

MAHANAGAR METRO

VOICE OF THE CITY, PULSE OF THE NATION

PM halves SPG convoy, pushes for more EVs after national austerity call

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ordered a 50% cut in his convoy size and increased use of EVs as part of an austerity and fuel-saving drive amid the economic fallout of the Iran war.

New Delhi.(Agency) Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ordered a 50 per cent reduction in the size of his convoy and called for greater use of electric vehicles as part of a wider austerity and fuel-saving drive amid economic stress linked to the Iran war, sources news agency on Wednesday.

According to sources, the Special Protection Group (SPG) has been instructed to cut down the number of vehicles in the Prime Minister's convoy, while ensuring that mandatory security protocols are not compromised. The SPG has already begun implementing the directions. Sources also said PM Modi has asked for a greater use of electric vehicles in the convoy, while making it clear that no new vehicles should be purchased for the transition.

The move came days after PM Modi appealed to citizens to adopt austerity measures, including avoiding gold

purchases for a year, postponing non-essential foreign travel and reducing fuel consumption, as India braces for the economic fallout of rising global oil prices. Leading from the front on



austerity measures, PM Modi has significantly reduced the size of his convoy during recent visits to states including Gujarat and Assam. The scaled-down convoys were seen in Vadodara and Guwahati soon after the Prime Minister's austerity appeal at a

rally in Hyderabad.

Sources said the reduction in vehicles was carried out while fully maintaining mandatory security requirements under SPG protocol. The austerity drive is now being mirrored across governments and ministries. Several central ministries are said to be exploring fuel-saving measures. Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled states, including Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, have also directed reductions in their official convoys, per sources. Union Minister CR Patil has also decided to stop using an escort vehicle as part of the effort, they further said.

PM MODI'S AUSTERITY CALL

Addressing a Telangana BJP rally in Hyderabad on Sunday, PM Modi urged people to adopt austerity measures to help the country tackle the economic impact of the Iran war and conserve foreign exchange reserves.

Senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi admitted to top Gurugram hospital for surgery

The 79-year-old Rajya Sabha MP has faced multiple health issues in recent years, including hospitalisations earlier this year for respiratory discomfort and uneasiness.

New Delhi.(Agency) Senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was admitted to a leading private hospital in Gurugram for a minor surgical procedure, sources said on Wednesday. Further details regarding the nature of the procedure have not been disclosed so far. The 79-year-old Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan has faced several health-related issues in recent years and has undergone treatment multiple times at hospitals in Delhi and elsewhere. In March this year, Sonia Gandhi was admitted to Delhi's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital after she complained of uneasiness. Her children, Lok Sabha MPs Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, were also present at the hospital during her stay.



Earlier in January, she was hospitalised due to respiratory discomfort. Doctors had then attributed her condition to a mild aggravation of bronchial asthma caused by Delhi's winter conditions and rising pollution levels. Throughout 2025, Sonia Gandhi was admitted to hospital on at least three occasions, including for stomach-related ailments and routine medical check-ups in Shimla and Delhi. A five-time Lok Sabha MP before moving to the Rajya Sabha, Sonia Gandhi has been one of the Congress party's most influential leaders for over two decades. She has also served two terms as Congress president and continues to play a key role in the party's organisational and political affairs.

Vijay's stunning astrologer move after DMK's anti-Sanatan speech. Talk about timing

During Vijay's first Assembly session, Udhayanidhi Stalin renewed his "eradicate Sanatan Dharma" remark, prompting the Chief Minister to respond with folded hands. Hours later, the appointment of Vijay's personal astrologer as Officer on Special Duty triggered political chatter and criticism over the timing.

New Delhi.(Agency) As Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay faced a floor test in the Assembly on Tuesday, his religion and his decision to elevate his personal astrologer to the Chief Minister's Office also appeared to be put to the test. Both allies and the Opposition took him to task over the appointment of his personal astrologer as an advisor to the Chief Minister, calling the move "unscientific" and devoid of logic. For a man who has neither worn his faith on his sleeve nor hidden it, Vijay has long been known among his fan base for the



almost God-like justice his on-screen characters delivered to enemies. But that changed overnight.

During his first Assembly session on Tuesday, DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin looked Vijay in the eye and

declared, "Sanatan, which divided people, should be eradicated." Vijay, dressed in a suit, merely folded his hands after the remark.

In response, Vijay, without directly taking on the Sanatan jibe head-on, said, "Everyone is important here. Even if they are from a party with just one candidate, their opinion will be treated equally to TVK's. Good suggestions will be accepted, and bad suggestions will be rejected." Soon after the exchange, headlines were dominated by the official announcement appointing Vijay's personal

astrologer, Radhan Pandit Vetrivel, as Officer on Special Duty to the Chief Minister. Questions were immediately raised over the timing. It was not as though Vijay had not already made up his mind, but the sequence of events -- the Sanatan remark, Vijay's folded-hands gesture, and then the appointment announcement -- quickly fuelled political chatter.

The DMK soon latched onto the controversy, with party spokesperson Saravanan Annadurai tweeting, "Many of you may be wondering about what our leader #UdhayStalin spoke in the Assembly today. Now keep wondering who has been made the Officer on Special Duty."

Explosive Honeytrap, Blackmail & Multi-Crore Extortion Allegations Against White-Collar Network Rock Gujarat

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Mekan

Ahmedabad: A sensational controversy has erupted in Gujarat after explosive allegations surfaced regarding an alleged "honeytrap and extortion conspiracy" targeting Jain monk Rajatilak Sagarji Maharaj. The matter is now being viewed not merely as an attack on an individual saint, but as a calculated attempt to damage the dignity and credibility of the Jain religious community. According to claims made in the report, a well-planned operation was

allegedly designed to trap and blackmail the monk through a honeytrap setup with the objective of extracting crores of rupees. Sources connected to the controversy claim that when the alleged financial demands were not met, an aggressive campaign to publicly defame and isolate the saint was launched. The report further alleges that the conspiracy was part of a larger organized blackmail network operating behind the scenes under the cover of influence and social status. Several individuals, including Hardik

Hudiya, Jagat Parekh, Vikram Singhvi, and Vikram Bafna, have been named in connection with the alleged operation. The controversy has triggered outrage and intense debate within sections of the Jain community, with many demanding a thorough investigation into the alleged conspiracy and possible links to a wider extortion syndicate. Several major questions are now being raised: Was this a carefully orchestrated extortion racket? Are influential figures secretly backing the alleged operation? Will law enforce-



ment agencies take strong action against those accused? Could more shocking names and revelations emerge in the investigation? As pressure mounts and the controversy deepens, all eyes are now on the authorities and the next phase of the investigation. Sources indicate that more sensational disclosures may soon come to light.

Bengal downgrades Abhishek Banerjee's security cover, Mamata's unchanged

The Z+ category security previously accorded to TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee is being scaled down. Moving forward, the parliamentarian, who is also the nephew of former chief minister Mamata Banerjee, will receive security coverage in accordance with the standard protocols laid down by the Centre for VIPs of his standing.

Kolkata. (Agency) In a significant realignment of high-profile security cover in West Bengal, the state home ministry and security agencies have reassessed the protection levels for several top political figures, including Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Abhishek Banerjee, following a routine threat perception assessment and is in the process of revising the same.

The Z+ category security previously accorded to the parliamentarian is being scaled down. Moving forward, the TMC national general secretary, who is also the nephew of former chief minister Mamata Banerjee, will receive security coverage in accordance with the standard protocols laid down by the Centre for VIPs of his standing.



While the specific details of the new tier were not disclosed for tactical reasons, sources noted that the adjustment follows a comprehensive review of current risk factors. Despite the changes to Abhishek's security detail, Mamata will continue to be

protected under the Z+ category due to her status as the ex-CM of the state.

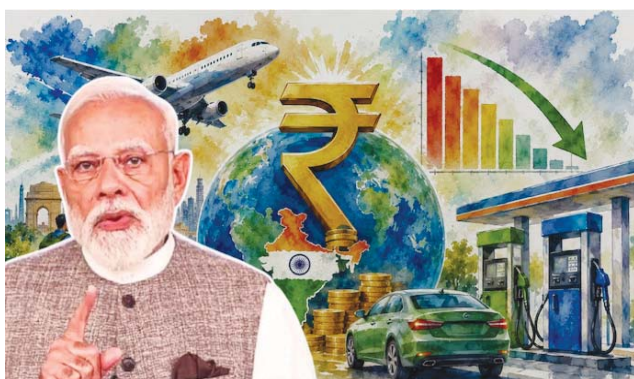
The adjustments are as per the standard administrative protocol. The reassessment of security is a continuous and evolving process. Security tiers are frequently calibrated based on intelligence inputs, environmental factors, and updated threat profiles to ensure resources are deployed where they are most critically required.

How much can you help India save if you go by Modi's advice?

► **PM Narendra Modi urged Indians to revive Covid-era habits like work from home (WFH), avoiding non-essential foreign travel and reducing fuel consumption to help India save foreign exchange amid the Iran war. How much forex can Indians help save with judicious fuel consumption? The answer is in the Covid**

New Delhi.(Agency) The reality of the war in the Middle East seems to be hitting India over two months after it started with the US and Israel attacking Iran. Though industrial hubs have been impacted and a panic over LPG refills was seen initially, most of India went about its business as usual. But India, which imports 90% of its energy needs, couldn't have been left untouched by the crisis. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged Indians to use fuel judiciously, resort to work from home (WFH) and avoid foreign trips. The question is how much Indians can save for the country if they do as asked. Going by the Covid-19 years, we can reach a ballpark figure. PM Modi on Sunday, urged Indians to revive

Covid years, like working from home where possible, avoiding non-essential foreign travel, reducing fuel consumption and buying less gold. Modi's request came



even as India is battling a massive surge in global oil prices triggered by the war in the Middle East.

event in Vadodara. He asked Indians to reduce the use of petrol and diesel, increase the use of public transport, carpooling, and advised WFH where possible. This was his second such appeal within about 24 hours.

With the Strait of Hormuz remaining disrupted for more than two-and-a-half months, India's crude import bill has shot up.

Years ago, during the Covid-time lockdown (2020-2021), Indians unintentionally helped India save billions of dollars in crude imports and overseas spending simply by travelling less and consuming less fuel. This time, unlike the Covid lockdown, there is no legal restriction. But the dips in the consumption of petrol, diesel and aviation fuel sales, show how Indians saved foreign reserves during the Covid-enforced

HOW INDIA SAVED FOREX BY TRAVELLING LESS DURING COVID

Foreign exchange reserves are any nation's first line of defence against external volatility, according to experts. The fall in the number of Indians travelling abroad during the Covid lockdown, from a pre-pandemic peak of 2.69 crore departures in 2019 to just around 92 lakh in 2020 and 85 lakh in 2021, also helped India save millions of dollars in foreign exchange.

The decline was reflected not only in overseas travel spending, but also in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) consumption, which dropped sharply as international and domestic flights were curtailed.

During the Covid years, India witnessed one of the sharpest falls in petroleum consumption.

Between April and July 2020 alone, India spent \$23.8 billion less on crude oil imports compared to the same period in 2019, according to Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) data cited by news agency.

News box

Charkhi Dadri, Jind top HBSE results, Gurgaon slips six ranks to 18th

GURGAON.(Agency)

Haryana Board of School Education (HBSE) announced Class 12 results on Tuesday evening, and Charkhi Dadri emerged as the best-performing district, securing a pass percentage of 91.08%. Jind secured second place at 87%, while Nuh was at the bottom of the chart at 57%, despite some improvement from last year's 45.7%. Girls outperformed boys across the state, recording a pass percentage of 87.9%, 6.5 percentage points higher than boys at 81.4%. Deepika from Rewari district topped the state by scoring 499 out of 500 marks. Udit from Rohtak secured the second position with 498 marks, while Yogita and Muskan from Jind jointly secured third place with 497 marks each. Meanwhile, Gurgaon's ranking dropped from 12th place in 2025 to 18th this year. The district's overall pass percentage dropped from 87.5% recorded last year to 81.9% in 2026. Education officers attributed the dip to growing academic challenges in schools, stressing the need for stronger academic monitoring, improved learning support systems and better teaching outcomes. A Gurgaon-based teacher highlighted stricter norms and more evaluation transparency, sometimes resulting in realistic but lower outcomes. Private schools in Gurgaon showed improvement compared with last year, with the pass percentage increasing to 65.1% from 37%. In govt schools across Gurgaon, 13,292 students appeared for the examinations, of whom 10,898 passed and 1,796 received compartment. Across Haryana, out of 2,42,856 students who appeared in the examinations, 2,05,618 cleared them. Science recorded the highest passing rate at 90%, followed by Commerce at 88.2% and Arts at 82.6%.

Bishnoi gang says firing outside Diljit manager's home 'third warning'

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Lawrence Bishnoi gang has claimed responsibility for firing outside the house of Gurbartap Kang — manager of singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh — in Karnal's Gonder. In a social media post, Bishnoi's aides Tyson Bishnoi, Aarzoo Bishnoi, and Hari Boxer said the attack was carried out using "Austria-made" weapons. They said the shooting was meant as a warning and not for extortion or financial gain and alleged that an employee associated with the singer had been exploiting women. They claimed a woman from Punjab was harassed and later abandoned during a recent Australia tour. The post also said the gang had received several complaints from other women alleging similar obscene conduct linked to the singer's band. According to the statement, two earlier warnings had already been sent to Dosanjh and his managers, Sonali and Gurbartap, asking them to distance themselves from the accused employee. Calling the firing a "third warning," the gang said it was showing restraint for now because Dosanjh represents the country internationally. They warned of more serious action if their demands were ignored.

Separate power connections must for ETPs, industries told after pollution complaints

NOIDA.(Agency)

Following complaints that industries were discharging untreated waste into drains by keeping effluent treatment plants (ETPs) switched off, the GB Nagar administration has directed all water-polluting industries to obtain separate electricity connections for their ETPs so that their functioning can be monitored through power consumption data. District magistrate Medha Roopam said the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) has been tasked with ensuring compliance and preparing a list of all industries connected to drains and rivers in the district. "Companies will now be required to obtain separate electricity connections for their ETPs. Every industrialist must strictly adhere to water pollution norms," Roopam said. Officials said the move is aimed at strengthening surveillance on industrial discharge into drains linked to the Hindon and Yamuna rivers. According to the administration, if electricity consumption recorded on an ETP meter is found to be unusually low, the treatment plant may be presumed nonfunctional, prompting further inspection. The administration will also examine purchase bills, GST records and other documents related to chemicals used by industries to verify whether treatment systems are being operated properly. A UPPCB official said all water-polluting industries in GB Nagar have ETPs installed. "There are around 150 such industries across the district, of which nearly 65 are in Greater Noida alone. Directions regarding separate electricity connections for ETPs have been issued and compliance is awaited," the official said.

Delivery agent killed in hit and run

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A 25-year-old delivery agent who worked for an online grocery app was killed in a hit and run while on his way to make a delivery in Indirapuram during the early hours of Tuesday. According to police, Rohit alias Pankaj Baisla, a resident of Arthala in Ghaziabad, was hit by an unidentified four-wheeler in front of the Indian Petrol Pump around 2am on Tuesday. A commuter found Baisla injured on the road and informed police, who reached the spot and brought him to a nearby hospital. Baisla was declared dead on arrival. ACP Indirapuram Abhishek Srivastava said that Baisla's brother Akshay filed a police complaint. An FIR has been registered under BNS sections 281 (rash driving) and 106 (causing death by negligence) at the Indirapuram police station. Teams were formed to nab the accused, and police are checking the CCTV footage. On May 9 and 10, traffic police conducted a special enforcement drive across the city. Police conducted checks and handed out challans for drunk driving, hooters, sirens, pressure horns and modified silencers — identified as major causes of road accidents. Teams were deployed at 23 key spots across the district.

Bandhwari landfill faces scrutiny again over groundwater pollution

GURGAON.(Agency)

The district administration has been directed to assess the environmental and groundwater impact of the Bandhwari landfill site. The directions were issued during a review of key civic issues in the city on Tuesday by Union minister of state for statistics and programme implementation, Rao Inderjit Singh.

Chairing a meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) at the Mini Secretariat, Singh reviewed progress on key development projects and central govt schemes, with focus on waste management, waterlogging and encroachments.

Calling the legacy waste at Bandhwari a major concern, Singh directed officials to conduct periodic groundwater testing in Bandhwari village and adjoining areas to assess the impact of the landfill site.



Officials informed the committee that nearly 14 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste remain at the site and complete remediation is targeted by Feb 14 next year. Singh emphasised scientific assessments and corrective steps to protect public health and the environment. The minister also asked departments to accelerate long-term measures to tackle monsoon flooding and groundwater depletion. He directed

officials to increase the reuse of stormwater and treated water and strengthen groundwater recharge efforts.

Singh also ordered a committee-based inquiry into alleged encroachments and drainage obstruction near Ambience Mall. The CEO of GMDA, PC Meena, informed the committee that the new drain line along the Southern Peripheral Road (SPR) is expected to be completed by June 15. Officials said the project is expected to improve drainage between Subhash Chowk and Rajiv Chowk.

