Malaysia stopped to watch the live telecast. At Besant Nagar Beach, around 150 people gathered to witness the ceremony.

Nearly 500 attended the screening near Kathipara Bridge, and hundreds took part at the Marina Beach. Small vendors near the screening venues and Nehru Stadium witnessed brisk business. Face-painting artists painted 'TVK' and party flags on supporters, while roadside stalls sold TVK shawls, whistles, and towels.

Many supporters saw Vijay's victory as a decisive break from the decades-long dominance of DMK and AIADMK. "For so many years, it was only DMK or AIADMK. This election felt different because youngsters came out largely to support Vijay," said Pranav (22) at Central station.

NEWS BOX

IPL 2026: Did Mumbai Indians bring back the wrong Pandya?

New Delhi. (Agency)

The engine room. Krunal Pandya spoke about Mumbai Indians' engine room. Kieron Pollard paired with two boys from Baroda – a legendary all-rounder flanked by a fast-bowling all-rounder and a spin-bowling all-rounder. It felt, more than anything else, like family. If you got past Rohit Sharma, there was Suryakumar Yadav. If you got past Suryakumar, there was the engine room, driving Mumbai Indians home, more often than not.

When Pollard and the Pandya brothers formed the backbone of the middle order, Mumbai Indians won three titles: 2016, 2019 and 2020. "I had my best six years in MI. I remember Pandya brothers and Kieron Pollard were the engine room. We won a lot of games with bat, ball and fielding. I still remember in 2021, when we were playing our last game, the three of us held each other's hands and felt like, okay, this is the last time we'll be able to play together. It was obviously an emotional moment," Krunal Pandya said on Saturday, after a match-winning performance for Royal Challengers Bengaluru – this time, and with no small irony, against his former team. Mumbai Indians have not been the same since the engine room was dismantled. Hardik Pandya left for Gujarat Titans. Krunal was not retained. Age caught up with Pollard. Together, they would have papered over each other's cracks; apart, those cracks have only widened.

Cut to 2026, and Mumbai Indians are out of the playoffs race for the third time since 2022. This season, they may finish with the wooden spoon, having won just three of their first eleven matches. The five-time champions, the gold standard of this tournament for a decade, are threatening to become also-rans.

Yes, the engine room was gone – but the problems have compounded manifold since. Poor auctions. Squads that glistened on paper and crumbled in the heat of competition. The playoffs, perpetually tantalisingly close, perpetually out of reach.

Fingers are slowly, but surely, pointing at Hardik Pandya – their captain. Rumours of him unfollowing the franchise on Instagram buzzed on Sunday night, minutes after they lost to RCB in Raipur and their playoff chances, already hanging by mathematics alone, went up in smoke. One could not help but notice the symbolism: a captain, seemingly, cutting the last cord.

Emotional Hansi Flick fights back tears after El Clasico win, mourns father's death

New Delhi. (Agency)

An emotional Hansi Flick fought back the tears during Barcelona's title celebrations, after he revealed that his father passed away on the eve of the El Clasico against Real Madrid on Sunday, April 10. Barca defeated their arch-rivals 2-0 to seal the title at Camp Nou in front of a buoyant crowd.

The German manager took his place on the sidelines, despite his personal tragedy, to mastermind a result that wrapped up the title with three games remaining. Before the match started, the stadium observed a one minute silence for Flick's father as the German manager had to be consoled by his staff.

"It was a tough match and I'll never forget this day," an emotional Flick said during the title celebrations that ensued right after the win. Flick paid tribute to his players, saying that he is proud to have such a good team. "I want to thank the squad and all the people who have supported us. The most important thing is that I'm very proud to have such a good team. Thank you for everything."

Usually a reserved man with his words, Flick kept his victory address short and sweet, once again putting all the praise on his players and thanking the fans.

"Thank you for that determination to fight in every match. I really appreciate it. My team is fantastic and I'm delighted. I'm so proud of my players. It's thrilling to be here with the fans, in a Clasico, beating Real Madrid. Now I think we need to celebrate," said Flick.

Flick revealed that when the news about his father's death was told to him by his mother, he was in a dilemma whether to reveal to his players.

"This morning my mother called me and told me that my father had passed away. I thought about whether to hide it or talk to my team. For me, it's like a family"

"What they've done is incredible, I'll never forget this moment. I really appreciate working for this club and living in Barcelona, the people are very kind to me," said Flick. Barca will look to sign off from the season in fine fashion by winning all their remaining three matches.