A box drain under construction near Medanta Hospital is likely to be completed within 25 days to ease flooding in nearby areas, officials added. Updates on the Narasinghpur drain were

also shared in the meeting.

Flagging illegal dumping of construction and demolition waste along the Gurgaon-Faridabad road, Singh directed officials to intensify enforcement measures. Municipal commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said fines worth Rs 2 crore have been issued and Rs 1.5 crore recovered from violators. Singh also expressed dissatisfaction over the condition of public toilets and directed officials to blacklist agencies failing to maintain hygiene standards. He sought the appointment of new agencies that can ensure proper operation and maintenance. DC Uttam Singh suggested exploring CSR partnerships.

Calling encroachments a major obstacle to traffic movement, the minister instructed departments to carry out sustained enforcement drives. He insisted that enforcement must deliver permanent solutions and that congestion-prone areas be prioritised.

Glocks used in firing outside Fazilpuria ex-manager's house smuggled from Pak?

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A probe into the May 2 firing outside the house of singer Fazilpuria's former manager has revealed that Glock pistols used in the attack were smuggled from Pakistan by drone and routed through a gangster network stretching from Punjab to foreign-based handlers. The two shooters, arrested days after the attack, were allegedly acting on the instructions of fugitive gangster Satta Naushera. Police are also probing the role of gangster Deepak Nandal in orchestrating the attack, which is believed to be the fallout of a monetary dispute. Crime branch teams had arrested Gursher Singh alias Shera (23) and Jaspal alias Babbal (28) — both from Tarn Taran in Punjab — for the firing outside Saurabh Yadav's house in Sector 45. Police said the men had come to Gurgaon to target Yadav and opened fire outside his house to spread panic. Constable Kulbir, deployed there after complaints of extortion, suffered bullet-graze injuries to his hands and legs. Police sources said the two men were in touch with Naushera and had received the guns around two months ago. The

suspicion is that the arms were brought into India through drones by Naushera gang members. The shooters, according to cops, were paid about Rs 2 lakh in advance



for the hit. Both Naushera and Nandal had claimed responsibility for the firing. Police are now trying to establish how Nandal — a music producer-turned-gangster — came in contact with Naushera, who is considered a close associate of Lakhbir Singh Landa. While Landa was declared a terrorist by the

Union home ministry in Dec 2023, Naushera carries a reward of Rs 5 lakh and is accused of supplying cross-border weapons to gang members in Punjab and nearby states with the help of associates in Pakistan. "The cross-border weapon supply chain, the source of these pistols and the role of other associates will now be examined in detail," an officer said.

The case took another violent turn on Monday. According to police spokesperson Sandeep Turan, the two accused were taken to Bandhwari for the recovery of the weapons allegedly used in the attack. There, police said, the men led the team to three concealed Glock pistols, picked them up and opened indiscriminate fire. "They fired eight to 10 rounds at the police team. The cops retaliated in self-defence," an officer said. Both accused were hit and taken to hospital. Gursher died during treatment, while Jaspal suffered a grievous leg injury. Constable Naveen, who was also shot in the leg, was discharged after treatment. Gursher's autopsy was conducted on Tuesday by a board of four doctors in the presence of a judicial magistrate.

Indirapuram fire probe flags blocked driveway, poor upkeep of fire safety systems

Noida.(Agency)

A high-level inquiry committee, constituted on the directions of district magistrate Ravindra Kumar Mandar, has flagged unauthorised constructions, blocked fire driveway and poor fire safety maintenance as factors that hampered rescue and firefighting operations during the April 29 fire at Gaur Green Avenue society in Indirapuram. In its report, the committee compared the residential society's approved building plan with constructions it found on the spot and found "boundary walls and temporary structures were constructed within the designated green area, swimming pool zone and clubhouse premises situated in front of Tower D". The committee noted that these obstructions, prima facie, adversely hindered firefighting

operations. PVC sheet awnings on at least three balconies, it mentioned, helped spread the fire upwards rapidly. Chief fire officer Rahul Pal earlier told TOI that fire engines initially could not move closer to the tower as cars parked on the road leading to the tower blocked its entrance. He also flagged a wall abutting the society's park, which constricted the access road further. According to the report, the fire originated on the ninth floor of Tower D and rapidly spread upwards, affecting at least 22 flats. Of these, eight flats were completely charred, but no lives were lost. The fire department had to deploy 17 fire tenders, water bowlers, two hydraulic platforms and nearly 70 personnel during the rescue and firefighting operations. Over 11 days, the committee, headed by GDA secretary

Vivek Mishra, inspected the site, examined CCTV footage, analysed technical reports and recorded statements of residents, RWA office-bearers and officials before submitting its report to Mander on Monday. It stated that an inspection of Flat D-943, where the fire began, found the electrical supply and MCB were functioning normally, and ruled out a direct electrical short circuit as the prima facie cause.

Based on evidence and CCTV footage examined during the inquiry, no direct proof of any conspiracy or deliberate act of arson was found. The panel clarifies that the actual causes of the fire could not be conclusively determined and recommends a detailed investigation by local police and technical agencies," the report stated.

I-T dept conducts searches tehsil office, detects Rs 45k cr transaction discrepancies

NOIDA.(Agency)

The income tax department on Tuesday carried out spot verification and survey operations on Tuesday at sub-registrar offices in the city and Mohali following inputs on serious lapses in reporting of high-value realty transactions. The search by the department's directorate of intelligence and criminal investigation in Chandigarh began early in the morning at the tehsil office at mini secretariat. Officials have so far identified property transaction discrepancies worth Rs 45,000 crore at Gurgaon tehsil.

The move is part of a nationwide data-validation exercise to assess quality and accuracy of information submitted by designated reporting entities. Under the law, sub-registrar offices must furnish details of immovable property transactions above Rs 30 lakh to the department through statements of financial transactions. These filings must include PAN details of buyers and sellers so the transactions can be matched with taxpayers' income disclosures. Officials said inspections in Gurgaon and

Mohali revealed widespread inconsistencies in transaction reporting. Preliminary analysis indicated that transactions involving non-reporting, missing PAN details, incorrect PAN



entries, and wrongly mapped buyer-seller information amount to nearly Rs 65,000 crore. Of this, Rs 20,000 crore pertains to Mohali tehsil. Officials said the scale of discrepancies is among the largest detected in such proceedings anywhere in the country so far. During the verification process, I-T officials examined data

available in the states' registry management systems and compared it with information submitted to the department under statutory reporting requirements. The comparison reportedly uncovered thousands of cases in which transaction records were either incomplete or inaccurately uploaded.

Investigators found that PAN numbers were either missing or entered incorrectly in many cases, making it difficult to establish identities of the parties involved. "In several other cases, buyer and seller details were not properly linked in the reporting structure. Such fragmented or defective reporting substantially reduces the data's utility for financial profiling and tax compliance analysis," said an official. The department increasingly depends on third-party transaction reporting to identify possible concealment or under-reporting of income. "Once accurate information is received, it is electronically matched with I-T returns filed by taxpayers. Where mismatches are found, taxpayers are generally encouraged through compliance campaigns to voluntarily correct their

returns," he said. Operations were primarily aimed at improving the integrity of information flow from reporting authorities. However, once corrected information is received from the authorities, the department may examine suitable cases involving major financial discrepancies. The main objective, officials said, would remain to encourage taxpayers to file updated returns. The authorities are now expected to seek corrected and complete transaction records from sub-registrar offices in Mohali and Gurgaon so the information can be effectively used for taxpayer verification and compliance monitoring. Officials said these data-driven exercises aim at strengthening transparency in the real estate sector, improve voluntary compliance, and enhance the effectiveness of non-intrusive tax administration.

The department has also intensified its outreach efforts through programmes and sensitisation meetings with reporting entities, including state revenue authorities, to ensure compliance with reporting standards prescribed under the I-T Act. Officials said this would improve voluntary compliance among reporting entities and, in turn, prompt taxpayers to revise their returns wherever necessary.

Suwendu aide Chandranath Rath murder: CBI suspects Rs 1 crore contract killing

The CBI has revisited Chandranath Rath's murder spot as it probes an alleged contract killing. Investigators are examining interstate links, forged vehicles and the source of more than Rs 1 crore allegedly spent on the operation.

Kolkata. (Agency)

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) suspects West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari's aide Chandranath Rath's murder was a meticulously planned contract killing involving interstate operatives, forged vehicles and over Rs 1 crore spent on weapons, logistics and sharpshooters. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of CBI, accompanied by forensic experts, on Tuesday revisited the murder spot of Rath in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district as investigators intensified efforts to crack what they suspect was a meticulously planned contract killing involving more than Rs 1 crore, police sources said. The CBI team, led by DIG Pankaj Kumar Singh, spent

several hours at the crime scene examining the sequence of events and reviewing evidence collected earlier, PTI reported.

A three-member team from the Central Forensic Science Laboratory collected fresh blood samples and other forensic material from the area to aid the probe. The locality remained under heavy police barricading through Tuesday, with residents and commuters passing through multiple security checks.

'MORE THAN Rs 1 CRORE SPENT ON OPERATION'

Investigators now believe the killing was executed with extensive planning and logistics support.

According to police sources, the alleged



"supari" operation may have cost more than Rs 1 crore, with money allegedly spent on weapons, reconnaissance, vehicles and hired shooters. "One of the two firearms used in the murder is suspected to be worth over Rs 10 lakh in the illegal market," a police officer said. Officials said the cost of hiring sharpshooters, conducting

surveillance on Rath's movements and arranging multiple vehicles for escape pointed towards a highly coordinated conspiracy.

"Who invested such a huge amount of money and why remain the biggest questions before investigators at this stage," a senior officer associated with the probe said.

CBI TAKES OVER PROBE FROM BENGAL POLICE

The CBI formally took over the investigation from the West Bengal Police on Monday following a request from the state government and subsequently registered an FIR in the case. Officials said the central agency has formed a multidisciplinary SIT to conduct a comprehensive and time-

bound investigation.

"All possible angles, including interstate criminal links and conspiracy, are being examined. The CBI's special investigation team will now focus on unravelling the larger conspiracy behind the murder," a senior official said. The agency is currently analysing ballistic evidence and other forensic material recovered from the scene.

HOW THE KILLING UNFOLDED

Rath was attacked near his residence in Madhyamgram's Doharia Lane, around 7 km from Kolkata airport, in what BJP leaders described as a "planned assassination", PTI reported. Investigators said Rath's SUV was intercepted by a silver car, following which armed men riding motorcycles opened fire at close range.

Short news

Born A Month Ago, 4 Cheetah Cubs Found Dead In Kuno National Park

Sheopur (MP). (Agency)

Four cheetah cubs, born a month ago, were found dead in the Kuno National Park located in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday morning with the carcasses partially devoured, an official said. "Around 6.30 am today, four cubs - born to female cheetah KGP12 on April 11 - were found dead with carcasses partially eaten, by the monitoring team near the den site in Sheopur territorial division," the official said. The cubs were last observed alive on the evening of May 11, he said.

The death of these cubs appears to have been caused due to predation by another animal, the official said.

The mother cheetah is safe and healthy. Further details will be known after post-mortem examination and detailed investigation, he said. After the death of these four cubs, there are now 53 cheetahs left in India. While the Kuno National Park is home to 50 cheetahs, including 33 Indian-born ones, three cheetahs are at the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary in the state, according to him.

All the surviving cheetahs are healthy and doing well, the official added. Nine cheetahs -- six females and three males -- were brought to Kuno from Botswana in February this year. Earlier, eight cheetahs were brought to India from Namibia on September 17, 2022, while 12 arrived in Kuno from South Africa in 2023.

Kakatiya-era hero stones discovered in Sangareddy



HYDERABAD. (Agency)

The half-relief (embossed) sculptures discovered at Rameswaram Banda in Patancheru Mandal of Sangareddy district have been identified as hero stones (veeragallu) belonging to the Kakatiya period by Kavali Chandrakant, a member of the Kotha Telangana Charithra Brundam. Speaking to, Chandrakant said the four hero stones were carved in the distinctive Kakatiya style. The warriors are depicted with flowing side-knotted hairstyles, large ear ornaments, necklaces, waistbands, warrior belts and anklets. Two warriors are shown carrying broad swords and bows, while the other two hold spears and shields.

The sculptures portray the warriors fighting enemy soldiers on the battlefield. According to Chandrakant, the warriors are believed to have attained "Veera Swarga" — the heavenly realm of valour — after sacrificing their lives in combat. The memorial stones were erected to honour their courage and sacrifice.

Among the four warriors, the two figures armed with swords and bows have been identified as Ekkatis, elite fighters comparable to present-day commandos. Also known as Ekanga Veeras, they were trained in the use of multiple weapons and advanced combat techniques.

A Shiva Linga carved above one warrior's head suggests he may have been a devotee of Lord Shiva.

How an overnight op unravelled NEET paper leak trail within hours

Jaipur. (Agency)

Hours after the National Testing Agency (NTA) cancelled the NEET-UG exam conducted on May 3 after a paper leak, authorities have now revealed as to how a swift and meticulous probe by investigation agencies traced the entire trail of leak within the span of a few hours.

The exam, conducted by NTA on May 3 for undergraduate medical admissions, was taken by around 22 lakh candidates across India. After receiving inputs from investigators, the NTA said the "present examination process could not be allowed to stand" and announced cancellation of the test. It said a re-examination would be conducted, with fresh dates to be announced soon. Students will not need to register again, and previously submitted applications will remain valid.

THE PAPER LEAK PROBE

The Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG) cracked the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak network in just seven hours, tracing the chain from its first intelligence input at 8 pm on May 8 to the identification of the



key accused by 3 am the next day.

The rapid operation exposed a network that stretched from Rajasthan to Haryana, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Kerala.

Rajasthan SOG launched the probe after receiving intelligence inputs from the IB

on the evening of May 8 about a suspected leak of the NEET-UG question paper. Senior officers, including Vishal Bansal, Ajaypal Lamba and Kundan Kanwariya, immediately assembled at the SOG headquarters and began verifying the claims.

LEAKED, ORIGINAL PAPERS MATCHED

The first stage of the investigation involved downloading the original NEET-UG 2026 paper and comparing it with handwritten and digital question sets that had gone viral on social media as a so-called "guess paper". At 9 pm a high-level meeting commenced. Till 12 am, SOG officials downloaded the original NEET paper and cross-referenced it with the questions that were circulating on social media. Officials found that 135 questions, including multiple-choice options, matched exactly. Several Biology and Chemistry questions were identical, strengthening suspicion.

Lashkar terrorist killed as Army foils infiltration bid along LoC in J&K

Srinagar. (Agency)

The Indian Army on Tuesday foiled a major infiltration attempt by suspected Pakistani terrorists along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, killing one infiltrator in the operation.

A heavy exchange of fire is underway between the infiltrators and Army troops deployed in the Krishna Ghati sector of Poonch's Mendhar. According to defence sources, alert troops detected suspicious movement of a group of heavily armed terrorists attempting to cross the LoC under the cover of darkness. The infiltrators were challenged, following which they opened fire, prompting retaliation from the Army



and triggering an intense gunfight.

Sources said one terrorist has been killed in the encounter, though the body is yet to be recovered as operations remain underway. The intruder, suspected to be linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, was allegedly

attempting to infiltrate into Indian territory near the Bicho Post in the Mankote area.

The remaining infiltrators are believed to have retreated towards the Pakistani side of the LoC. Additional troops have been deployed and the entire area has been cordoned off. "The troops continue to dominate the area and maintain a high state of operational readiness across the sector," the Indian Army said.

A search operation is underway to ensure that no infiltrators manage to sneak through, with the Army deploying surveillance equipment and drones to monitor the forested terrain along the LoC.

Gelatin had circuit-like setup, matchsticks tied with wires

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Investigation into the recovery of gelatin sticks inside a cardboard box near Prime Minister Narendra Modi's convoy route on Sunday morning, revealed that the box also contained a suspected circuit-like setup, along with matchsticks tied together with wires to a stick, camphor, and a battery. The additional materials found inside the box raised suspicion that they could have been converted into an explosive device.

On Monday, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and other central agencies, along with the state intelligence agency, began probing the matter. Just 30 minutes before the PM's arrival, during routine sanitisation, a police constable found the cardboard box lying 20ft away from the



route through which PM Modi was scheduled to pass. The jurisdictional Kaggalipura police registered a case under the Explosive Substances Act and Explosives Act, and special teams have been formed for the investigation.

However, a senior police officer who is part of the investigation said the recovered materials were not in working condition for an immediate explosion. Police are analysing CCTV footage along the route to identify who placed the gelatin sticks and to ascertain the motive.

Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara said police are probing the matter. "I would not like to share the details at this stage. Regarding the hoax threat call, one person was arrested and is being interrogated. Gelatin sticks were recovered. I have received information on NIA seeking to probe the incident. If they ask, we will cooperate and let them investigate," he said, adding that high-level security had been provided for the PM's programme by state and central agencies.