Shahbaz Ahmed leads big-money buys at Bengal T20 League auction

Shahbaz Ahmed emerged as the biggest buy at the Bengal T20 League Men's Auction after Shracchi Tribes Rarh Tigers retained the Indian all-rounder for INR 12.20 lakh through the Right To Match card.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Bengal T20 League entered a new phase on Saturday as franchises spent heavily in the tournament's first-ever Men's Player Auction, with India all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed and wicketkeeper-batter Abhishek Porel emerging as the biggest buys ahead of the upcoming season. Shahbaz Ahmed became the most expensive player at the auction after Shracchi Tribes Rarh Tigers

used the Right To Match (RTM) card to retain him for INR 12.20 lakh. Abhishek Porel followed closely behind, with Lux Shyam Kolkata Tigers securing the 23-year-old wicketkeeper-batter for INR 10.40 lakh after competitive bidding.

The auction, held in Kolkata on May 10, saw all eight franchises aggressively build their squads with a combined purse of INR 4.08 crore. Teams focused on assembling balanced combinations featuring established domestic cricketers, experienced campaigners, and promising young talent.

India pacer Mukesh Kumar was retained by Sobisco Smashers Malda for INR 9.60 lakh through RTM, while Novus Purulia Royals made an immediate impact in their debut auction by signing Sudip Kumar Gharami for INR 9.40 lakh and Ravi Kumar for INR 7.80 lakh.



Murshidabad Kings secured Saksham Chaudhary for INR 8.40 lakh, while veteran all-rounder Writtick Chatterjee joined Adamas Howrah Warriors for INR 8.20 lakh. Servotech Siliguri Strikers signed Karan Lal for INR 8 lakh, and Bengal captain Abhimanyu Easwaran was picked up by Sobisco Smashers Malda for the same amount.

The auction also marked the official entry of Novus Purulia Royals into the competition. They joined Adamas Howrah Warriors, Lux

Shyam Kolkata Tigers, Murshidabad Kings & Kueens, Rashmi Medinipur Wizards, Servotech Siliguri Strikers, Shracchi Tribes Rarh Tigers, and Sobisco Smashers Malda in the league. Players were divided into five categories – A+, A, B, U19, and U16 – reflecting the league's emphasis on creating a pathway for both established and emerging cricketers in Bengal. The inclusion of the U16 category remained one of the standout features of the auction, reinforcing the tournament's long-term focus on talent development.

One of the youngest players in the auction, 16-year-old Rohit, attracted significant interest before being signed by Novus Purulia Royals for INR 5.20 lakh. Speaking after the auction, CAB President and former India captain Sourav Ganguly said the introduction of the auction system had added a new competitive dimension to the tournament.

Delhi Capitals look to spoil playoff race as Ian Bell admits inconsistency

New Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi Capitals appear to have accepted their setback in the playoff race, but could still play the role of party poopers for other teams vying for qualification in the next stage of the Indian Premier League this season.

Plagued by inconsistency throughout the campaign, the Axar Patel-led side currently sit eighth on the points table with eight points and only three matches left to play. "We want to finish as high on the table as we possibly can, and that positivity is really important," assistant head coach Ian Bell said ahead of their clash against Punjab Kings at the HPSA Stadium in Dharamshala.

With only six more points available from their remaining three matches, DC can at



the game against Kolkata Knight Riders. Bell admitted that inconsistency has been the biggest reason behind their struggles this season.

"It's been inconsistent. I think we sit here now and look at a few games where we had our opportunities, and when you play in the IPL and at the highest level of cricket against world-class players, you have to take those moments. We probably haven't done that ruthlessly enough," he said.

KL RAHUL AND BATTING INCONSISTENCY

Bell also pointed to the batting unit's inability to deliver consistently, while singling out KL Rahul for praise. "I think with KL, like any good player, you're always trying to improve, wherever you are in your career," Bell added.

best finish with 14 points, a tally that may still not be enough, especially with three teams already sitting on 12 points and having games in hand. Reflecting on the team's disappointing campaign, Axar had already accepted defeat. "We will think about our mistakes. We will start planning for next year. We can look at our bench and see who can step up for us," Axar said after

How MS Dhoni's advice turned CSK's Urvil Patel into an IPL record breaker

New Delhi. (Agency)

CSK's Urvil Patel revealed the chat he had with MS Dhoni and the advice the legendary wicketkeeper gave him as he became an IPL record-breaker during the clash against LSG. Urvil scored the joint-fastest fifty in the history of the competition when he reached the landmark at the Chepauk in just 13 balls.