Bihar plans inmate-run petrol pumps on vacant jail land in prison reform initiative

Bihar could become the first state in the country to implement such a model if the proposal receives cabinet approval and is executed effectively.

Patna. (Agency)

In a first-of-its-kind prison reform initiative, Bihar's home (prison) department plans to open petrol and diesel pumps on vacant jail land and have inmates operate them.

Convicts serving long jail terms and covered under the prison reforms process will be assigned the task of operating the petrol pumps. However, undertrial prisoners and convicts involved in serious crimes will not be engaged in running the filling stations proposed on jail premises.

The Bihar home (prison)



department has prepared a detailed proposal and sent it to the state finance department for approval. Consent from the

Bihar law department will also be sought. The proposal will come into effect once it receives clearance from the

state cabinet.

Following approval, the home (prison) department will sign an MoU with oil marketing companies for operating petrol and diesel filling stations on vacant jail land. The department has already decided to sign an agreement with Hindustan Petroleum in this regard. According to a senior prison department official, a mechanism will also be developed to monitor the sale of petroleum products through the proposed filling stations. "The proposal is ready and awaiting finance department

approval," the officer said.

At present, 61,891 prisoners are lodged in Bihar's 59 jails, including eight central jails, against a total capacity of 47,750 inmates. Prisoners operating the filling stations will also be paid wages, the official added.

Bihar could become the first state in the country to implement such a model if the proposal receives cabinet approval and is executed effectively. "This will increase the income of prisoners serving sentences in different jails of the state," the officer said.

India Inc's role in vision 2047

The world economy is being reshaped by a confluence of unprecedented disruptions—geopolitical realignments, technological acceleration and climate transition. These disruptions are not just a source of uncertainty; they are also a catalyst for reinvention as they re-organise the global economy. Supply chains are being redesigned, industries are being reimaged and new centres of innovation are emerging. It is in this environment that India needs to achieve its ambition of becoming a developed nation.

Industry has a critical role in catalysing this ambition—as a builder of capabilities, driver of innovation and a value creator. The decisions businesses make today—on manufacturing, technology, energy and talent—will shape not just enterprise success, but the trajectory of India's future. It is in this context that CII's Vision for India@100 assumes significance.

Developed through engagement with more than 10,000 stakeholders, it represents a multi-stakeholder roadmap for India's journey to becoming a developed nation by 2047. The theme of the CII Annual Business Summit 2026—The Future | Global Economy, Industry, Society—places this vision within the context of a rapidly changing world, with industry at the centre of translating ambition into action.

India is expected to remain the fastest growing major economy, and as per IMF estimates, its growth is expected to be more than twice the global average in the near future. It is seen as a trusted partner—able to engage across regions, build bridges and offer stability amidst uncertainty. This gives India a unique vantage point to shape global conversations on trade, technology, climate and development. India's experience in building inclusive digital ecosystems at scale demonstrates how innovation can serve society and simultaneously enable a rapidly growing digital economy. Together, these strengths point to a clear shift—India is not only participating in global systems but actively helping redesign them.

The global economic order itself is undergoing a structural shift. Trade and investment flows are increasingly shaped by resilience, trust and strategic alignment, rather than cost efficiencies alone. Industrial policy has re-emerged as governments seek to shape economic outcomes more directly. In this environment, competitiveness must be built across multiple dimensions—manufacturing strength, technological depth, sustainability and institutional capability. Nations need to balance self-reliance with global integration, strengthening domestic capacities while remaining deeply engaged with the world. This balance lies at the core of India's path forward, which rests on five strategic capabilities. First is building manufacturing scale and strategic depth. The renewed global emphasis on industrial policy highlights the importance of targeted capability-building. Industry will play a decisive role in this transformation—by investing in advanced manufacturing, strengthening supply-chain resilience and leveraging free trade pacts, and driving innovation to position India as a competitive manufacturing hub. Second is the imperative of technology leadership. In an increasingly innovation-driven economy, technological capability will be central to productivity, competitiveness and strategic influence. Today, artificial intelligence, digital platforms and advanced manufacturing are becoming foundational to growth. Sustaining India's momentum in this space will require higher research and development investment, stronger industry-academia collaboration and a continued focus on building globally competitive products and platforms.

The covenant complete

Part II, The soldier at the door: This is not about pay parity. It never was. It is about design.

THE civil servant and the soldier are the twin stabilisers of the Republic. One operates through continuity and administrative persistence; the other through intensity and existential risk. Both are indispensable. Both deserve frameworks that reflect what they are actually required to do. The answer to difference is not hierarchy. It is design. Any framework for the military must begin with one foundational reality: rank in the armed forces is fundamentally different from rank in civilian systems. In civilian life, rank is largely a measure of seniority and administrative progression. In military life, it is operational authority over life and consequence. An administrative error may cost money or delay; an error in command costs lives and territory.

A brigadier commanding troops in active operations does not merely hold greater seniority than a colonel. He carries a categorically different burden of consequence. That distinction matters because the military pyramid narrows by design. Combat leadership demands youth. The institution therefore remains structurally young by ensuring that only a small number rise to the highest ranks. That is not failure. It is the arithmetic of command. But the consequences of that arithmetic are profound. Most officers, however capable, will never rise beyond certain levels. The institution is therefore sustained not only by those who reach the top, but by those who remain where the system needs them most, the Majors and Lieutenant Colonels, the company commanders and battalion seconds, the officers carrying the operational weight of the force at precisely the level where command is closest to consequence. When that cohort sees no meaningful progression within rank, when the only visible signal of recognition becomes the promotion the pyramid denies to most of them, something slowly begins to erode. Not competence. Not courage. But certainty that the institution still sees them clearly. And then many leave. Not in protest. Simply because the civilian world has learned to recognise what military service has produced in them, composure under pressure, decisiveness, leadership without certainty, and offers them a framework that acknowledges those qualities. The state loses not its weakest product at that moment, but some of its best formed. That is why within-rank progression is not a cosmetic issue. It is central to institutional design. Responsibility, professional distinction, posting profile and visible recognition within rank must continue even when promotion cannot. Otherwise, the system unintentionally signals that service matters only if one keeps rising. But the military cannot function as a ladder alone. The rank one holds must itself remain a form of arrival, not merely a waiting

room for the next.

The design must therefore preserve, not by flattening the pyramid, but by ensuring that to serve well within one's rank, for as long as the nation requires it, is recognised as exactly what it is: among the hardest and most necessary things the institution asks. It is here that the debate over NFU (non-functional upgradation) entered the picture. NFU emerged to address stagnation in civil services where promotion opportunities were uneven. The principle was understandable; administrative systems required a mechanism to reduce career disparities. The issue is not that other services received relief. The issue is that a mechanism designed for administrative cadres was overlaid onto a military



structure built on entirely different foundations. In civil services, rank and pay broadly track seniority. In the military, rank is operational authority and accountability for irreversible consequence. When NFU logic enters the military ecosystem, it creates a category confusion. Pay equivalence gradually begins implying equivalence of status, even though the underlying responsibilities remain fundamentally different. The officer commanding troops in active operations does not become institutionally equivalent to another functionary merely because arithmetic aligns their pay scales. The comparison is not invidious; it is simply incomplete.

That is why pay and rank must be governed by separate design logics. Rank reflects operational authority, command responsibility and the burden of consequence. Pay and material recognition reflect what the state owes across a career it has deliberately shaped, compressed, intense and structurally shortened by institutional necessity. Conflating the two distorts both. NFU did not create the underlying problem; it exposed the design mismatch that already existed.

That mismatch becomes most visible at the point where military service itself structurally terminates.

And then comes the final reality the system must confront:

the military career ends early not because the individual has ceased to contribute, but because the institution must remain young. A civilian career is usually a long climb with compounding returns. Skills deepen, networks expand and earnings rise with age. Military service inverts that logic. Its most intense years are often the earliest. It extracts the greatest personal cost at precisely the age civilian careers are consolidating. And it ends before civilian peers reach their professional peak. A post-service annuity calibrated to those lost earning decades is therefore not a pension in the ordinary sense. It is deferred recognition of a career architecture deliberately designed by the state to extract the maximum from an individual during the years when that extraction carries the highest personal cost.

The covenant is never signed by the soldier alone. The family serves invisibly beside him, carrying the absences, instability and uncertainty the uniform normalises. The officer who has commanded under pressure and subordinated self to institution for decades has given the Republic something that cannot be fully measured in any pay matrix. A terminal recognition at the completion of that covenant is therefore not sentiment. It is institutional honesty. Modern conflict only sharpens the urgency of getting this design right. Wars no longer unfold only on borders; they run through infrastructure, information systems and public psychology. In such an environment, military, paramilitary, civil administration and political leadership must function as one coherent instrument. That coherence depends not merely on capability, but on clarity of authority and mutual respect across the system.

A state that permits unresolved status dissonance within its own crisis architecture introduces friction into the mechanism. Modern conflict requires to remain frictionless. And in moments of consequence, friction kills. From disaster relief to the calibrated precision of operations, the requirement remains the same: coherence. Command cannot be negotiated in the middle of consequence. Respect cannot be improvised during collapse. Coherence is built slowly over years through frameworks that signal the Republic understands the role of each of its institutions. When the soldier knows the nation has seen him clearly, confidence compounds into capability. When he suspects the accounting has missed the point, something quieter begins to erode. Not loyalty. Not courage. Something harder to name and harder to replace. The framework is the Republic's answer to him. When the state responds with design, the institution holds. The soldier knows the nation understands. And the nation knows the soldier will remain what he has always been at the decisive hour:

Economic turbulence : Civic discipline alone can't turn the tide

It seems that the Modi government is preparing the people for a crisis that it failed to anticipate

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's post-poll austerity push has an ominous ring to it. Apparently, all's not well on India's economic front. Global headwinds, particularly the war in West Asia, are taking their toll on an economy that remained resilient even during the Covid-19 pandemic. The PM has asked citizens to work from home, use public transport, avoid unnecessary foreign travel and postpone the purchase of gold. Citing the habits adopted during the disruptive pandemic, he has stressed the need to reduce fuel consumption and save foreign exchange. His call for a "civic Satyagraha" is a politically astute move, considering that the majority of the states are ruled by the BJP on its own or in alliance with other parties. Yet, it seems that the Modi government is preparing the people for a crisis that it failed to anticipate. India heavily imports crude oil and gold, both of which strain foreign exchange reserves when global prices surge. Encouraging fuel conservation, domestic tourism and reduced dependence on imports

are sensible responses to a volatile international



environment. However, the fact is that the government largely remained occupied with the Assembly

elections over the past month and a half. Economic management took a back seat during this period. Now, efforts are afoot to deal with the challenges.

Asking families to put off weddings abroad or avoid buying gold reflects anxiety over the rupee's alarming depreciation. A government that has repeatedly projected economic strength is now urging behavioural restraint on a nationwide scale. Some steps may have unintended consequences. India's jewellery sector supports millions of livelihoods, and a big drop in gold purchases could hurt workers far more than wealthy investors. Also, the work-from-home policy is not practical for large sections of the workforce. Indeed, civic responsibility matters, but it is no substitute for contingency planning. The government must urgently do course correction.

Austerity without equity will fail

If this is to be India's forex Satyagraha, the design must match the ambition.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal — with its eleven specific requests spanning fuel, gold, fertilisers, cooking oil, solar pumps and foreign travel — is being read by many as a prelude to administered price hikes. But there is a larger ambition visible in the speech. It is to make forex conservation a genuine national movement, a civic mobilisation comparable in spirit, if not in form, to Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March of 1930. Gandhi's genius was to choose salt, an everyday item, universally used, symbolically powerful, to crystallise the case for economic self-reliance into a mass act of participation. Modi is reaching out, so that each Indian feels personally invested in the nation's economic resilience, when conserving foreign exchange becomes as much a patriotic duty as flying the flag.

The instinct deserves credit. India's import dependence on crude oil, fertiliser inputs, gold and edible oil is a structural vulnerability that has been diagnosed for decades without adequate remedy. Modi is making it vivid and personal, asking citizens to connect their everyday choices to the national balance of payments. This is an act of economic leadership.

Lal Bahadur Shastri did something similar with food in 1965, asking Indians to voluntarily fast on Monday evenings as the country faced both a war and a food crisis. Socialist parliamentarian Madhu Limaye pressed the point further in Parliament, arguing that voluntary austerity was a constitutional duty in times of national stress, and that the political class must visibly lead rather than merely preach. The tradition of appealing to civic solidarity in times of economic emergency is honourable and has worked before. But Gandhi's salt Satyagraha movement's moral force came partly from the fact that the salt tax was visibly, outrageously regressive. It hurt the poor more. Gandhi chose salt precisely because of

the injustice. On the other hand, the forex conservation movement is not against injustice and is itself regressive. Because it asks those with the least to bear a disproportionate share of the pain. Look at the eleven requests through this lens. Deferring foreign vacations and destination weddings abroad is something only the



affluent need consider. It is irrelevant to the poor. Shifting to an electric vehicle presumes having the capital to buy one. Work-from-home is an option for white-collar professionals, not daily-wage earners. Asking to reduce edible oil consumption falls hardest on those with the least since cooking oil is not a luxury. Some of the requests are well-targeted at the wealthy; others inadvertently ask those with the smallest margins to absorb a disproportionate share of the sacrifice.

The economic backdrop makes the equity question more urgent. India's three State-owned oil marketing companies are losing between Rs 1,600 and Rs 1,700

crore every day, with cumulative losses over the past ten weeks crossing Rs 1 lakh crore. Negative margins stand at Rs 14 per litre on petrol and Rs 18 on diesel. Excise duty cuts to cushion the blow are costing the treasury Rs 14,000 crore a month. Fertiliser subsidies, budgeted at Rs 1.71 lakh crore, face an overshoot of Rs 35,000 to Rs 50,000 crore. And this crisis lands on top of an already strained fiscal position: in FY26, direct tax receipts fell short of revised estimates by Rs 80,594 crore.

The FY27 direct tax target is Rs 26.97 lakh crore, which is a whopping 15 per cent jump over FY26 actuals. But revenues are already slowing down. Here lies a structural paradox in Modi's appeal. Some of what he asks will genuinely help the current account without hurting domestic output like reducing gold imports and foreign travel. But fuel price hikes are categorically different: they are inflationary, compress real household incomes across the board, and will force the Reserve Bank of India into the uncomfortable trade-off between defending the rupee and protecting growth.

There is also a cognitive dissonance in the government trying to suppress prices but also asking citizens to behave as if prices are too high. There is now pressure on tax mobilisation. The Income Tax Department's Central Action Plan for 2026-27 directs field officers to prioritise recovering Rs 2.57 lakh crore in demands upheld at appeal, track the top 10,000 PAN-wise defaulters, and classify Rs 7.88 lakh crore in large unclassified arrears by July. The scale of what has gone uncollected is striking: confirmed, undisputed tax demands of over Rs 9 lakh crore sit in arrears, concentrated overwhelmingly in Mumbai (Rs 1.65 lakh crore) and Delhi (Rs 1.21 lakh crore) — the wealthiest

urban centres in the country. In FY26, the actual cash recovery against a target of Rs 5.04 lakh crore was only Rs 85,000 crore. The government cannot credibly ask families to cut their cooking oil consumption while Rs 9 lakh crore in confirmed tax dues from large corporate and individual defaulters remains uncollected year after year. Ensuring that tax demands are actually recovered, using whatever digital surveillance, would be a powerful signal that the national sacrifice is genuinely shared.

This is also an opportune moment to revisit whether India's tax architecture is structurally progressive enough. India abolished its wealth tax in 2015 and has had no estate or inheritance duty since 1985. The top one per cent of Indians hold an estimated 40 per cent of the nation's wealth. A temporary crisis surcharge on very high incomes, a windfall levy on entities benefiting from the disruption — commodity traders, domestic refiners — or a carefully designed wealth tax would serve multiple purposes: raising revenue to offset the fiscal haemorrhage, making burden-sharing visibly equitable and giving the mass movement the moral authority it needs. Madhu Limaye's argument was precisely this: austerity without equity is not patriotism, it is the displacement of pain downward. We also need to examine our resilience and risk buffers. The member nations of the International Energy Agency (IEA) hold 90 days of strategic petroleum reserves as a treaty obligation. Europe built LNG import terminals and diversified supply at emergency speed. Japan and South Korea pass through price signals rapidly and hedge exposure through financial markets.

India's dedicated strategic petroleum reserves cover only about nine to ten days of demand, far below the 90-day benchmark used by many IEA countries, though total oil stocks including commercial and refinery inventories are estimated around 74-75 days.

Monsoon Hair care



Unmanageable hair screams the arrival of monsoon, and such weather calls for some extra attention to your tresses.

Dr.Sunaina Hameed, Consultant Dermatologist at Whitefield Columbia Asia Hospital believes that acid rain, dirty water and increased levels of humidity have an adverse effect on the hair and scalp. However, a few simple tweaks in your daily schedule can save you from these problems.

If you get caught in the rain, wash your hair with a mild shampoo as soon as possible. Don't forget to use a conditioner after rinse. Also, limit the use of hair dryers and opt for air-drying instead.

Apply warmargan oil to your scalp and run a comb through your hair to get the oil to reach up to the tips. Smooth out wet and tangled hair using a wide-toothed comb. This will help prevent hair fall and breakage.

Monsoon humidity can cause an itchy scalp and dandruff. Natural cures include rubbing neem oil and lemon on your scalp to get rid of itchiness. In case these aren't enough, use a mild ketoconazole or zinc pyrithione (ZPTO) shampoo.

This season can leave your scalp prone to tiny painful pus filled boils. This is a medical condition known as folliculitis caused by bacterial or fungal infection in the hair follicles. Use an anti-bacterial shampoo (like Cetirilak) every day. In case it doesn't help, consult a dermatologist for antibiotics.

Humidity can cause your hair to get frizzy. Use a heavy



cream based conditioner and a leave-on hair serum to tame the frizz. Tone down the use of waxes and gels. Do not tie or braid your hair when it is wet. Minimize the use of hot irons and curling irons during this season.

Aloe vera gel is an excellent hair mask and beer is an excellent conditioner. Use them once a week for nourishment.

When you can't tame your hair on a bad hair day, just accessorise! Use a scarfs, bandanas or colourful hair bands as temporary fixes.

Curry leaf extract, neem oil, hibiscus extract, black tea, henna, coffee powder, reeta (soapnut powder), gooseberry and acacia (shikakhai) are excellent herbal and home-based remedies to darken your hair.

Lemons have different uses — they're beneficial for your skin, hair and even nails. Read on to know how you can use them...

- Have a lot of blackheads, which refuse to disappear just by using beauty products? Lemon juice is an effective way to prevent and remove blackheads. Use a cotton soaked lightly with a few drops of lemon juice and gently apply on your face every alternate day.
- Skin feeling flaky or dry? Instead of using your normal moisturiser, head to the kitchen and make a



paste out of honey and lemon juice and apply it all over your face, hands and legs. Add a few drops of

Make lemons Your beauty must-have

Were you aware that the humble lemon, apart from adding taste to your food, is also great for your skin and hair?

- water if the paste is too thick.
- Another very effective moisturising combination is lemon mixed with fresh coconut water. Use it as a face wash every morning and see how fresh your skin feels.
- Get rid of those unsightly dark patches on your knees, elbows and toes by rubbing a fresh lemon on them
- Fix yellow and brittle nails by mixing lemon juice with a few drops of castor or almond oil. Let the slick mixture sit on your nails for about 20 minutes and wash off with lukewarm water.
- Suffering from dandruff and a dry, itchy and flaky scalp? Apply lemon juice on the scalp and see how it gets rid of flakes. Do this about thrice a week for best results.
- You could also use lemon juice to exfoliate your lips. Mix it with some sugar and rub your lips with it.

Simple steps to glowing Skin

Here are some tips to boost your skin's health, reports femalefirst.co.uk:

Drink lots of water:

Every system and function in our body depends on water. Skin is no different. Dry skin has less resilience and is more prone to wrinkling, so ensure you take in enough water to reach your skin and keep it hydrated. Two to three litres a day is usually about right.



It's not a bad idea after all to go bare faced sometimes, but make sure you have healthy and glowing skin. Ensure drinking water and using

Always remove make-up:

It sounds obvious, but one in five women still admit to sleeping with make-up on when away from home. During summer nights, one is naturally warmer and sweatier and if make-up is left on overnight, and bacteria is more likely to develop, leaving pores



blocked and resulting in an increased chance of waking up with bad skin outbreaks - whether spots or dry patches.

Stick to products meant for your skin:

The internet can give out weird and wonderful information, but not all of it is accurate. Be aware that not everything you read will work. A common mistake is using toothpaste on spots - toothpaste is meant for your teeth which are one of the hardest surfaces in your body. Using a product on your skin which is actually intended for the teeth will damage your skin and cause it to completely dry out.

Wear SPF throughout the year:

It's easy to assume that just because the sun isn't out, you don't need to use a product with SPF in it. But UVA rays are constantly present, no matter the season or the weather and these are the ones that cause the skin to age because they are able to penetrate much deeper into the surface of the skin, damaging the cells beneath.

Reverse shampoo routine for healthier hair

Want softer and bouncy curls? Then try the reverse shampooing technique.

One of the hottest haircare trends, this method requires you to first condition your hair and then wash it off with shampoo. Experts and those who have tried this method swear by its results, confirming that the hair is much shiny and manageable than before.

The logic behind it There are two ways of looking at it. Anooradha Mittal, a hairdresser, says, "When you douse your hair with conditioner at the end of a wash, you run the risk of not rinsing it off completely. So, chances of your hair becoming greasy and accumulating dirt is high. The logic behind conditioning first is to let the conditioner do its job completely — protect hair from chemicals present in the shampoo and lock the moisture and natural oils. However, most salon experts follow the process of applying a conditioner towards the end."

How to reverse hair wash Wet your hair. Pour a coin-sized



amount of conditioner on your palm and apply it evenly. Avoid the roots and scalp, and concentrate more on the strands. Leave it on for five minutes before washing. Shampoo the regular way and rinse off all lather. What are the benefits? According to trichologist Srimadh Bave, with this technique, your hair gets the moisturising benefits from

the conditioner and proper cleansing from the shampoo, without leaving behind any residue. "If not washed well, conditioners at the end of routine leave behind a coating on strands, which attract dirt and grime."

When your hair is wet, it's at a high risk of breakage. A pre-conditioning routine fortifies hair. You can even leave a light conditioner on for about half an hour before shampooing it off.

This regime adds volume to hair, makes it shiny and gives a soft texture. It also makes your curls frizz-free.

A mixture of a light conditioner and water can act as a good detangler. Separate hair into sections after applying the mix and slowly remove the knots.

The biggest advantages of reverse hair wash? It's low maintenance (because you are not buying any extra high-end haircare product but using your routine conditioner and shampoo) and you spend the same time putting this process into practice.



Tips to look flawless and acne-free in summer



Ensure facial hygiene to avoid acne and rashes in summer
Here are some tips that can help you look flawless and acne-free:

Watch your diet:

One should avoid food such as doughnuts, wheat bread, soda and baked potatoes. Removing sugary and starchy products from your diet will help you control acne and will keep you healthy in the long run.

Avoid stress:

Physical as well as emotional stress has been proven to trigger acne breakouts in some people. Wrong cosmetics: Another common factor responsible for causing acne is the use of certain kinds of cosmetics and cleansing products. Avoid using greasy or harsh products or those whose ingredients you are allergic to. These products tend to clog your skin pores and irritate your skin, and result in acne breakouts.

Facial hygiene:

Wash your face with a gentle cleanser at regular intervals. Splashing fresh water on your facial skin rejuvenates it and the hydration prevents acne and pimples. Include fruits and vegetables in your diet: These foods not only work wonders for your overall health, they are also vital sources of antioxidants, vitamins and other essential nutrients that erase the signs of acne and heal acne-ridden skin.

Hydration:

Make sure you drink lots of water throughout the day. Water flushes out toxins and other impurities from your system and keeps your skin cleansed and hydrated. Avoid a sedentary lifestyle: Try and remain physically active. Yoga and exercise improve your skin and boost metabolism. Wear comfortable clothing: Sport loose clothes that do not irritate your skin. Prevent acne breakouts by avoiding the heat, friction and constant pressure caused by restrictive headgear or other forms of athletic gear. Switch to cotton clothing instead of wearing synthetic.

Clean up after exercise:

Make sure you shower after exercising to get the sweat and grime off as soon as possible. When you sweat after a serious workout, there is an accumulation of dead cells on the surface of your skin. It is essential to remove these immediately to avoid blockages which can then lead to acne breakouts.



Five benefits of having Oily skin

So, you thought it was downright bad to have an oily skin? Well, it's time to think again. The occasional breakouts should not demoralise. Because, here are a five benefits of having an oily skin.

Much slower rate of aging: People with dry skin show the signs of aging much faster than the ones with oily skin. Wrinkles and fine lines get camouflaged by the oily skin. Your skin a natural glow, all the time: The shine on your oily face doesn't look bad all the time. While many buy expensive products to get that shiny T-zone, you have it for free. Isn't that awesome? Your face has natural oils: And these oils keep your skin healthy and soft. Hence, you don't need expensive day or

night creams to protect your skin and make it smooth. Your skin will always be moisturised, season no bar: Your skins natural oils will take care of it. Not only that, your skin is also resilient to the harshness of various environmental conditions. Low maintenance: Yes, you don't need those heavy foundations that wear out in the middle of the day. A simple dash of face powder and you are ready to go.

Tips on packing Jewellery for your travels

If you are an accessory lover, chances are that while packing for a vacations, you end up carrying a fair bit of weight, thanks to your jewellery bag.



But with a few tricks, you can easily reduce your load. Just carry versatile pieces that you can mix and match.

We give you a few tips on how you can maximise the use of a few chosen pieces and travel light. Pick versatile and convertible pieces: These make packing convenient because they do the work of more than one piece. For instance, a necklace can easily double up as a stylish bracelet.

Pearl earrings: They won't get in your way while you're navigating through airports. Besides, they add sophistication to the overall look of the outfit.

Your favourite everyday piece: Be it a ring, a bracelet or delicate chain, there are a few pieces that can add to any look.

A dash of colour: Pick jewellery with pop colours because they have the ability to instantly make a simple black dress chic.

Sparkle and shine: Add a little sparkle to an outfit by wearing a pair of hoop earrings. It's easier than packing another dress.

Makeup on acne?

This could be tricky if you are not aware of the dermatological effects

When you are suffering from acne you need to be careful of what you wear on your skin because the wrong cream or powder can aggravate your condition. However, the right product can, not just camouflage your acne marks but also lend an elusive iridescence to your skin.

Dr Sama Rais, consultant dermatologist and cosmetologist says that if one is suffering from mild acne one must preferably apply light makeup like a daily-wear foundation and a concealer which is non-comedogenic. She adds, "When you have acne you should avoid clogging of pores and so, must not use heavy makeup that cakes up on your face." However, she cautions, "In the initial phase, while undergoing treatments, it is best to avoid makeup till the eruptions settle a bit."

In the later course of the treatment when you have only acne marks left on your skin, experts say, that it is completely okay to wear light makeup.

Covering marks with makeup could also boost one's confidence.

Dr Poonam Wadhvani, cosmetic dermatologist says, "For acne prone skin always apply makeup, which is paraben-free or oil-free or lanolin-free and non-comedogenic."

Choosing the right product is essential, emphasises Dr Wadhvani. She adds, "If one has oily skin, one should never use a creamy, hydrating moisturiser. Rather, one should use a primer, a good foundation and then dust powder on top of it."

Dermatologist Dr Geeta Oberoi calls attention to using minimal makeup on skin that has acne. She states, "Use light makeup to just conceal the marks during the day. But you need to make sure to keep your face makeup free at night or when at home, to avoid clogging of pores." Dr Oberoi also cautions, "Do not use oil as a makeup remover if you have acne. Opt for a double cleansing with a cleanser to remove makeup followed by a medicated face wash."



Let your hair shine in summer



Here are some easy tips to prepare your hair for the season.

- Cleansing

We often end up with various hair problems during the summer - things like hairfall and dandruff are common occurrences due to the build up of dirt and pollution on our scalp. A dirty scalp tends to get really oily and will make our hair feel heavy and unflattering. Therefore, it is important to wash our hair more often in the summer.

Use the Hair Spa Rejuvenation shampoo two to three times a week. The product is infused with hydrating marine minerals complex and essential nutrients that deeply nourish and cleanse the scalp.

- Massage and Condition

It always helps to massage your scalp during the summer as it increases the blood flow, leaves your hair beautifully nourished and will also make you feel rejuvenated. Once you wash your hair, apply a generous amount of the Hair Spa Rejuvenation massage it with a conditioner to wet hair. The conditioner is especially designed to massage the scalp and moisturize the hair. This prevents it from tangling, making it softer and smoother.

- Protect

We all worry about UV protection for our skin, but what about the hair? UVA and UVB rays can also cause damage to the cuticles leaving your hair dry, frizzy and dull. It's time to get creative with that headgear. Experiment with hats and scarves that will not only make you look stylish, but will also double up and protect your hair from the harsh sun.

- Use hair-friendly tools

and styles

Since your hair is already prone to so much damage in the summer because of all the heat and humidity, we should ensure that all other processes are smooth and hassle-free. If you choose to blow dry your hair, avoid heat and opt for the cool setting. It's there for a reason.

Avoid metal or rubber when buying hair accessories as they can easily entangle the hair causing breakage. Cotton or plastic hair bands will always be safer.

Opt for loose styles such as fishtail braids or a glamorous messy bun that are really summer-friendly and easily be created at home.

- Protect those tresses while swimming

There is no better feeling than taking a dip into cool water during the scorching summer heat.

The pool water is usually loaded with chlorine and other chemicals that can cause damage to the hair. While you may feel good, you will notice that your hair gets frizzy. When you are in the pool, ensure that you cover up with a swimming cap.

After swim, care is also really important so ensure that you wash and condition your hair with moisturizing hair products.

- Stay healthy

It's not only about what you put on your hair that matters, but also what you put inside your body.

Maintain a diet that is rich in Vitamins, Iron and Zinc that help in preventing your hair from becoming dull, thin and dry.

Indulge in different kinds of berries and fruits like kiwis, oranges and papaya, while also gorging on all things green. Spinach and other leafy vegetables are really high in Iron content and can do wonders for your hair. Don't forget to include a wide variety of nuts

Cleanse and condition your hair well, use the right tools and protect it from heat, humidity and pollution for a healthy shine on your mane.

in your diet as they act as superfoods for you hair. They are rich in Vitamin E which boost blood circulation to the scalp and keeps the hair follicles healthy.

Convoy cuts, no Cannes, metro rides: BJP ministers swap VIP optics for austerity

Days after PM Modi urged Indians to embrace Covid-era restraint, BJP-ruled states began sharply reducing the size of ministerial convoys. Several ministers also cancelled foreign trips. Here's a look at the measures announced by different states as part of the austerity drive.

New Delhi.(Agency)

They say charity begins at home. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged Indians to embrace Covid-era restraint amid economic pressures stemming from the protracted Iran conflict, the BJP was called out for hypocrisy as its own ministers held roadshows and travelled in large convoys. As the criticism snowballed and outrage grew, several BJP-ruled states — along with PM Modi himself — walked the talk.

While PM Modi and several BJP chief ministers sharply reduced the size of their convoys, Maharashtra directed ministers to avoid unnecessary flights and switch to virtual meetings. Ministers Kapil Mishra and Ramdas Athawale were seen taking the metro to office on Wednesday, while Maharashtra minister Ashish Shelar cancelled his visit to France for the Cannes

Film Festival.

PM MODI'S AUSTERITY APPEAL

The writing had been on the wall for quite some time now. The prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz — the global energy corridor — has affected oil and LPG supplies to India. India imports over 85% of its crude requirements, making it the second-largest oil importer. Several countries like China, Pakistan and Bangladesh had already announced fuel rationing and WFH measures.

India, however, held back. It was only on May 11, after elections to four states were over, that PM Modi called for "collective sacrifice", urging Indians to shift to public transport and revive work-from-home practices to conserve fuel. To preserve foreign exchange reserves, he



urged citizens to delay gold purchases for a year and avoid foreign holidays and destination weddings. Reduction in edible oil use and cutting down on imported

fertilisers also featured in PM Modi's speech.

FOLLOW LIVE UPDATES

However, the opposition was quick to flag

the gap between PM Modi's appeals and his extravagant political activities in Gujarat and Assam. Visuals of Madhya Pradesh BJP leader Saubhagya Singh Thakur's massive 200-vehicle convoy quickly went viral on social media, sparking further outrage.

Amid the criticism, several BJP-ruled states announced austerity measures. PM Modi led the charge himself, with sources saying that he has ordered a 50% reduction in the size of his convoy and urged the use of Evs.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah was also seen travelling with just five cars in his convoy — down from the 10-11 vehicles that usually accompany him.

The chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Delhi also issued similar directives.

MLAs were offered cash: EPS's big claim as AIADMK infighting becomes public



Chennai.(Agency)

High drama unfolded inside the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly during Chief Minister Vijay's floor test on Wednesday when the rumoured AIADMK feud broke out in the open after party General Secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami made a big claim that his MLA were offered cash to vote in favour of the TVK chief. While Palaniswami declared that the 47 AIADMK MLAs would oppose the motion backing Vijay, party leader SP Velumani, who is said to be leading the 'rival' faction, openly vowed support for Vijay.

Vijay, the newly sworn-in chief minister, was facing a trust vote to prove his majority in the House days after he took oath. The TVK chief had the support of 119 MLAs before the test, without the backing from any of the AIADMK MLAs. He eventually won the floor test with the support of 144 MLAs.