During the madness against LSG, Urvil was able to hit five sixes in a row as CSK powered to the win on the back of his blistering knock of 65 off 23 balls. Urvil had often got starts for CSK, scoring 24 off 12 against MI and 17 off 9 against DC but was unable to convert them.

The Gujarat batter quickly turned to Dhoni for assistance. Speaking to the IPL's website, Urvil said that Dhoni told him that there was no doubt in his abilities and

it was just a mental block for him. The 27-year-old said that Dhoni told him to just try and target the right balls to the right areas.

"After getting out in the last two matches, I



sat with Mahi bhai in the dressing room and asked him, 'Brother, I'm getting starts but getting out. What should I do to convert them?' Bhai told me just one thing — 'I don't have any doubt about

your skills. Whatever doubt there is, it's only in your mind. Just stay clear mentally and try to hit the right ball to the right areas.'" said Urvil.

"ALWAYS PLAYED FOR MY FATHER"

After reaching the landmark, Urvil made a special dedication to his father during the celebration. The CSK batter revealed that his dad is a fan of his big-hitting and kept telling him not to worry about getting big scores despite the starts he was getting.

"I was getting good starts but then getting out. My father was the only one telling me, 'Son, I really enjoy the way you are batting. Just keep playing like this. Whether you score runs or not doesn't matter to me.' I have always played for my father. He kept telling me, 'Play freely, we don't want anything from you. We are happy just because you are here.'" said Urvil.

PBKS vs DC preview, IPL 2026: With three straight losses and their season

on the brink, Punjab Kings seek a mountain-air reset in Dharamshala. They face a demoralised Delhi Capitals, desperate to play the spoiler and salvage some tattered pride.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Indian Premier League's annual pilgrimage to the mountains arrives at a critical juncture for the Punjab Kings. As the mist settles over the Dhauladhar range, Shreyas Iyer's men find themselves at a crossroads. After a blistering start to the 2026

campaign that saw them win six of their first seven fixtures, the wheels have threatened to come off with three successive defeats. Returning to their second home in Dharamshala, the Kings know that any further slip-up could see their playoff dreams evaporate as quickly as the mountain fog.

For the Delhi Capitals, the journey north feels more like a dead rubber than a high-stakes duel. It has been a season of 'what ifs' for the capital side, who have managed just four wins from eleven outings. Demoralised and effectively out of the race for the top four, Axar Patel's side are playing for little more than pride and the chance to act as spoilers. Their recent form – five losses in their last six games – suggests a squad that is struggling to find the motivation required for the IPL's gruelling

final stretch. Yet, there is something about the Dharamshala air that often breathes life into the underdog.



For Punjab, this is a chance to reset. The shift from the humid plains to the high altitude of the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium offers a literal and metaphorical change of atmosphere. As the first match of

the season at this venue, the pressure is on the groundsmen and the captains alike to decipher a surface that traditionally rewards pace and fearless stroke-play.

Punjab will also be looking to get tighter on the field as they have dropped catches aplenty. In their last game against SunRisers Hyderabad, three dropped catches saw them concede 235 to the home team, which became insurmountable in the end in Hyderabad.

"We let ourselves down in the last game with our catching. If we take those catches, we could probably restrict them to a little bit more than 220 and come out on top in that game. It's a little bit of a hiccup, but I think any team that thinks they're going to go through this tournament and just sail for two months all the way through and not lose a game of cricket is kidding themselves. Our tournament for us starts now, I think," Punjab Kings' assistant coach James Hoopes said.

RCB coach Andy Flower given hefty fine for fiery umpire confrontation during MI clash



New Delhi. (Agency)

RCB coach Andy Flower found himself in trouble for his fiery confrontation with the fourth umpire during the match against MI in Raipur on Sunday, May 10. Flower has been found guilty of breaching IPL's Code Of Conduct and has been fined 15 percent of his match fees. The RCB coach accepted the offence.

The controversy unfolded after a debated boundary decision involving Krunal Pandya. Attempting a big shot off AM Ghazanfar, Krunal sent the ball towards wide long-on where Naman Dhir grabbed it near the ropes before tossing it towards Tilak Varma as he crossed over the boundary line.

Tilak failed to complete the relay catch and appeared to indicate a six, seemingly believing Naman had made contact with the boundary cushions. Television replays later confirmed that Dhir had stayed clear of the ropes during the entire effort.

Flower was seen in an animated chat with the fourth umpire right after the incident and he has been found guilty of breaching article 2.3 of IPL's Code Of Conduct. This relates to the use of an audible obscenity during a match.