However, things went haywire inside the House during the debate on the confidence motion when EPS rose to speak and alleged that many of the AIADMK MLAs were offered cash in a horse-trading attempt, persuading them to vote in favour of the TVK chief.

"There have been horse-trading attempts to poach AIADMK MLAs. I have got information that some might get ministerial births and take part in the ruling government. You said you want to run a pure and transparent government and we hope so," EPS said.

Prateek Yadav, Mulayam Singh's younger son and Akhilesh's half-brother, dies at 38



Prateek Yadav was the son of the late Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and his second wife Sadhana Gupta. He had been unwell for some time. A few weeks ago, he was admitted to a hospital in Lucknow, where Akhilesh Yadav had also visited him.

Lucknow.(Agency)

Prateek Yadav, the younger son of late Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and half-brother of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, died on Wednesday in Lucknow, sources said. He was 38 years old and married to BJP leader Aparna Yadav. According to sources, Prateek was brought to Lucknow's Civil Hospital at around 6 am on Wednesday for treatment, where doctors declared him dead. Hospital officials later said that Prateek showed no signs of life when he was brought in, with no pulse and fixed, dilated pupils. Sources said only members of his household staff were accompanying him when he was taken to the hospital.

Sources added that Prateek Yadav had been unwell for some time. A few weeks ago, he was admitted to a private hospital in Lucknow, where Akhilesh Yadav had also visited him. After his condition showed some improvement, he was brought back home.

Following his death, Prateek Yadav's body was shifted to the postmortem house at King George's Medical University (KGMU), where a panel of doctors conducted the autopsy under videography surveillance.

The Samajwadi Party condoled his death in a post on X, saying, "The passing of Prateek Yadav is deeply saddening. May God grant peace to the departed soul."

Akhilesh Yadav also mourned the death of his half-brother in a post on X. He prayed for peace to the departed soul and paid tributes to Prateek Yadav.

From despair to determination: Students try to cope as NEET UG gets cancelled

New Delhi.(Agency)

When the notification of reports of cancellation of the NEET-UG 2026 over paper leak flashed across his phone on Tuesday morning, over a week after he had appeared for his second attempt, 20-year-old Shubh Vardhan tried to stay calm.

After months in Kota, Rajasthan, where he was enrolled at ALLEN Career Institute preparing for India's fiercely competitive medical entrance examination, he had recently returned to his home in Ghaziabad.

More than 22 lakh aspirants across the country like him had appeared for the entrance test this year. Unlike many devastated by the announcement, Shubh said, "It's valid. If the people have cheated then the exam will be cancelled," he said, adding, "There

will be an opportunity for people who earlier had zero chances as they get more time." In this attempt, Shubh, who is the son of a government officer and a homemaker, was expecting a score



of 400. He said he has been working hard to become the first doctor in his family. For nearly two years, his life had narrowed into the rhythms familiar to lakhs of NEET aspirants with continuous test series, life in hostel rooms.

Across Delhi-NCR on Tuesday, scenes of despair and determination could be witnessed following the announcement.

An 18-year-old student of Sardar Patel Vidyalaya in South Delhi said,

"My honest reaction was a mixture of frustration and resolve. I was disappointed that this uncertainty and administrative incompetency has revived the stress I had finally overcome."

She added, "It is especially difficult for those who were expecting high scores. It's a shock beyond comprehension."

Nevertheless, I'm hopeful that this unexpected opportunity will allow me to improve and return better prepared. Even as the situation is far from ideal, we have to navigate through it with steady preparation."

Rape & murder of IRS officer's daughter: 'Accused waited for victim's parents to step out before entering house'

New Delhi.(Agency)

Twenty-three-year-old Rahul Meena, accused of killing the daughter of an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer in Southeast Delhi last month, deliberately chose a time when the victim was alone. This is among a key detail the investigators are treating as central to establishing his criminal intent, official sources said. On April 22, the 22-year-old victim was allegedly strangled with a mobile phone charger at their home by Meena, a former domestic help, who is facing charges of rape and murder.

"As part of the probe, we have to establish whether there was criminal intent or a guilty mind. If someone waits outside a house and commits the crime when the victim is alone, it clearly shows there was an intention to kill," a source said. "The CCTV evidence and disclosure statements show that the timing of the crime was between 6:30 am and 7:30 am. The probe and disclosure statement of Meena has now revealed that he

waited for the IRS officer and his wife to leave for their morning walk before entering the house," the source also said.

Sources further said that the murder investigation is in its final stages. "We are aiming to file the chargesheet at the earliest. It may be filed within a week," a source said.

Sources also said that the statements of other domestic workers living in the building have also been recorded. This, they said, was done to corroborate his addiction and mental state in the run-up to the crime. "They have disclosed that he was addicted to online gaming. When he would win money, he would call women and spend it on

them. We are also preparing a detailed report on his medical condition," the source said. Police sources earlier had said that the crime was driven primarily by financial distress due to losses incurred during online gambling sessions — with the situation escalating into a brutal assault inside the victim's home.



Vijay wins Tamil Nadu trust vote with 144 MLAs voting in favour; DMK walks out

New Delhi.(Agency)

With the backing of at least 25 AIADMK faction MLAs led by

Shanmugam and SP Velumani, Vijay

comfortably crossed the majority mark in the

trust vote despite one supporting legislator

being barred by the

Madras High Court from participating in the floor

test.

Vijay on Wednesday passed the motion in the 234-member Tamil Nadu Assembly with flying colours, with 144 MLAs backing his government against the majority mark of 118. The floor test, however, unfolded amid empty Opposition benches after DMK and DMDK legislators staged a walkout, while four PMK MLAs and one BJP MLA abstained from voting.

The rival AIADMK camp led by 'rebel' leaders Shanmugam and SP Velumani, which has the backing of 30 out of the party's 47 MLAs, also appeared to support Vijay. Going by the numbers, at least 25 MLAs AIADMK faction voted in favour of the Chief Minister. Vijay already had the support

confidence

of 120 MLAs, minus one legislator who had won by a margin of a single vote and was



barred by the Madras High Court from participating in Wednesday's trust vote.

As the number of legislators present and voting

dropped following the walkout by the DMK and its allies, along with the abstention of five MLAs, only 22 legislators from the EPS camp voted against the TVK government.

Now that the dust over the trust vote has settled, the bigger question is the split within the AIADMK, with 25 MLAs breaking ranks. Defying AIADMK chief Edappadi K. Palaniswami's directive, the rebel legislators signalled where their loyalties now lie, leaving EPS with only 22 MLAs in his camp. However, to bypass the anti-defection law and formally merge with the DMK, the rebel camp would need the support of at least two-thirds of the AIADMK legislature party — 31 of its 47 MLAs — a mark it still falls short of.



villages and runs the nonprofit Centre for Youth Culture Law and Environment (CYCLE), said.

Tyagi pointed out that while Bijwasan remains a rural village, Rajokri next door was declared urban in 2019. Batches of villages were declared urban from the 1960s to 1994, Tyagi said. Thereafter, 174 villages got the urban tag in 2018 and 2019. Once the ongoing process is complete, these 48 villages will be the last batch of villages to be declared urban in Delhi.

What changes after a village becomes urban?

First, the villages are no longer governed by the agricultural land-use norms of the Delhi Land Reforms Act, 1954 (DLR Act) which prohibits landowners from using agricultural land for housing, commercial and industrial activity. Rural groups have long demanded changes in the Act, arguing that farming is not viable.

Second, the village comes under the purview of the DMC Act and DDA Act.

Gram Sabha land is transferred to DDA.

This is also the first step towards implementing the Green Development Area (GDA) policy, which seeks to permit commercial development in the outermost villages of Delhi, said Bhupender Bazard, leader of the Dilli Dehat Vikas Manch.

What has happened in villages declared urban before?

The promise that rural areas will benefit from municipal governance has largely remained on paper, experts and rural groups complained.

Work from home for Zoho employees following PM Modi's appeal? Sridhar Vembu ready to...

MORBI.(Agency)
Zoho co-founder and Chief Scientist Sridhar Vembu has reignited the discussion on remote working/work from home, following PM Narendra Modi's recent appeal to citizens on maintaining national austerity. Vembu tweeted that as a company, he is ready to revisit work from home, although the company has fully adopted work from office in recent months."I hope all of us heed the Prime Minister's appeal. As a company, we adopted Work From Office fully in recent months, but we will revisit Work From Home now. We have adopted natural farming in our farm and we are also actively looking for ways to cut diesel use," Vembu wrote on X.Vembu's comments were further critically questioned by netizens. One asked about how the Zoho co-founder plans to support the small-scale vendors.How do you plan to support the small-scale vendors-the canteen walas and the bajji-tea stalls who depend entirely on your office footfall? With commercial LPG shortages and price hikes already forcing items like poori and dose off menus, these micro-businesses are struggling to survive. Are you suggesting full remote work like during the pandemic, or WFH within city limits so the local economy doesn't collapse while you save on diesel?," a user that goes by the name Vijay asked on X.Responding to the query, Vembu wrote, the company plans to help people in need with free food. This will be similar to what the company did during remote working times.
"We always support our canteen staff and drivers during work from home times. In the past, we have used our kitchens to distribute a lot of free food to the needy around our offices. We will do likewise now," he posted.

RBI cancels licence of Sarvodaya Co-operative Bank -- What will happen to depositor's money?

Mumbai.(Agency)
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced on Tuesday that it has cancelled the licence of the Sarvodaya Co-operative Bank Ltd., Mumbai, with immediate effect, as the bank does not have adequate capital and earning prospects. "Consequently, the bank ceases to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business on May 12, 2026. The Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Maharashtra, has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appointing a liquidator for the bank," the RBI said in a statement.On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive the deposit insurance claim amount of his or her deposits up to a monetary ceiling of Rs 5,00,000 from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), subject to the provisions of DICGC Act, 196, the RBI statement said.According to the data submitted by the bank, about 98.36 per cent of the depositors were entitled to receive the full amount of their deposits from DICGC as on date of imposition of all inclusive directions. As on March 31, 2026, the DICGC has already paid Rs 26.72 crore of the total insured deposits under the provisions of the DICGC Act, based on the willingness received from the depositors concerned of the bank.
The RBI said that Sarvodaya Co-operative Bank has failed to comply with the Banking Regulation Act and its continuance is prejudicial to the interests of its depositors.The bank, with its present financial position, would be unable to pay its present depositors in full; and public interest would be adversely affected if the bank is allowed to carry on its banking business any further, the RBI statement said.

Retail inflation at 13-month high, touches 3.48%

New Delhi.(Agency)
Retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rose to an 11-month high of 3.48% in April from 3.40% in March, primarily due to higher food prices, data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Tuesday showed. Rural inflation touched a 15-month high of 3.74%, while urban inflation stood at 3.16%.
Food inflation rose considerably to 4.20% in April. While overall food inflation witnessed a moderate uptick, at the item level, inflation cooled for potatoes, onions, peas and chickpeas. Items such as air conditioners recorded the lowest inflation rates during the month.While retail inflation remained within the tolerance band of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), economists cautioned that inflation could rise further if retail fuel prices increase in the coming months due to the West Asia crisis.
Debopam Chaudhuri, chief economist at Piramal Finance, said: "If retail fuel prices are revised upward in the coming months, the inflation trajectory could change meaningfully. The second-order effects of higher transport and logistics costs tend to transmit rapidly across a broad section of the inflation basket. Under such conditions, it appears unlikely that the overall cost of funds will ease materially anytime soon."However, there has been sharp inflation in precious metals due to rising global prices and rupee depreciation against the US dollar. Inflation in silver prices surged 144.34% year-on-year, while gold, diamond and platinum jewellery inflation rose 40.72%.Rajni Thakur, chief economist at L&T Finance Ltd, said inflation in April was "better than expected across the board". She noted that while food prices had increased by around 30 basis points, overall transportation prices had eased due to softer services inflation.She added: "While food prices have nudged higher by around 30 basis points, overall transportation prices have actually eased.

From Thailand to Dubai: How your next foreign trip could weaken the rupee

What does a Europe honeymoon, Thailand getaway or Dubai shopping spree have in common? Beyond memories and Instagram pictures, they all mean more dollars leaving India. Let's understand here.

New Delhi. (Agency)
A family excitedly planning a Thailand escape. A newly married couple dreaming of Paris or Switzerland. A destination wedding in Italy straight out of a Bollywood film. For many Indians, foreign holidays are no longer rare luxuries — they are aspirations, celebrations and hard-earned rewards. But there is another side to this story, one

that rarely makes it into holiday albums or Instagram captions.Each flight ticket. Every hotel booking. Every swipe at a cafe abroad. Small expenses individually, perhaps. But together, they add up.Rupees are exchanged for dollars, euros or pounds. One trip may not matter much. But when lakhs of Indians travel overseas around the same time, the economic effect quietly starts building. Most of the time, nobody notices.But these are not exactly ordinary times.Crude oil prices have crossed \$105 per barrel. Tensions in West Asia continue to unsettle global markets. And India, which imports more than 80% of its oil needs, suddenly finds itself needing far more dollars to pay rising bills.That is partly why Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently urged Indians to avoid non-essential foreign travel for a year.At first glance, it may sound unusual. But look closer, and the message becomes less about holidays, and more about

economics.
THE HIDDEN ECONOMICS OF FOREIGN HOLIDAYS



An overseas trip may feel like personal spending, but at a larger level, it becomes part of India's foreign exchange story. When Indians travel abroad, they spend in dollars, euros and pounds. That naturally increases demand for foreign currency. Siddharth Maurya, Founder and Managing Director of Vibhavangal Anukulakara Pvt. Ltd., said rising foreign travel can slowly add pressure on the rupee,

especially during uncertain economic periods."With foreign travel by Indians, they end up spending in foreign currency like dollars, euros, or pounds. There will be increased foreign exchange demand and increased dollar flows out of India as well," Maurya said.He clarified that travel alone may not sharply weaken the rupee, but it becomes relevant when paired with expensive oil imports and global uncertainty."Although foreign travel is unlikely to lead to rupee depreciation all by itself, it still adds to the overall current account equation," he added.WHY PM MODI'S MESSAGE COMES NOW
The Prime Minister's message is not just about travel habits. It comes against a larger economic backdrop.India imports more than 80% of its oil requirement, and oil is paid for in dollars. So, when crude prices rise, India's dollar demand automatically increases.

Customs duty rises on gold, silver: Will buying slow or stay strong

Gold and silver have turned costlier after the government raised customs duty. The move has immediately sparked questions in bullion markets. Will higher prices cool demand, or will buying continue to stay strong despite the hike

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Government of India has increased the effective import/customs duty on gold and silver from around 6% to 15% (10% Basic Customs Duty + 5% AIDC). Since India imports most of its gold and silver requirements, this directly increases the landed cost of bullion in the domestic market. **IMPACT ON MCX GOLD AND SILVER PRICES**
The rise in the import duty on gold and

silver immediately impacted on MCX gold and silver prices. MCX prices usually rise sharply because imported bullion becomes costlier, domestic prices start trading at a bigger premium over international COMEX/LBMA



prices and futures contracts on MCX quickly adjust to reflect the higher import cost.Today's reaction itself showed that MCX gold futures surged more than 6-7% while silver futures jumped around 6-8% after the

announcement.WHY MCX RISES MORE THAN COMEX
MCX pricing formula roughly works like: International Price + USD/INR + Import Duty + Taxes + Premium so even if COMEX gold remains stable, a customs duty hike alone could push MCX prices higher. **IN THE SHORT-TERM IMPACT ON GOLD AND SILVER**
Strong domestic premium, short covering rally and arbitrage widening between MCX and COMEX.On the other hand, profit booking can emerge and demand destruction may happen at higher prices, jewellers may reduce purchases and physical premiums can cool down later.MEDIUM-TERM EFFECTS ON DUTYHIKE
Higher customs duty can reduce official bullion imports, and this may support the Indian rupee and current account

Some Japanese snack packages are turning black-and-white as Iran war depletes ink supply

TOKYO.(Agency)
The packaging on some snacks in Japan is turning a somber black-and-white, as the war in Iran disrupts the supply of an ingredient used in colored ink. Tokyo-based Calbee Inc., which makes potato chips and cereal, said what's inside remains the same. Calbee's popular snacks are available in Japan's omnipresent convenience stores and shipped to the US, China and Australia. "This measure is intended to help maintain a stable supply of products," it said in a statement this week.The change on 14 products in its lineup will start May 25, limiting ink colors to just two, the company said, noting it was necessary to respond flexibly to changing geopolitical conditions.How long the change might last remains



caused supply crunches.Japan relies almost entirely on oil imports. A key oil-related product called naphtha is used in various items like plastics and

ink. Japan has so far ridden out the worries relatively calmly, as the government has worked to allay such fears by noting the nation's oil reserves. But there's no mistake in the stark change on the chips packaging.Calbee's lightly salted chips, known as "usu shio," originally came in a bright-orange bag with an image of yellow chips and a potato-man mascot wearing a hat. The new packaging just has monochrome lettering.The company, which also makes shrimp chips, or "kappa ebisen," had just announced an ambitious growth strategy in March."Calbee will continue to respond flexibly and promptly to changes in its operating environment, including geopolitical risks, and remains committed to maintaining a stable supply of safe, high-quality products," it said. "We ask for your understanding."



led the Sensex gainers, rising 3.22%. It was followed by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd, which gained 2.00%. Tata Steel Ltd moved up 1.39%, while Bharat Electronics Ltd added 1.04%. Bharti Airtel Ltd also opened higher, rising 0.95%. Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd saw the sharpest fall, dropping 2.35%. Titan Company Ltd declined 1.49%, NTPC Ltd was down 1.18%, Bajaj Finance Ltd slipped 0.94%, and State Bank of India Ltd fell 0.89% in early trade."With the AI trade still intact, FIIs are likely to continue on the sell-mode. The derivatives data indicate this. Investors should opt for safety now. Better to remain in cash till there is clarity on the crude price," said Vijaykumar."Pharmaceuticals seem to be the safe sector now. Long-term investors can slowly accumulate large banking stocks on declines," he added.