"Andy Flower, Head Coach, Royal Challengers Bengaluru has been fined 15% of his applicable match fee for breaching Level 1 of the IPL's Code of Conduct for Players and Team officials. Andy was found to have breached article 2.3 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, which relates to "use of an audible obscenity during a match." The incident occurred in 17.2 over when Andy spoke aggressively with the fourth umpire. Andy admitted to the offence and accepted the sanction imposed by Match Referee, Amit Sharma," read the statement from IPL.

RCB BEAT MI IN A THRILLER

The match between RCB and MI was a must-win clash for both teams and lived up to the billing. Batting first, MI posted 166 in their 20 overs after Bhuvneshwar Kumar was able to restrict them with a four-wicket haul.



Disha Patani

Shares Excitement Over Hollywood Debut The Portal Of Force: 'I've Always Loved Action...'

Actress Disha Patani has officially stepped onto the global stage as the gripping trailer of her first international movie, "The Portal of Force", recently reached the audience. Talking about her latest project, Disha revealed that she had been waiting with bated breath for the trailer of this very special project.

Sharing her experience, the 'Malang' actress added, "Stepping into my first international outing was both thrilling and terrifying – but the scope to explore the craft was massive. Working with an experienced, diverse cast was an education in itself." Disha further revealed, "You realise that storytelling transcends language and geography – honesty on screen is universal. I've always loved action, and to bring what I've learned on the home turf to a global platform feels incredibly empowering."

The preview shows Disha as Jessica, the emotional and narrative epicentre of an epic supernatural showdown between two ancient factions – the Statiguards and the Holiguards.

It might be interesting to know that "The Portal of Force" is the first film of the Statiguards vs Holiguards Saga, marking the beginning of a new cinematic universe created by Lado Okhotnikov.

Known as "the Chosen One," Jessica is revealed to be the daughter of rival leaders on both sides a living bridge between warring worlds – and the ultimate decider in a battle.

As the narrative unfolds, we see Jessica undergoing a visceral supernatural transformation.

Disha is also seen performing some high-octane combat sequences in the project with utmost confidence. The ensemble cast of "The Portal of Force" includes Hollywood heavyweights such as Kevin Spacey, Dolph Lundgren, and Tyrese Gibson, along with others. Over and above this, Disha has also been roped in for a crucial role in the much-anticipated Bollywood drama "Awarapan 2". Made under the direction of Nitin Kakkar, the sequel will be headlined by Emraan Hashmi.



Avika Gor Moves To Bangkok After Marrying Milind Chandwani; Is She Also Quitting Indian TV?



Actress Avika Gor has moved to Bangkok after marrying Milind Chandwani. The actress has decided to move because it's a better career decision for her husband. However, this does not mean that she will stop acting or working in India. She will continue her television and film career as it anyway requires her to shoot outside Mumbai for months.

Avika told Hindustan Times, "Yes, Milind and I have moved to Bangkok. We've even bought a house there, which I've been setting up as per my taste." She said, "Milind and I realised that it's a better opportunity for him when it comes to his work there. And honestly, for me too, it felt exciting."

She added, "I would always feel like I'm on a holiday there, so why not? We have always believed in supporting each other to grow, even when we were dating for seven years. If I get a project that takes me away for months, he supports that completely. Similarly, I don't think I should stop his growth either."

She explained, "Even when I was in Mumbai, I was shooting in Hyderabad, Rajahmundry or Visakhapatnam. I realised that it doesn't really have to be Mumbai where I have my base." "I have only been there for about a month now, and I'm mostly in Hyderabad or Mumbai because of work. The priority will always be my commitments because those are the things that made me who I am today," she clarified.

When asked if she is worried about losing projects due to her move, Avika said, "Everything that comes my way happens according to my schedule, so I don't think that's going to be a constraint ever. At the end of the day, when somebody wants to work with me, they should—and they better—make all the efforts for me. When I shared my decision to move, people in the industry were very supportive."

"For the first time, I'm deciding everything myself—from the furniture to how the house will look. Growing up, you live in spaces shaped by your parents or later your in-laws, but this is the first space that truly feels like ours," she said.

Ranveer Singh Poses With Fans On The Sets Of Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone's King



Ranveer Singh is currently basking in the massive success of Dhurandhar: The Revenge, which hit theatres on March 19.

Directed by Aditya Dhar, the film has been enjoying a phenomenal run at the box office and breaking several records. Amid the love and appreciation coming his way, Ranveer recently jetted off to South Africa with Deepika Padukone and their daughter, Dua. Soon after their arrival, several videos of a pregnant Deepika shooting with Shah Rukh Khan for King surfaced on social media. One of the clips also featured Ranveer and little Dua watching the shoot. Now, more pictures of Ranveer posing with fans in South Africa have emerged online. In pictures that are now going viral across social media platforms, Ranveer Singh can be seen warmly interacting with fans and happily posing for selfies during his time in South Africa. The actor kept his look casual yet stylish in a black T-shirt paired with cargo pants. Adding his signature flair to the outfit, Ranveer completed the look with tinted sunglasses and a beanie, effortlessly grabbing attention with his cool off-duty style.

The pictures surfaced just days after a video of Ranveer from the sets of King went viral on social media. In the clip, the actor was seen taking care of his daughter Dua while Deepika shot a romantic sequence with Shah Rukh Khan. Fans couldn't stop gushing over Ranveer's adorable "dad duties" moment, as he stood beside his little one under an umbrella, patiently watching the shoot while she continued filming.

Meanwhile, Ranveer and Deepika announced their second pregnancy in April 2026. The couple shared a joint post on social media to confirm the happy news, with the picture featuring big sister Dua holding a positive pregnancy test. Ever since the announcement, fans of Deepika have been showering the couple with love and heartfelt wishes, while eagerly waiting for more glimpses from this new phase of their lives.

On the work front, Deepika has King with Shah Rukh Khan and Raaka with Allu Arjun in the pipeline. The actress is expected to continue shooting throughout her second pregnancy. Meanwhile, Ranveer has Pralay lined up next, with the actor set to begin filming for the project soon.

Zareen Khan

Remembers Her Late Mother, Shares Emotional Tribute On Her Birth Anniversary

Actress Zareen Khan remembered her late mother, Parveen Khan, on her first birthday following her demise with a special social media post. Publishing a throwback video of her mother cutting her birthday cake, the 'Veer' actress revealed that she plans to take forward her mother's mission to feed everyone.

"Happy Birthday mom (red heart emoji) Making sure everyone ate was like her life mission and I'll make sure i continue th... Insha Allah! (sic)," read the text on the post. For the unaware, Zareen's mother passed away on April 8 this year after suffering from a prolonged illness.

10 days after her mother's demise, the 'Housefull 2' actress remembered her with a heavy heart. "Inna lillh wa'inaa 'ilayh rajiewn (To Allah we belong and to him we shall return)." My Mother, my first love, my best friend, my baby, my world, my everything It's been 10 days that you are gone," wrote Zareen on the photo-sharing app.



"I'm not gonna write some long caption for the world to read bcoz you know exactly what I'm going through right now without you. There's a constant ache and emptiness in my heart which is irreplaceable," she went on to add.

She wished her mother peace and love in heaven. "Be the Chota baby you always were and enjoy your parents' love in Jannat ... Until we meet again!," concluded the post.

Zareen's mother's last rites took place at the Versova Muslim Kabrastan in Andheri West, Mumbai. Confirming the unfortunate news, Zareen's team had shared a statement saying, "Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un (Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return). This is to inform that our beloved Ms Parveen Khan, mother of Zareen Khan & Sana Khan, has departed peacefully to her heavenly abode on the 8th of April. May Allah grant her the highest place in Jannatul Firdaus. Ameen."



NEWS BOX

Turkish Airlines jet catches fire while landing at Nepal airport; all passengers evacuated safely

KATHMANDU. (Agency)

A Turkish Airlines jet caught fire while landing at Nepal's main airport on Monday, causing no reported injuries but forcing the airport to shut down. The flight from Istanbul landed at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport with fire and smoke on the right landing gear. Emergency crew responded and controlled the fire and passengers were safely evacuated, according to airport officials. The airport was shut down on Monday morning. There were 277 passengers on board the Airbus 330 jet. Several planes bound for Kathmandu were put on hold while officials were investigating and attempting to clear the only runway available at the airport. Nepal experiences relatively frequent plane crashes as its mountainous terrain and variable weather make flying conditions difficult. In 2015, a Turkish Airlines jet landing in dense fog in Kathmandu skidded off a slippery runway, shutting down the airport for several days. No injuries were reported, and the plane was later towed out of the airport and converted into a museum.

6 people found dead in train's boxcar near US-Mexico border: Police

World. (Agency)

Six bodies were found on Sunday in a train boxcar in Laredo, Texas, according to police. A Union Pacific worker discovered them in a train yard at a remote location near the Mexican border, and police and firefighters later confirmed they had died, said Laredo Police Investigator Joe Baeza. Police have not determined how they died, Baeza said. The investigation is ongoing, he said. There were no survivors, he said. Police did not say where the individuals were from. Past instances of multiple deaths in trains and tractor trailers not far from the U.S.-Mexico border have involved migrants, including a 2022 incident in which 53 were found dead in an abandoned truck with malfunctioning air conditioning on the outskirts of San Antonio.