Air India cuts flights to major global destinations as fuel costs surge

Air India has suspended and reduced several international services from June as fuel prices rise and airspace restrictions bite. The cuts underline growing pressure on long-haul operations, with the airline warning that more routes could turn unviable.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Air India has suspended and reduced flights on several international routes as soaring jet fuel prices and airspace restrictions continue to increase operating costs for airlines.The Tata-owned airline has made major cuts across its international network for three months starting June, reported The Economic Times.The report said Air India has fully suspended flights from Delhi to destinations including Chicago, Newark, Singapore, and Shanghai.The airline has also reduced flight frequencies to several major international cities such

as San Francisco, Paris, and Toronto. Overall, around 100 daily flights have reportedly been cut from the network. **WHY AIR INDIA IS CUTTING FLIGHTS**
The move comes at a time when global jet fuel prices have surged sharply due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia and tensions around the Strait of Hormuz. According to the report, global average jet fuel prices rose to \$162.89 per barrel for the week ending May 8, 2026, compared to \$99.40 per barrel at the end of February. Fuel is one of the biggest expenses for airlines and can account for nearly 40% of total operating costs.Higher fuel prices directly affect airline profitability and often force carriers to either increase ticket prices or reduce flights. **PAKISTAN AIRSPACE CLOSURE ADDING TO PRESSURE**
The report said Air India is facing greater pressure than rival IndiGo because the closure of Pakistani airspace has forced many of its Europe- and North America-

bound flights to take longer routes. This has increased fuel consumption, crew costs, and travel time.Some flights to North America are now making technical stops at cities such as Vienna or Stockholm, adding further operational



costs. **AIR INDIA MAY CUT MORE FLIGHTS**
Last week, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson reportedly told employees that the airline would continue reducing international services because higher fuel prices and airspace restrictions had made several routes unprofitable. According to the report, people aware of the

matter said further cuts may happen if fuel prices remain elevated. A senior airline official quoted in the report said, "We are not recovering even the operating cost on most flights. A sustained increase will force us to cut more." **GOVERNMENT YET TO OFFER RELIEF**
The report said the Federation of Indian Airlines, which represents airlines including Air India and IndiGo, had recently warned about possible service suspensions unless the government steps in to ease cost pressures. While India rolled back a domestic aviation fuel price hike in April, airlines have reportedly not received relief for international operations.Jet fuel prices in Delhi are now said to be nearly double March levels.The report also linked the situation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent remarks urging Indians to reduce fuel usage and avoid unnecessary travel amid the global energy shock caused by the Iran conflict.The Prime Minister had also appealed to citizens to conserve foreign exchange as global crude oil prices remain elevated.

Short news

Kerala nurses win Florence Nightingale Awards 2026

Kerala.(Agency)

Nursing professionals from Kerala have made the state proud by winning the National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026 in recognition of their meritorious work. Among the awardees were major general Lisamma P V, additional director general of the Military Nursing



Service (MNS), Manjumol V S, senior nursing officer at the Pangappara Government Medical College health unit, and Deepa Biju, assistant nursing superintendent at the National Academic Medical Organisation (NAMO) Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. In addition, Aysha Beebu K from Lakshadweep also received the award.

Major general Lisamma, hailing from Kollam, assumed the role of additional director general of MNS in May 2025. Her leadership and service have been widely recognised.

Manjumol's citation highlighted her exceptional courage and presence of mind in critical situations, including her successful rescue of a psychiatric patient and saving a choking child. Her contributions to clinical practice were equally significant as of the development of Covid care guidelines and protocols for health workers.

Delegation from North Karnataka to meet Maharashtra govt on water sharing

VIJAYAPURA. (Agency)

Congress MLA from Indi, Yashvanthrayagouda Vittalagouda Patil, has said that a high-level delegation comprising MLAs from Vijayapura, Belagavi and Kalaburagi districts will soon meet the Maharashtra government to resolve issues related to the sharing of Bhima and Krishna river water and seek a permanent solution through mutual coordination.

He said the Maharashtra government had released 16,000 cusecs of water from the Ujni reservoir into the Bhima river as a humanitarian gesture, helping avert a severe drinking water crisis in the region.

"Instead of depending on such releases every time, permanent solutions can be found only through drinking water projects linked to the Krishna and Bhima rivers," he said.

Patil noted that Maharashtra itself was facing water scarcity while supplying drinking water to Solapur, yet released water into the Bhima river out of goodwill. He said Karnataka should also positively consider Maharashtra's requests regarding water supply.

"We can resolve the water dispute with a give-and-take policy by sharing water with Maharashtra, and Maharashtra will reciprocate. I request the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister to take steps in this direction.

Son of Chhota Shakeel aide shot in South Mumbai



Mumbai.(Agency)

A 40-year-old man identified as Sameer Asif Khan, son of Mohammed Asif Khan alias "Asif Dadhi", who was earlier linked to underworld don Chhota Shakeel, was allegedly shot at by unidentified bike-borne assailants near South Mumbai's Dockyard Road railway station on Tuesday evening. According to police, the incident took place around 6.05 pm when Sameer had gone to meet a hotelier friend at his office. Police said two men on a motorcycle allegedly followed Khan before one of them opened fire. The bullet struck Khan in the right thigh, leaving him injured.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Krishnakant Upadhyay confirmed the incident and said efforts were underway to trace the attackers.

"Several teams have been formed to identify and apprehend the suspects," an officer involved in the probe said. Police are in the process of registering a case of attempt to murder against unidentified persons.

Lightning kills four students, three injured in Kerala's Malappuram

MALAPPURAM.(Agency)

A routine evening outing turned tragic for seven friends after a lightning strike left four of them dead at the Panthallur hill viewpoint at Mankada in Malappuram on Tuesday. The victims – all school and college students aged between 16 and 22 – were residents of Vellila, located around 6km from Mankada. Rahees, 20, Bahas, 18, Siyad, 16, and Fahad, 22, are the deceased. The three injured youths – Fahad's brother Roshan, 20, Rahees's brother Salmanul Faris, 21, and Ishath, 16 – are currently under treatment at a private hospital for burn injuries.

The tragedy unfolded between 5pm and 5.30pm at Kuranganchola viewpoint, a popular local haunt where youth from Vellila gather to watch the sunset.

According to the residents, the weather changed quickly on Tuesday evening, with cloudy skies giving way to heavy downpour, followed by massive lightning.

P Jamsheer, a neighbour of the students who was among the first responders, said: "The



transition in weather was terrifyingly swift. It started raining heavily, followed by intense thunder and lightning. The seven friends were sitting on top of a rock, from where one

can see far into the distance, when lightning struck."

"Passers-by spotted the boys lying unconscious and went to check on them. That was when one of the boys told them that they had been struck by lightning," said Jamsheer. The residents mounted a desperate rescue effort, using private vehicles and ambulances to navigate the rugged terrain and rush the youngsters to the hospital. Two of them, they said, died on the spot. The residents had initially believed that there were only six students in the group. However, upon reaching the hospital, the injured students made the distressing revelation – one of their friends, Salmanul Faris, was missing. A frantic search ensued. The youth, thrown by the impact of lightning, was found lying in a ditch under a rock crevice near the viewpoint. He, too, was rushed to the hospital. Hospital authorities indicated that the injured were showing signs of stabilisation.

Gujarat HC quashes 2006 order against retired IPS officer in 1993 mob assault case

Vadodara. (Agency)

Holding that "mere suspicion of involvement" was "not sufficient" to proceed against a person who was not an accused in a case, the Gujarat High Court quashed a sessions court's 2006 order directing that a then-serving police officer be named as an accused in a case that was mid-trial under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Justice HD Suthar of the Gujarat High Court held that the sessions court had "improperly exercised" the power to summon a person, as the evidence fell short. The HC was hearing a revision application filed by retired IPS officer RJ Savani, challenging the July 2006 order of the sessions court in Nadiad, Kheda, which had ordered that Savani be joined as an accused, and witnesses be recalled, in a case in which the investigating officer had earlier cleared



Savani.

In its judgment dated May 6, the HC observed that the sessions court had acted on the testimony of the complainant, in which he had "clearly stated" that he "was not present" at the site of the incident and "based on the information received from the people he has lodged the complaint" and also made allegations that Savani "in the capacity of deputy superintendent of police was unanswerable". The HC judgment

stated, "Mere suspicion of involvement of the proposed accused-applicant is not sufficient and to proceed against the proposed accused...there must be some material or evidence, which suggests more than prima facie evidence regarding the involvement of the applicant..."

Citing SC precedents, the HC said, "...it clearly reveals the power of summoning under Section 319 of the Code is not to be exercised routinely" and the "existence of more than a prima facie case" is mandatory to summon an additional accused. The court stated that trial courts must "evaluate the evidence against the persons sought to be summoned" and then adjudge whether the evidence is as weighted and valued as against those who are already facing trial. "In the absence of any credible evidence, the power under Section 319 of the Code ought not to be invoked.

Annapurna Bhandar, free bus travel for women to be rolled out from June

The government has also announced that women will be able to travel free in state-run buses from June 1. Reports suggest that the transport department is considering a "pink ticket" or zero-fare ticketing model for its implementation.



Kolkata.(Agency)

In a bid to reshape the state's social support structure, the newly elected government is preparing to implement a series of major welfare schemes, from rolling out the proposed direct cash transfer scheme for women, free bus travel for female passengers, to integrating the Central schemes that had previously been stalled.

According to sources, the welfare implementation begins with Annapurna Bhandar, the government's proposed direct-benefit transfer (DBT) scheme for women, which is to be implemented from June 1. Under this scheme, eligible women are expected to receive Rs 3,000 per month directly into their bank accounts through DBT. The scheme is being viewed as the BJP government's



counterpart to the previous TMC government's Lakshmir Bhandar scheme, which had become one of Bengal's most politically influential welfare programmes.

Government sources said that Lakshmi Bhandar beneficiaries are likely to be brought under the Annapurna Bhandar before the discontinuation of the older scheme takes place. Officials have repeatedly stated that existing beneficiaries will not lose support

during or before the convergence period. The government has also announced that women will be able to travel free in state-run buses from June 1. Reports suggest that the transport department is considering a "pink ticket" or zero-fare ticketing model for its implementation.

The proposal places the BJP government within a political model that was first popularised nationally by the Arvind Kejriwal government in Delhi. In 2019, the Arvind Kejriwal led Delhi government introduced the Pink ticket scheme allowing women to travel free in DTC and cluster buses across the national capital. But the BJP leaders at the national level often criticised such welfare programmes as "freebie politics" or "revdi culture," particularly during debates around opposition-run state schemes.

Karnataka orders closure of all trekking routes again

Bengaluru.(Agency)

After the death of a 10-year-old boy in a leopard attack near Nagamale Hills, which is 11 km from Male Mahadeshwara (MM) Hills and situated inside the wildlife sanctuary, the Karnataka Forest Department on Tuesday ordered the closure of all trekking routes, wherever wildlife is sighted and till the listed standard operating procedures (SOPs) are fully in place.

Forest, Environment and Ecology Minister Eshwar B Khandre issued the orders in reaction to the boy getting killed by a leopard on Sunday. Prior to announcing the ban, Khandre held a high-level meeting with forest officials and later announced that pilgrims will be allowed to visit MM Hills and Nagamale Hills only during Shivaratri and Ugadi festivals. Further, people will be allowed to walk only 3 km and not 14 km.

They will be permitted in small groups, accompanied by trained guides and forest staffers, who will carry walkie-talkies. "All devotees will have to take well-covered jeeps after buying tickets from designated counters. The view lines en route will be cleared for wildlife sightings. Similar will be the case at Nagamale Hills, where people are not allowed to climb 7 km," Khandre said.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wildlife, Kumar Pushkar said the trek route closure is for the safety of the people. The SOPs too have been put out for the same reason. The department staff had been given till May 8 to implement the SOPs, but it is taking time to do so on the ground. Until the completion reports submitted and certificates issued, trekking will not be allowed, he said.

Now, divide garbage into four, not two, bags; sanitary, special care waste added to list

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

Henceforth, all residential and commercial units in the city will be required to segregate their waste into four bags before handing them to sanitation workers during door-to-door collection.

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation said it has made it mandatory for residents to segregate wet, dry, sanitary and 'special care' waste. Wet waste includes fruit and vegetable leftovers and kitchen waste. Dry waste includes items such as paper, plastic, glass, and metal. Sanitary waste includes used diapers and sanitary pads, which must be wrapped securely in bags and kept separately. Hazardous household garbage will be treated as "special care waste". People in all seven zones and 48

wards of the city are being urged to follow the new garbage disposal rules, and AMC has clarified that burning or burying waste on streets or in open spaces and discarding them in drains or water bodies will be considered a legal offence. "These rules are mandatory for all residential and commercial units in the city. If any unit fails to segregate the four types of waste properly or is negligent in adhering to the rules, it will then be considered contempt of an order of the Supreme Court. In such a situation, strict punitive action can be taken against under the Solid Waste Management Rules-2026 and other applicable environmental laws," AMC authorities said. The new and stricter guidelines for waste management were in



accordance with the directives of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the Supreme Court, they added. AMC will also conduct a city-wide awareness campaign for a cleaner city.

On-site waste processing must for bulk generators

While all bulk waste generators in the city were instructed to strictly comply with the new rules, they have also been asked to ensure on-site waste processing and scientific waste management. AMC has also warned that if any unit is negligent in the on-site processing operation or violates the rules, then it would also amount to contempt of the Supreme Court order. According to the new provisions, all units with a total built-up area of 20,000 square meters or more, or those that have a daily water consumption of over 40,000 liters or those that generate solid waste of 100 kilos or more daily will be considered "bulk waste generators". AMC has clarified that these rules include hotels-restaurants, religious.

NEWS BOX

Why Bhuvneshwar Kumar is right to ignore India comeback hysteria

New Delhi. (Agency)

There is usually a familiar pattern to Indian cricket's comeback conversations. One strong IPL season, a few match-winning performances, television panels begin debating possibilities, former cricketers start backing the player publicly and social media turns every squad announcement into a referendum on selectors. It happened with Mohammed Shami after the Champions Trophy. It has happened with several senior players over the years. And now, as IPL 2026 reaches its business end, the spotlight has shifted firmly towards Bhuvneshwar Kumar. Only this time, the man at the centre of the noise seems completely detached from it. Imagine leading the Purple Cap race, producing match-winning spells against some of the best batting line-ups in the tournament and hearing respected voices openly push for your India return—yet refusing to turn it into a personal mission. That has been the most striking part of Bhuvneshwar Kumar's resurgence this season. While the cricketing world keeps building the comeback narrative around him, Bhuvneshwar himself has stayed

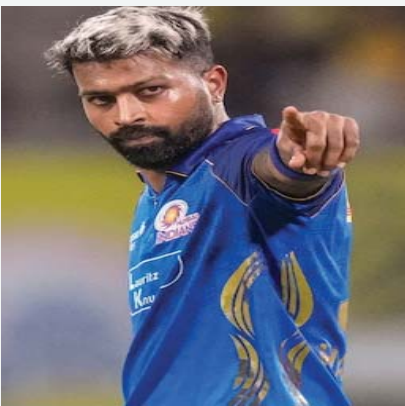


grounded. "I am not thinking about India's comeback. It has been many years since I stopped keeping or making long-term goals, because whenever I did that, it never worked for me," Bhuvneshwar said in a video posted by RCB. It is not the usual answer modern cricket produces. Careers today are built around constant planning — the next ICC event, the next squad, the next opportunity. Every strong IPL season immediately gets tied to a larger international conversation. Bhuvneshwar, though, sounds like a cricketer who has stopped measuring fulfillment through selection alone. And perhaps that is exactly why he has looked so good this season.

THE SECOND WIND

At 36, Bhuvneshwar is bowling with the freedom of someone who no longer feels the need to prove anything.

Is Hardik Pandya really injured? MI captain dazzles in late night net session



NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Is Hardik Pandya really injured? Well, this will be the question that everyone will have after seeing the Mumbai Indians skipper sweat it out in the nets during a late-night session. Hardik posted a couple of videos on his official Instagram account, where he was seen taking the bowlers apart.

Hardik has been out of action since MI's El Clasico loss to CSK on May 2 and he didn't travel with the initial group of Mumbai players to Dharamshala for their next match against Punjab Kings on May 14. Hardik has missed the last two games due to back spasms. But the Indian all-rounder has now hinted with his intense training session that he is fit and ready to return if needed. Hardik was seen training at a Reliance facility and showed no mercy towards the bowlers as he took them on. The MI captain trained alone at the facility and didn't show any signs of discomfort while batting. You can see the full video below: MI coach Mahela Jayawardene issued a fitness update on Hardik right after their loss to RCB. The Mumbai coach said that Hardik is having a back issue and the medical team was still working on him in a bid to get the all-rounder back on the field. Jayawardene said that they weren't willing to take a risk with the all-rounder and go about things on a day-to-day basis. "Yeah. Hardik has a back issue which we were trying to rectify, but it hasn't settled in yet. So the medical guys were working on him. He couldn't train the last few days, so we didn't want to take a risk without knowing exactly. So we'll see. It's on a day-to-day basis. See how he feels."

And then we'll make a decision on that," said Jayawardene. MI are already eliminated from IPL 2026 as they have just six points from 11 matches.

Preity Zinta, Punjab Kings slam fake stories on team as social media scrutiny grows

Preity Zinta and Punjab Kings have publicly denounced the false stories circulating about the team and its players, as social media scrutiny of the franchise continues to intensify. PBKS have suffered a sharp drop in form after their latest losses in IPL 2026.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Punjab Kings owner Preity Zinta and the franchise issued a stern statement on Tuesday, May 12, amid social media scrutiny surrounding the team and its players. While they did not address any of the rumours, Zinta and PBKS urged people to refrain from spreading fake stories about the franchise and its stars. Punjab had a dream start to the 2026 campaign, remaining unbeaten in the first seven matches, winning six of them. This included breaking their own record for the highest successful chase in IPL history.



But the last few weeks have seen the team's performance take a nose-dive as they have lost four matches on the bounce and slip out of the top two. Along with the struggles on the field, PBKS courted controversy over Yuzvendra Chahal's alleged vaping incident. At the same time, there are social media

discussions about Prabhsimran Singh's fitness and reported weight gain along with comments about the general attitude of the players. During the chaos, both Zinta and PBKS decided to draw a line and urged people to not make comments without verifying the facts first. The PBKS owner

said that while she welcomed healthy debate, fake narratives to damage players and the franchise's reputation will not be taken lightly. "There's a difference between criticism & calculated misinformation. Healthy debate around the game is welcome, but the deliberate spread of fake narratives to damage individuals, the team, or the brand should not & will not be taken lightly. I urge everyone including verified voices & media professionals to exercise responsibility before amplifying unverified information. Thank you," said Zinta on X. PBKS echoed the same sentiment in their statement, asking people not to drag the team in the mud for attention or traction. "Criticism, banter, and opinions are part of sport. Fake stories and made-up narratives for cheap engagement are not. We urge everyone to verify facts before spreading misinformation for attention or traction," said PBKS on X. Despite their poor run of form, PBKS remain in contention for making it to the playoffs this season. They will next face MI on Thursday, May 14 in Dharamshala.

Chettan's day out: CSK's Sanju Samson plays beach cricket with locals in Chennai

Dharamshala. (Agency)

Sanju Samson has already made himself the chettan of Chennai after making the switch from RR to CSK ahead of the IPL 2026 season. Now, the wicketkeeper-batter is putting in efforts to connect with the local fans of CSK as he joined in for some beach cricket with them. Samson arrived with no security personnel and quickly mingled with the Chennai fans as he showed no superstar attitude and decided to play cricket with them as a part of the gang. The CSK opener even batted left-handed and hit a big shot as the fans were happy to mingle with him. Samson shared some light-hearted moments with the fans as the video quickly went viral on social media. You can see the clip below: SAMSON FEELING THE LOVE FROM CSK

Samson talked about how he felt the love from the CSK fans right before he even played a game for them and how the support has made him become more responsible as a player. Right when the trade discussions were going on, like always the media picks it up and say Sanju might come to CSK. From that time I could feel some insane love for me. Whenever I came to Chennai or whenever a local guy is meeting



me, he would say 'hey Sanju, come to CSK.' "I was just telling in a meet and greet they was asking like what do you have to say about the fans of CSK, like when you're playing in a match for them, you don't feel like making a mistake. You think twice before playing a shot. That's how responsible I have become after joining CSK," said Samson on the Super Kings podcast.

Samson has repaid the faith put in him by CSK, by being their highest run-getter so far this season. The wicketkeeper has scored 430 runs from 11 matches at an average of 53.75 and a strike-rate of 169.29. He has hit two centuries this season, making him the franchise's first Indian and only the fourth player overall to register multiple IPL centuries in the same season. CSK are currently in the race for the playoffs and will bank on Samson to get them over the line.

IPL 2026: RCB close in on playoffs, but revival-hungry KKR stand firmly in the way

Raipur. (Agency)

Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Kolkata Knight Riders head into Raipur carrying completely different pressures, but both teams know this clash could shape the rest of their IPL 2026 season.

RCB are sitting on top of the table with 14 points and another win would almost lock in a playoff spot while also keeping them firmly in the hunt for a top-two finish. KKR, meanwhile, are still stuck in eighth place with nine points from 10 matches, but four straight wins have suddenly pulled them back from the edge after what looked like a dead campaign not too long ago. Raipur's surface did not exactly scream batting paradise during the previous game. Even RCB struggled to chase 167 against Mumbai Indians, suffering a cramp-fighting 73 from Krunal Pandya and a wild final-over six from Bhuvneshwar Kumar to somehow get over the line. That sluggish pitch now awaits two teams whose biggest strengths are currently very different. RCB still relies heavily on batting momentum and

individual game-breakers. KKR, on the other hand, have rebuilt their entire season around strangling teams through spin and middle-over pressure. And that immediately



puts the spotlight on two men before the first ball is even bowled: Virat Kohli and Varun Chakravathy.

WILL VIRAT KOHLI TURN HIS FATE AROUND?

For most of IPL 2026, Kohli looked locked into another classic Kohli season.

He scored 379 runs in his first 11 matches, stitched together nine straight double-digit

scores and quietly became the stability behind RCB's rise to the top of the table.

Then suddenly, the last two games happened.

Back-to-back ducks. Three balls faced combined. And now, for the first time this season, there is genuine noise around Kohli's form heading into a massive fixture. The interesting part though is that RCB have actually continued winning despite Kohli's quiet patch. Earlier versions of Bengaluru often collapsed emotionally whenever Kohli failed. This season feels different. Krunal Pandya dragged them through against MI. Devdutt Padikkal has chipped in consistently.

Even Tim David and Rajat Patidar have had moments through the season. Still, RCB know exactly what a locked-in Kohli changes in games like these.

KKR certainly do.

Assistant coach Shane Watson admitted before the game that Kolkata's plans still revolve around getting Kohli early because once he settles, he completely controls the tempo of a match.

IPL Play of the Day: Rabada, Siraj unleash powerplay hell to stun Hyderabad

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Earlier in the season, Rashid Khan candidly admitted that Gujarat Titans did not possess the most intimidating middle order in the IPL, a weakness that could eventually hurt them. But he also pointed out that GT's bowling attack was superior to most teams in the competition. On Tuesday night in Ahmedabad, Kagiso Rabada and Mohammed Siraj delivered a chilling reminder of exactly what Rashid meant. GT vs SRH, IPL 2026: Scorecard | Highlights

The Titans' batting may not always overwhelm opponents with brute force, but their bowlers have repeatedly found ways to suffocate teams under pressure. Sunrisers Hyderabad became the latest victims as Rabada and Siraj unleashed absolute havoc in the powerplay, scripting an 82-run demolition that pushed SRH to their lowest total in IPL history. Defending 168 on a surface that has heavily favoured teams batting first this season, Gujarat knew early wickets would tilt the game

decisively in their favour. Rabada and Siraj ensured there was no escape route for Hyderabad, reducing them to 34 for three in



the powerplay with relentless pace, movement and hostility. From that point, the chase felt less like a contest and more like survival. The victory also carried huge significance in the playoff race. Gujarat surged to 16 points, historically the magic number in a 10-team IPL season, with no side ever failing to qualify for the playoffs after reaching that mark. With their fearsome pace attack peaking at the right

time, the Titans are beginning to look like a side no team would want to face in the knockout stages.

HOW SIRAJ, RABADA ROCKED

They say the morning shows the day, and for the Titans, the signs were clear from the very first over. Mohammed Siraj set the tone with a fiery wicket- maiden, removing the dangerous Travis Head and instantly putting the Sunrisers on the back foot. Remarkably, Siraj has now picked up four wickets in the first over of innings in IPL 2026, underlining how often he has given the Titans the perfect start.

Then came Rabada, charging in with menace and intensity. Abhishek Sharma welcomed him with a towering six off the very first ball, but Rabada responded like elite fast bowlers do, with hostility and a wicket in the same over. Abhishek's dismissal had an element of fortune as the ball hit inside edge and then ricocheted off the pads and rolled back onto the stumps as the SRH opener looked in dismay.

SRH head coach stands by batters after hitting new low in loss vs GT

Daniel Vettori backed Sunrisers Hyderabad's batting unit after their record-low 86 against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad. He called the collapse a one-off blip and said the side could bounce back quickly.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Daniel Vettori refused to turn on his batting unit despite a crushing collapse against Gujarat Titans, insisting the franchise's record-low total in a losing cause was nothing more than a rare blip in an otherwise outstanding IPL 2026 campaign. SRH were blown away for just 86 in Ahmedabad on Wednesday, their lowest-ever total in IPL history in a defeat, as

Gujarat Titans produced a ruthless bowling display to storm into the playoffs as the first team to secure qualification. Defending 169 on a lively black-soil surface, GT's pace attack dismantled Hyderabad from the outset. Mohammed Siraj and Kagiso Rabada ripped through the top order, removing four batters early to leave SRH's chase in tatters before it had a chance to settle. Jason Holder then maintained the squeeze with immaculate lengths, while Prasidh Krishna and Rashid Khan ensured there was no route back for the visitors. Despite the scale of the collapse, Vettori made it clear that one poor outing would not change his view of a batting group that has been one of the most dangerous units in the competition. "But as always, you have to start well, and we didn't tonight. That's what happens," Vettori said after the match.

"I don't put any blame on the batting unit. They've been exceptional this year. Every team throughout the IPL is going to have

their small blips once in a while, and ours was tonight. I don't see any reason why they won't bounce back." Vettori admitted Hyderabad's chase effectively unravelled in



the powerplay, with GT's relentless pressure making recovery nearly impossible.

We always want to get off to a good start. That's our M.O. through the powerplay. Today, even though they bowled exceptionally well, there were a couple of fortunate dismissals with

the first two wickets," he said.

"From there, it was tough to really regroup, and they just kept putting pressure on."

While the batting collapse grabbed attention, Vettori also defended his own bowling unit, pointing out that restricting a powerful Gujarat side to 169 had initially left SRH believing they were firmly in the contest.

"We don't expect our bowling unit to be perfect," he said. "I thought Sakib's last over was brilliant. Pat front-ended himself because we wanted to keep trying to take wickets, and that's what he was able to do. He had an exceptional spell." "Maybe one over from Malinga was slightly expensive, but once again, he's been absolutely amazing for us this year. Restricting them to 170 was a very good job." That optimism lasted only briefly, as Gujarat's fast bowlers turned the chase into a demolition.



Palak Tiwari

Celebrates Emotional Bond With King, Calls Him Her 'Veera'

King has made his acting debut with Lukkhe, and his performance as MC Badnaam has become one of the talking points of the crime drama. The rapper, singer and songwriter steps into a fierce and emotionally layered role in the series, which is currently streaming on Prime Video across more than 240 countries and territories.

Set against the backdrop of Punjab's underground music and crime scene, Lukkhe has been appreciated for its stylised storytelling, immersive world-building and high-energy characters. Among the many equations in the series, one bond that has especially connected with viewers is the sibling dynamic between King's MC Badnaam and Sanobar, played by Palak Tiwari.

Palak Tiwari Calls King Her 'Veera'

Palak recently took to social media to share a heartfelt note for King, celebrating their bond both on and off screen. Referring to him affectionately as her "Veera," she expressed gratitude for sharing this special journey with him through Lukkhe. Her caption read, "Nihal to me and badnaam to the world, similarly Arpan to me and king to the world. There has been no greater joy than being your younger sister. Tujhse accha koi nahi. I'm always your sanno and you'll always be my Veera. Lukkhe was a first for both of us and I'm so happy it gave me you!! Meri jaan bhi kya, rooh teri kadam kare. But on a side note to everyone please watch Lukkhe on @primevideo in heh ."

Their on-screen relationship, rooted in fierce protection, love and emotional vulnerability, has struck a chord with audiences. The warmth between the two actors appears to have translated naturally into their performances, making MC Badnaam and Sanobar's bond one of the emotional highlights of the show.

King's Acting Debut As MC Badnaam

Known primarily for his music, King makes a strong shift into acting with Lukkhe. His character MC Badnaam is placed in a world where rap, ambition, loyalty and crime collide. The role allows him to bring both intensity and emotional depth to the screen.



'Deepika Padukone Is Being Overly Scrutinized': Amrita Puri Backs Actress' 8-Hour Shift Demand



Actress Amrita Puri, known popularly for starring in 'Aisha', has weighed in on the ongoing debate around working hours in the Hindi film industry, linking it to the wider discussion sparked by Deepika Padukone's reported demand for an 8-hour work shift. Amrita reflected on her own experiences in the industry over the years, revealing that she has often worked extremely long schedules, including 16-hour shifts and all-nighters, without additional compensation. She defended Deepika, and said that she has raised a 'very important issue' with her demand for fixed working hours.

Amrita Puri Backs Deepika Padukone Amid 8-Hour Shift Controversy

In a recent chat with Rediff, Amrita Puri spoke about the controversy surrounding Deepika's reported 8-hour shift demand, and expressed that the issue has been subjected to unnecessary scrutiny. She said that the reaction would likely have been very different if the same demand had come from a male actor, and called out the gender bias.

"There are times where I have done 16 hour shifts or all-nighters, you know. And I have not got paid for it, which is problematic, right? If you go beyond your 12 hours and are not paid. I think Deepika has brought up a very important issue. I think that she is being overly scrutinized. The thing with this whole Deepika thing is, I promise you, if it was a man, it wouldn't be in the papers," she said.

Amrita Puri Says Nobody Would Question a Male Actor Over 8-Hour Shift Demand

She further said that it is not uncommon for some male actors in the industry to have fixed working-hour clauses in their contracts, but these arrangements rarely become public discussion points. "I know of a male actor who is extremely successful commercially, who has had that 8-hour clause in their contract for years.

Mouni Roy And Husband Suraj Nambiar Unfollow Each Other On Instagram, Spark Divorce Rumours



Actor Mouni Roy and businessman Suraj Nambiar have sparked fresh divorce rumours after fans noticed that the couple unfollowed each other on Instagram. Social media users also pointed out that Suraj seems to have deleted or archived wedding photos with Mouni, leading to speculation about trouble in paradise. The rumours quickly gained attention online because Mouni and Suraj have often shared holiday pictures and romantic moments on social media since their wedding in 2022. Fans are now wondering if the couple is going through a rough phase after noticing their sudden online distance.

Fans Notice Social Media Changes

Mouni Roy is known for regularly posting updates from her personal life, including pictures with Suraj Nambiar from vacations, parties and family celebrations. However, followers recently noticed that the two have stopped posting pictures together.

The speculation grew stronger after fans realised that Mouni and Suraj no longer follow each other on Instagram. Neither Mouni nor Suraj has reacted to the rumours publicly so far. The couple has also not released any official statement regarding the reports circulating online.

Fans React Online

The social media activity sparked mixed reactions from fans. While some expressed concern about the couple's relationship, others asked people not to jump to conclusions based only on Instagram activity. One user wrote, "Looks like there's some problem in their marriage. Hope it's not serious," while another commented, "Maybe they just want privacy."

Many requested others to avoid assuming the worst until Mouni and Suraj address the speculation themselves.

Mouni And Suraj's Wedding

Mouni Roy and Suraj Nambiar got married in Goa on January 27, 2022. The couple had both Malayali and Bengali wedding ceremonies and shared several photos and videos from their big day online. Their wedding pictures received a lot of love from fans and celebrities.

Karishma Tanna

Says Walking Helps Her During Pregnancy, Urges 'Mamas-To-Be' Not To 'Completely Stop Moving'

Actress Karishma Tanna, who is all set to welcome her first bundle of joy, has shared a message for all expecting mothers that daily walks have helped her stay physically and mentally active during pregnancy. Karishma shared a video of herself from the gym, where she is seen walking on the treadmill. Tagging pregnancy as "beautiful" yet challenging, the actress asked all "mamas-to-be" to stay gentle with themselves but not completely stop moving.