"Totally Unacceptable": Trump Rejects Iran's Peace Plan, Tehran Responds



World. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump has rejected Iran's proposal to end the over two-month-long war in the Middle East, claiming Tehran's terms were "totally unacceptable" and raising the likelihood of renewed conflict after weeks of negotiations. The American commander-in-chief, who is under increasing domestic pressure to end the Iran war, claimed the Islamic republic was "militarily defeated", as he insisted that Tehran's nuclear programme -- one of the main reasons why Trump started the war -- has been contained. The 79-year-old Republican himself provided no details on Tehran's counterproposal but, in a brief post on his Truth Social platform, said he was rejecting it. What Trump Said "I have just read the response from Iran's so-called 'Representatives.' I don't like it -- TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE!" he said. The Wall Street Journal, citing people familiar with the matter, reported that Iran has laid out its own demands to Washington and proposed to have some of its highly enriched uranium diluted, and the rest transferred to a third country. In its response, delivered through mediator Pakistan, Iran sought guarantees that the transferred uranium will be returned if negotiations fail or Washington quits the agreement later, sources told the Journal. Trump made no mention of such details in rejecting Iran's response. Later, talking to journalist Sharyl Attkisson, Trump also claimed the US was "closely monitoring" Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium and claimed Washington would know if anyone approached the site and would "blow them up". "We'll get that at some point. Whenever we want. We have it surveilled. I did a thing called Space Force, and they are watching that... If anybody got near the place, we will know about it -- and we'll blow them up," the US leader said. Referring to American surveillance capabilities, Trump said that Washington would know if anyone went near the enriched uranium. "If somebody walked in, they (Space Force) can tell you his name, address, his badge number," Trump said. Iran's Response Iran responded by warning it would not hold back from retaliating against any new US strikes or permit more foreign warships in the Strait of Hormuz. Iranian state television reported that Tehran has also rejected the American counterproposal as amounting to surrender, insisting instead on "war reparations by the US, full Iranian sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, an end to sanctions, and the release of seized Iranian assets."

Iran war disruptions spark higher costs and lost income in Bangladesh

Conditions have eased slightly in recent days, with shorter queues at fuel stations after the government increased supplies, but concerns persist across sectors.

DHAKA. (Agency)

Tariqul Islam lost his savings after setbacks in his clothing business about a year and a half ago and turned to ride-sharing on his motorbike to make ends meet. Until recently, he spent hours in fuel lines as supply disruptions linked to the war in Iran ripple into Bangladesh. The 53-year-old father of four fears the strain will worsen if the war drags on, saying long hours waiting for fuel have sharply cut his income and made it increasingly difficult to support his

family in Dhaka, the nation's capital, including a daughter at university and a son in college. "My family was managing fairly well through ride-sharing," he said. "But after the fuel shortage began, I would buy fuel one day and run the bike for two days. As a result, I had to sit idle for one day, which reduced my income." The strain in Islam's household reflects a broader squeeze in Bangladesh, heavily dependent on imported fuel, where energy shortages have disrupted daily life, slowed industrial output and raised concerns about economic growth as global tensions push up costs and strain supplies. Conditions have eased slightly in recent days, with shorter queues at fuel stations after the government increased supplies, but concerns persist across sectors. Across Asia, governments are facing similar strains as the war-driven surge in energy prices rattles economies dependent on imported oil and gas. The continent is exposed because it relies on imported fuel, much of it passing through the Strait of Hormuz -- a chokepoint for about a fifth of global oil and natural gas

trade. Higher fuel costs are leading to inflation and squeezing household budgets, while industries from manufacturing to transport are facing rising operating costs and supply disruptions.



The Asian Development Bank in late April cut growth forecasts for developing Asia and the Pacific, warning that war-driven energy disruptions would slow economies and fuel inflation. It now expects growth of 4.7% in 2026, with inflation rising to 5.2% as oil prices climb and financial conditions tighten. Many are hoping for a quick end to

the conflict and a return to normal. "If this situation continues, we will have to move back to our village and find some other way to earn a living," Islam, the struggling father said. It is not possible to survive in Dhaka by doing ride-sharing under these conditions. "Energy crunch weighs on Bangladesh's economy. Rising energy prices are also expected to strain Bangladesh's finances, with the government likely to spend an additional \$1.07 billion on LNG subsidies in the April-June quarter alone if global prices remain high. Bangladesh has sought supplies from its big neighbor India, which has responded positively as it has diversified sources, including Russia, of fuel. Already, authorities have imposed austerity measures to manage the crisis as global lenders warn of slower growth in the nation of more than 170 million people. Gas and diesel shortages have triggered more frequent power cuts in industrial zones. The government has also shut fertilizer factories to divert gas to power plants.