In the clip, Karishma is heard saying: "Hi guys, just a small reminder to all the mamas to be out there. One thing that genuinely helps me during pregnancy is walking. Even a simple daily walk makes such a difference physically and mentally." She says the body changes during pregnancy.



Karishma added: "And trust me, pregnancy is beautiful but yes, the way the body changes, tiredness, it's all real. And that's exactly why movement becomes very very important. I mean no pressure but just stay active, strong and connected to your body."

"Like even 20-30 minutes of daily walking will help you with swelling, stiffness, mood swings, sleep, digestion and honestly it just makes you feel better."

She asked all expecting mothers to be gentle on themselves, but asked them not to stop moving. "So all the prego women watching this, please please be gentle to yourself. But don't completely stop moving. Your body will thank you later. And I will thank you later. Lots of love." Karishma wrote in the caption: "Hey preggos!!! let's do this." A fitness enthusiast, Karishma started dating a Mumbai-based real estate businessman Varun Bangera in 2021. In the same year, they got married in 2022.

It was in April, when the actress announced that she's all set to welcome her first bundle of joy in with her husband Varun. In a collaborative post, the two announced the news. They shared multiple pregnancy photoshoot pictures of Karishma along with Varun.



NEWS BOX

China-US trade talks start in South Korea

BEIJING. (Agency)

Delegations from China and the United States met for trade talks in South Korea, Chinese state media reported Wednesday, hours before US President Donald Trump is due to arrive in Beijing. The talks were taking place at Incheon International Airport, near Seoul, Xinhua news agency said, without providing further details. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had said he would be meeting Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, both of whom have led previous rounds of negotiations. The officials are likely to put the finishing touches on any announcements made during Trump's summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Washington and Beijing last year slapped tit-for-tat tariffs on each other's exports, with levies exceeding 100 percent. Trump and Xi agreed on a year-long trade truce at their October meeting in South Korea. "Economic security is national security," Bessent said as he announced his South Korea trip on social media. Bessent will then travel to Beijing for the Trump-Xi summit, he added.

More than a dozen business executives including Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang and Tesla boss Elon Musk are also travelling to China with Trump.

At Tech Trial, Sam Altman Says Elon Musk Wanted 90% Stake In OpenAI

World. (Agency)

Elon Musk was obsessed with trying to control OpenAI, the artificial intelligence company's CEO Sam Altman said Tuesday at a blockbuster trial pitting some of the world's wealthiest tech titans against each other. Altman is the latest in a parade of Silicon Valley megastars to take the stand in the case brought by Musk over OpenAI's pivot away from scrappy non-profit into the \$850 billion juggernaut behind ChatGPT. Musk -- the richest person on the planet -- claims Altman and co-founder Greg Brockman improperly used a \$38 million injection he had hoped would sustain OpenAI as a research lab, developing the technology for the good of humanity. "It does not fit with my conception of the words 'stealing a charity' to look at what has actually happened here," Altman told the court in Oakland, California. OpenAI was founded as a non-profit in 2015, but established a for-profit subsidiary in 2019 as the AI race heated up. Altman and others insist this was necessary to raise the vast sums of money from investors, including Microsoft, required to compete in a costly and difficult field. Musk's legal case demands that OpenAI revert to non-profit status, a move that would impact its position in the global artificial intelligence race against Anthropic, Google and China's Deepseek. OpenAI counters that Musk -- who is now also an AI competitor with his xAI -- is motivated by petty revenge, having failed to seize majority control of the commercial entity.

The court has heard how, in 2017, the company's co-founders discussed the creation of the subsidiary with Musk. Altman said Tuesday that the Tesla boss demanded a huge controlling stake.

"An early number that Mr Musk threw out was that he should have 90 percent of the equity to start," he told the jury.

Saudi Arabia launched secret retaliatory airstrikes on Iran during regional war: Report

World. (Agency)

Saudi Arabia carried out a series of unpublicised airstrikes on Iran in late March in retaliation for attacks inside the kingdom during the Middle East conflict, according to sources cited by Reuters.

The strikes marked the first known case of Saudi Arabia directly conducting military action on Iranian soil, underscoring a major shift in the kingdom's approach toward its main regional rival.

The conflict began after the United States and Israel launched airstrikes on Iran on February 28. In the weeks that followed, Iran targeted all six Gulf Cooperation Council states with missiles and drones, striking US military bases, civilian sites, airports and oil infrastructure, while also closing the Strait of Hormuz and disrupting global trade.

Saudi Arabia, despite its close military relationship with the US, found itself vulnerable as attacks pierced the US security umbrella during the 10-week war. The Saudi Air Force strikes were carried out as "tit-for-tat strikes in retaliation for when Saudi (Arabia) was hit," one Western official said.

The strikes reflected the widening scope of the conflict across the Middle East and revealed a regional confrontation that had largely remained out of public view. The Wall Street Journal reported on Monday that the United Arab Emirates had also carried out military strikes on Iran. Together, the Saudi and Emirati actions showed Gulf monarchies responding militarily after coming under Iranian attack. However, their approaches differed. The UAE adopted a more hawkish position, seeking to impose costs on Iran and engaging only rarely in public diplomacy with Tehran. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, sought to contain the conflict and remained in regular contact with Iranian officials, including through Tehran's ambassador in Riyadh, who did not respond to a request for comment.

According to the Iranian and Western officials, Saudi Arabia informed Iran about the strikes, leading to intensive diplomatic engagement and Saudi warnings of further retaliation. The exchanges eventually produced an understanding between the two countries to de-escalate. Ali Vaez, the Iran Project Director at the International Crisis Group, said retaliatory Saudi strikes followed by de-escalation would "show pragmatic recognition on both sides that uncontrolled escalation carries unacceptable costs."

US Inflation surges as Iran war drives energy prices sharply higher

The Labor Department's consumer price index rose 3.8% from April 2025, the biggest jump in three years, and up from a 3.3% year-over-year gain in March.

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

U.S. consumer prices climbed sharply again last month as the 10-week war with Iran delivered higher gasoline prices and more pain for Americans. The Labor Department's consumer price index rose 3.8% from April 2025, the biggest jump in three years, and up from a 3.3% year-over-year gain in March. On a month-to-month basis, April prices rose 0.6% from March as gasoline prices rose 5.4%, according to the data released Tuesday. The month-over-month gain was down from a 0.9% increase in overall prices from February to March,

when the initial financial shock from the war hit the U.S. economy. Labor Department figures showed that gasoline prices are up more than 28% compared with a year ago. However, the AAA motor club listed the average regular gallon of gasoline above \$4.50 on Tuesday, about 44% more than it cost last year at this time. Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called consumer core prices rose 0.4% last month from March and 2.8% from April 2025, relatively modest readings that suggest the energy price burst has yet to spill over more broadly into prices for other goods. Grocery prices rose 0.7% from March to April as meat prices rose after they had declined slightly in the month before. Prices are rising at a time when Americans are already frustrated by the high cost of living. Affordability is likely to be a key issue when voters go to the polls Nov. 3 to determine whether President Donald Trump's Republican Party maintains control of the U.S. Senate and House of

Representatives. Inflation is the key drag on the U.S. economy now," Heather Long,



chief economist at Navy Federal Credit Union, wrote. "There is a real financial squeeze underway. For the first time in three years, inflation is eating up all wage gains. This is a setback for middle-class and lower-income households and they know it. They are having to cut back on spending and stretch every dollar." In April, average hourly wages fell 0.3% from a year

earlier after accounting for inflation -- the first year-over-year drop in three years. Inflation had been dropping more or less steadily since peaking with a 9.1% year-over-year spike in June 2022, a surge caused by supply chain bottlenecks at the end of COVID-19 lockdowns and a jolt for energy prices following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But inflation has remained above the Federal Reserve's 2% target. Then, the United States and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28, and Tehran responded by shutting off access to the Gulf of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passes. That has sent oil prices, and most visibly gasoline, racing higher. The Fed, which had been expected to cut its benchmark interest rate in 2026, has turned cautious as it waits to see how long the conflict lasts and whether higher energy prices spill over into other products and cause a broader inflationary outbreak.

How Google Is Moving The Needle On AI, Tony Stark-Style

World. (Agency)

Google is moving the needle on artificial intelligence, quite literally. And in classic Google fashion, it is doing so by reimagining something most people stopped thinking about decades ago: the humble computer cursor.

In a blog post published last night, Google DeepMind unveiled experimental demos of what it calls an "AI-enabled pointer," a cursor powered by Gemini that does not just track where users are pointing, but also understands what they are pointing at and why it matters. It feels quite Tony Stark-ish. Remember how the Iron Man movies showed Tony Stark using ambient and intuitive AI all those years ago? His fictional AI assistants, principally J.A.R.V.I.S. and later F.R.I.D.A.Y., operated as always-on, contextual, and conversational partners rather than just command-based tools. All this is not some distant

sci-fi dream anymore. Imagine hovering over a paragraph and simply saying "summarise this." Or pointing at a couch online and asking AI to place it inside your living room. Or circling a restaurant in a paused travel video and instantly pulling up booking information. No copying, no pasting, no opening a separate chatbot window. Just point and speak. For decades, the mouse pointer has largely remained unchanged. It understood coordinates, not context. Google now wants to change that. "Our goal is to address a common frustration: because a typical AI tool lives in its own window, users need to drag their world into it," DeepMind wrote in its blog. "We want the opposite: intuitive AI that meets users across all the tools they use, without interrupting their flow." That seemingly small shift could end up becoming one of the biggest interface changes of the AI era. The Cursor Is Becoming Intelligent

If chatbots represented the first major AI interface revolution, Google appears to be betting that the next phase will be far more ambient and invisible.

Instead of typing elaborate prompts into dedicated AI apps, users may increasingly interact with AI through gestures, voice and context-aware interfaces woven directly into everyday computing. And according to AI educator and founder of The Cutting Edge Group, Ansh Mehra, this is very much in line with Google's long history of quietly laying the foundations for the modern internet.

"If you look at Google's history, you'd realise that almost every important app we use today is built on foundations laid by Google," Mehra told NDTV.

"Every other browser you use today is built on Google's Chromium framework. Their 2017 Transformer paper gave birth to OpenAI, Anthropic and Meta Llama, and now they're about to change the cursor."

Trump Downplays Differences With Xi Over Iran Ahead Of Beijing Summit

WORLD. (Agency)

President Donald Trump on Tuesday downplayed differences with President Xi Jinping over the U.S. and Israel's conflict in Iran as he headed to Beijing for a high-stakes summit with the Chinese leader. Trump has been unsuccessfully pressing Xi to use China's considerable leverage to prod Iran to agree to U.S. terms to end the more than 2-month-old war -- or, at the very least, reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

But just before he left the White House on Tuesday for his flight to Beijing, Trump sought to downplay differences with Xi over Iran and the shadow the conflict is casting on global oil markets. "We're going to have a long talk about it. I think he's been relatively good, to be honest with you," Trump said of his plans to discuss the conflict with Xi. Minutes later, he added, "We have a lot of things

to discuss. I wouldn't say Iran is one of them, to be honest with you, because we have Iran very much under control." But Trump over the course of



the conflict has veered between venting that China, the world's biggest buyer of Iranian oil, hasn't done more to get the Islamic Republic in line and acknowledging that Xi's government helped de-escalate the conflict last

month by nudging Tehran back to ceasefire talks when negotiations wobbled. Ahead of the visit, Trump sought to minimize the need to persuade Xi to change China's posture on Iran. Instead, Trump's Republican administration seems determined not to let differences on Iran overshadow efforts to make headway on other difficult matters in the complicated relationship -- ranging from trade to further Chinese cooperation to block exports of fentanyl precursors.

"I don't think we need any help with Iran," Trump said when asked by a reporter if he would press Xi to pressure the Islamic Republic.

Beijing publicly insists that it wants to see the war end and has been working diplomatically behind the scenes to help its ally Pakistan push to broker a peace agreement.

Kash Patel Denies Allegations of Drinking During Senate Budget Hearing

WORLD. (Agency)

FBI Director Kash Patel angrily lashed out at a Democratic lawmaker at a budget hearing Tuesday, calling allegations that he drinks excessively on the job and has been unreachable to his staff at times "unequivocally, categorically false." "I will not be tarnished by baseless allegations and fraudulent statements from the media," Patel told Sen. Chris Van Hollen during a testy exchange that began when the Maryland Democrat confronted him about a recent article in The Atlantic magazine that painted an unflattering portrait of his leadership of the nation's premier federal law enforcement agency.

Patel has filed a \$250 million lawsuit over the story. The Atlantic has said it stands by its reporting and would vigorously defend against the "meritless lawsuit."

Patel shouted over Van Hollen and sought to turn the tables by accusing him of "slinging margaritas on the taxpayer dime" in El Salvador, a reference to a visit the Democrat paid last year to Kilmar Abrego Garcia while he was jailed there following his mistaken deportation to the country. "The only person who has been drinking during the day on the taxpayer dime was you," Patel said. "Director Patel, come on," Van Hollen said. "These are serious allegations that were made against you."

He at one point asked Patel if he was willing to take a test meant to measure whether an individual has a drinking problem, prompting Patel to shoot back, "I'll take any test you're willing to take." The senator called Patel's claims of margaritas in El Salvador "provably false." After last year's meeting, Van Hollen publicly accused El Salvador's government of having misrepresented the nature of his encounter with Abrego Garcia, saying officials there had staged the meeting with drinks appearing to be alcohol and angled to set the meeting by a hotel pool. The testy exchange occurred at an annual Senate subcommittee budget hearing featuring Patel and other senior law enforcement leaders. The director used the forum to tout what he described as major crime-fighting achievements since he took the position and received a friendly reception from Republican senators who praised his leadership.

Democrats, by contrast, pressed Patel on headline-generating travel that has blended his professional duties with private leisure -- including a trip to the Winter Olympics in Italy, where he partied with the U.S. men's hockey team after their gold medal win -- as well as the mass terminations of agents who worked on investigations into President Donald Trump.

Russia Tests Nuclear-Capable 'Satan II' Missile With 35,000 km Range

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

Russia on Tuesday test-fired a new intercontinental ballistic missile as part of efforts to modernize the country's nuclear forces, a launch hailed by President Vladimir Putin just days after his claim that the fighting in Ukraine is nearing an end.

Putin said that the nuclear-armed Sarmat missile would enter combat service at the end of the year. It was built to replace the aging Soviet-built Voevoda. "This is the most powerful missile in the world," Putin declared, adding that the combined power of the Sarmat's individually targeted warheads is more than four times higher than that of any Western counterpart. The Russian leader has repeatedly brandished the nuclear sword after sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022 to try to deter the West from ramping up support for Ukraine. After overseeing a military parade on Red Square on Saturday commemorating the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, which for the first time in nearly two decades didn't include heavy weapons, Putin declared the

conflict in Ukraine is coming to an end. Since coming to power in 2000, Putin has overseen efforts to upgrade the Soviet-built components of the Russian nuclear triad -- deploying hundreds of new, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, commissioning new nuclear submarines and modernizing nuclear-capable bombers. Russia's effort to revamp its nuclear forces pushed the United States to launch a costly modernisation of its arsenal. The last remaining nuclear arms pact between Russia and the US expired in February, leaving no caps on the world's two largest atomic arsenals for the first time in more than a half-century and fueling fears of an unconstrained nuclear arms race. The Sarmat - designated "Satan II" in the West - is meant to replace about 40 Soviet-built Voevoda missiles. Its development began in 2011 and before Tuesday, the missile had only one known successful test and reportedly suffered a massive explosion during an abortive test in 2024. Putin said Tuesday that the Sarmat - part of a slew of new weapons that Putin

revealed in 2018, claiming they would render any prospective US missile defenses useless - is as powerful as the Voevoda but with a higher precision. It is capable of suborbital flight, he said, giving it a range of more than 35,000 kilometers



(21,700 miles) and an extended capability to penetrate any prospective missile defenses. Moscow's new weapons include the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle, capable of flying 27 times faster than the speed of sound. The first vehicles have

already entered service.

Russia has also commissioned the new nuclear-capable Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile, and used its conventionally-armed version twice to strike Ukraine. Oreshnik's range of up to 5,000 kilometers (3,100 miles) makes it capable of reaching any target in Europe. Putin also announced Russia was in the "final stages" of the development of the nuclear-armed Poseidon underwater drone and the Burevestnik cruise missile powered by miniature atomic reactors. The Poseidon is designed to explode near enemy coastlines and cause a radioactive tsunami. The Burevestnik has virtually unlimited range thanks to nuclear propulsion, allowing it to loiter for days, circling air defenses and attacking from an unexpected direction. Putin has described those new weapons as part of a Russian response to the US missile shield that Washington developed after its 2001 withdrawal from a Cold War-era US-Soviet pact that limited missile defenses.