'Without strategic goal, plan or timeline': US Senator slams Trump over Iran War

PESHAWAR. (Agency)

Arizona Democratic Senator Mark Kelly has criticised US President Donald Trump over Washington's involvement in the Iran conflict, accusing the administration of entering the war without a "strategic goal, plan or timeline" and rapidly depleting key US military stockpiles. Speaking to CBS on Sunday, Kelly said briefings from the Pentagon on munitions inventories, including Tomahawk missiles, ATACMS, SM-3 interceptors, THAAD rounds and Patriot missiles, revealed alarming levels of expenditure triggered by the conflict. "It's shocking the how deep we have gone into these magazines, because this president got our country into this without a strategic goal, without a plan, without a timeline, and because of that, we've expended a lot of munitions, and that means the American people are less safe, whether it's a conflict in the western

Pacific with China or somewhere else in the world, the munitions are depleted. You may have seen me ask the Secretary of Defence this question about how long it's going to take to



replenish. We're talking about years," he said. Kelly also questioned the broader benefits of the conflict for Americans, accusing Trump of failing to deliver on campaign promises related to peace and lowering costs. "What are the American people

getting out of this? This president said he wasn't going to start any new wars. He was going to bring down costs. He's done exactly the opposite. War against Iran. Costs on everything are up," Senator Kelly said. Meanwhile, Iranian state broadcaster Press TV reported comments from IRGC commander Brigadier General Ahmad Zolghadr, who claimed the United States could no longer "instill panic" by deploying aircraft carriers in international waters. Later on Sunday, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) said its forces had redirected 61 commercial vessels amid the continuing maritime blockade in the Strait of Hormuz. As tensions escalated across West Asia and the Gulf region, Trump also lashed out at Iran over Tehran's response to efforts aimed at ending hostilities and restoring peace, calling the reaction "completely unacceptable."

Nobel laureate Narges Mohammadi is transferred to a Tehran hospital

BEIRUT. (Agency)

Nobel Peace laureate and activist Narges Mohammadi has been transferred to a Tehran hospital more than a week after collapsing in prison, her foundation said Sunday. Her transfer comes after days of pleading by her family and others who described her condition as critical. Her foundation said she has been granted a prison sentence suspension on bail. It was not clear for how long her sentence is suspended, the foundation said. Mohammadi had been imprisoned since December in Zanjan prison. She lost consciousness twice and was transferred to a local hospital on May 1. A statement from her foundation, shared with The Associated Press, said the suspended sentence is not enough and that Mohammadi needs "permanent, specialized care." The statement added that "we must ensure she never returns to prison to face the 18 years remaining on her sentence. Now is the

time to demand her unconditional freedom and the dismissal of all charges." Mohammadi's Iran-based lawyer Mostafa Nili said on social media the transfer order was issued following the decision of the Legal Medicine Organization -- government-appointed medical examiners -- "which stated that, due to her multiple illnesses, she needs to continue treatment outside prison and under the supervision of her own medical team. There was no immediate comment from Iranian authorities. Mohammadi's brother Hamidreza Mohammadi, who is based in Oslo, Norway, had said medical examiners previously recommended her transfer to Tehran but the decision was blocked. He blamed Iran's intelligence agency. "I'm relieved now. I can breathe lightly," her brother told the AP in a message. The 53-year-old rights activist and champion of women's rights was awarded the Nobel in 2023 while in

prison and has been jailed repeatedly throughout her career. Her current imprisonment began when she was arrested in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad. Mohammadi's family said her health had been deteriorating in prison, in part because she was heavily beaten during her arrest. She had a heart attack in March and has a blood clot in her lung since before her imprisonment that needs blood thinners and monitoring to manage it. Since being taken to the Zanjan hospital's cardiac care unit, Mohammadi's blood pressure had been swinging between extremely low and extremely high, and she was receiving oxygen to breathe and can't talk, according to her brother. The Nobel committee had called on Iranian authorities to immediately transfer Mohammadi to her dedicated medical team in Tehran, saying that "without such treatment, her life remains at risk."

One evacuated passenger tests positive for hantavirus, another develops symptoms on flight home

TENERIFE. (Agency)

Passengers evacuated from the hantavirus-hit cruise ship began flying home aboard military and government planes Sunday after the vessel anchored in the Canary Islands, with one American testing positive and a French traveler developing symptoms for the pathogen aboard their separate aircraft. One of the 17 American passengers evacuated from the MV Hondius tested positive for the hantavirus but is not showing any symptoms, U.S. health officials said late Sunday. Earlier, one of the five French passengers developed symptoms on their flight home, French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu said in a statement, and all were put into strict isolation with plans to be tested. Passengers were evacuated from the MV Hondius following its arrival in Tenerife, the largest island in the Spanish archipelago off the West African coast. Earlier, officials from the Spanish Health Ministry, the World Health Organization and the cruise company Oceanwide Expeditions had said none of the more than 140 people who were then on the Hondius had shown symptoms of the virus. The aircraft carrying the Americans was due to arrive in Omaha, Nebraska, early Monday. The Americans would first be taken to the University of Nebraska Medical Center, which has a federally funded quarantine facility, to assess whether they have been in close contact with any symptomatic people and their risk levels for spreading the virus. The medical school also has a special unit for treating people with highly infectious diseases that was used early in the pandemic for COVID-19 patients and previously for Ebola patients. "One passenger will be transported to the Nebraska Biocontainment Unit upon arrival, while other passengers will go to the National Quarantine Unit for assessment and monitoring. The passenger who is going to the Biocontainment Unit tested positive for the virus but does not have symptoms," said Kayla Thomas, a spokesperson for the Nebraska Medicine hospital that will help care for the passengers. From the ship, all of the passengers were escorted to shore by personnel in full-body protective gear and breathing masks. Spanish passengers were the first to leave, flown to Madrid and taken to a military hospital. Hours later, a plane that evacuated French passengers landed in Paris, where it was met by emergency vehicles.

Thailand's ex-PM Thaksin released from prison after serving eight months for abuse of power

BANGKOK. (Agency)

Thailand's former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, whose 21st-century political odyssey sharply divided Thai society for decades, was released from a Bangkok prison on Monday after serving eight months of a one-year sentence for a corruption-related charge. A crowd of about 300 supporters and political allies gathered outside the Klong Prem Central Prison to greet the 76-year-old billionaire populist. Thaksin was a telecommunications magnate who founded his own political party in 1998 and served as prime minister from 2001 until a military coup ousted him in 2006 while he was abroad. His ouster triggered nearly two decades of deep and sometimes violent political polarization, while his political machine staged several comebacks even as Thaksin himself stayed in self-imposed exile to escape what he said was political persecution through the courts. His three children, including former prime minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, and other family members also arrived early to welcome him.

Thaksin emerged from the prison gate in a white polo shirt and blue pants and was embraced by his family. He smiled brightly as he walked around to greet his supporters who chanted "we love Thaksin," and gave red roses to him. He then left without speaking to reporters. He arrived at his residence in western Bangkok about an hour later. In a video streamed by Thai Rath News, Thaksin was seen rolling down the car window to greet a small group of supporters waiting at his home, responding to reporters' shouted questions that "I was in hibernation, I can't remember anything now." Thaksin was the first elected prime minister in Thai history to serve a full four-year term. Policies like a national healthcare scheme and projects to build roads in less developed parts of the country drew devoted support from the poorer segments of society, particularly in the rural north and northeast, but his popularity and sometimes high-handed style created deep fractures between his base and the country's urban elites, royalists, and military. He was charged with abuse of

power over allegations including using his position to benefit his own business interests and illegally approving a state lottery project that caused losses to the government.



Thaksin was convicted in absentia, but returned to Thailand to be sentenced in 2023 as the Pheu Thai Party, his most recent political vehicle, formed a government. He was widely believed to have reached a secret accommodation with the traditional royalist establishment. He was originally sentenced to eight years in prison, but it was commuted to one year by

King Maha Vajiralongkorn, which he was granted permission to serve from a suite in Bangkok's Police Hospital on medical grounds. After protests that he had received unwarranted special treatment, the Supreme Court in September 2025 ordered Thaksin to serve his sentence in prison. A Justice Ministry panel agreed last month to grant him parole as part of a review of more than 900 eligible prisoners' cases, citing his good behavior in prison, his age and the low risk that he would repeat his offense. After his release, Thaksin will be on probation for four months, during which he must reside at his declared home in Bangkok, wear an electronic monitoring bracelet, and report regularly to probation officials. Thaksin's daughter Paetongtarn became the country's youngest prime minister in 2024 but was removed from office by the Constitutional Court in August 2025 after a recording was released of a compromising phone call with former Cambodian leader Hun Sen.