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Offer namaz in shifts: Yogi Adityanath's stern warning against prayers on roads

Yogi Adityanath said namaz would not be stopped in Uttar Pradesh but could not be offered on roads. The remarks prompted an AIMIM response questioning whether the same rule applies to road closures for puja and aarti.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday issued a stern warning against the practice of offering namaz on roads, stressing that blocking traffic for such congregational gatherings will not be permitted by his government. Speaking at an event in Lucknow, the Chief Minister said the Uttar Pradesh administration would first pursue compliance through persuasion. If that approach fails, he added, authorities would adopt other measures to ensure adherence to public order norms. "You have to offer namaz, you can read it during your shift. We will convince you with love, and if that

does not work, another method will be adopted," Adityanath said and also shared the video of his speech on X. Furthermore, the Chief Minister stated that roads are meant for commuters, including workers, traders, patients and emergency



services, and any obstruction affects daily life. He said no one has the right to halt traffic or convert intersections into gathering points. "I am often asked whether, in Uttar Pradesh,

people really do not offer namaz on the roads. I say clearly that it does not happen at all. Go and see for yourself. Roads are meant for movement. Can anyone come and create a spectacle on a crossroads and block traffic? What right does anyone have to disrupt public movement?" he said.

Adityanath also said that the rule of law applies equally to everyone and public spaces cannot be misused. "We will not stop namaz, but it should not happen on roads," he said. This is not the first time the BJP leader has objected to namaz being offered in public spaces. During the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections, the Chief Minister had criticised the then Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government, alleging that namaz was being allowed on streets

Instagram, children were used for Vijay's victory: MK Stalin after DMK defeat

Chennai.(Agency)

MK Stalin on Monday reflected on the DMK's defeat in the recently concluded Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, saying the party had failed to anticipate how social media platforms like Instagram and the use of children in campaigning would influence voters in favour of TVK. "Using social media, Instagram and making children campaign to influence their mothers, grandparents and elders, calculatively it has been done which we failed to see," the DMK president said, adding that the party would now work out strategies "to defeat such acts henceforth."

Stalin, however, asserted that the DMK remained politically relevant despite losing power. "Several who spoke here were sad but we don't have to be sad as we are only ruling," he said. Referring to the new government continuing welfare measures launched during the DMK regime, Stalin said that was proof the party's policies still shaped governance in the state.

"We have seen several victories and several defeats. But DMK turns into a phoenix during defeat," he said, insisting he had not broken down after the election loss. The DMK chief said the party had started election work immediately after the results. But he questioned how the rival alliance managed to win despite, according to him, not appointing booth committee members, booth agents or even counting agents in several places. "I did not break down after seeing the election defeat. We started our election work immediately after the parliamentary elections.



Murmu okays ordinance to raise top court bench strength, new count at 38

Notably, the present ordinance modifies Section 2 of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956, substituting 'thirty-three' with 'thirty-seven'.

New Delhi.(Agency)

President Droupadi Murmu promulgated an ordinance on Sunday raising the number of Supreme Court judges to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The move, as government sources said, is aimed at bolstering the number of judges in the Supreme Court with the sole intention of ensuring speedy justice and quicker disposal of cases, thereby reducing pendency.

Notably, the present ordinance modifies Section 2 of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956, substituting 'thirty-three' with 'thirty-seven'. The official gazette notification of May 16 read, "Parliament is not in session, and the President is convinced that conditions exist which make it imperative for her to act without delay." Exercising her powers under Article 123 of the Constitution, the president promulgated the ordinance. When Parliament assembles, the ordinance must be placed before both houses. It will cease to have effect if six weeks elapse from the reassembly of Parliament with no resolution approved, or if resolutions disapproving it are passed by both Houses. The President retains the power to withdraw the ordinance as she chooses.

This step to increase the judges is being seen as an attempt to tackle the persistent backlog crisis that has troubled the court for years, especially post-pandemic after e-filing became widespread. The current arrears stand at more than 93,000 cases and could soon touch six digits. Three more apex judges are slated to retire in 2026. Justices JK Maheshwari and Pankaj Mithal's tenure would end in June, and Justice Sanjay Karol is due to retire in August 2026.

'Acting without delay'

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Blackmailing Syndicate Under Police Net FIR Filed in Madhya Pradesh Against Gang Accused of Defaming Jain Saints Through Fake Social Media Campaigns

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Mekan

Ahmedabad: A major crack-down has begun against an alleged blackmailing syndicate accused of defaming revered Jain saints through fake and morphed images circulated on social media in an attempt to extort huge sums of money. Following a clean chit granted to Jain Acharya Shri SagarChandraSagarSurishwarji Maharaj Saheb of Surat (Vesu), an official FIR has now been registered in Madhya Pradesh against the accused individuals. The FIR reportedly names Jagat Parekh, Hardik Hudiya, Vikram Bafna, and Kalpesh Singhvi, who are alleged to have operated a network of blackmail and misinformation under the guise of journalism and social media activism. As legal action intensifies, panic is said to have spread within the group. Detailed Report: Allegations of Organized Defamation and Extortion Jagat Parekh's Alleged Criminal Background Comes Under Scrutiny According to sources associated with the complaint, the alleged mastermind of the syndicate, Jagat Parekh, has a controversial background with multiple prior police cases reportedly linked to him. The



accused allegedly attempted to create fear and controversy by spreading fabricated content targeting Jain monks and religious leaders. The controversy escalated after a high-level forensic examination, reportedly initiated under the guidance of Gachhadhipati Shri Nardevsagar Surishwarji Maharaj Saheb, concluded that the viral images being circulated were completely fake and digitally manipulated. Madhya Pradesh Police Begins Investigation After the alleged fake content continued circulating online despite the forensic findings, legal proceedings were initiated in Madhya Pradesh. Po-

lice are now expected to investigate social media accounts, IP addresses, digital communication records, and financial transactions connected to the case. Legal experts believe that if charges related to organized blackmail, cyber defamation, and extortion are proven, the accused could face serious criminal consequences. Key Highlights FIR Registered in Madhya Pradesh: Police action initiated against the alleged blackmailing syndicate under serious legal provisions. Main Accused Under Radar: Jagat Parekh and Hardik Hudiya are among the primary individuals named in

the complaint. Forensic Findings: Viral images allegedly used to target Jain saints were reportedly declared fake during forensic examination. Social Media Investigation: Authorities are likely to examine digital evidence, online activity, and monetary transactions linked to the accused. Growing Pressure: Sources claim the accused are now attempting damage control by circulating old reports and selective narratives online. Strong Reaction from Community Circles Several members of the Jain community have expressed anger over what they describe as an attempt to malign the image and dignity of respected Jain saints. Community voices have called for strict legal action against individuals involved in fake propaganda, cyber harassment, and blackmail operations. Supporters of the legal action say the FIR marks only the beginning of a broader fight against misinformation, digital extortion, and "yellow journalism" targeting religious institutions and spiritual leaders.

PM Modi meets Norwegian counterpart, first Indian PM visit to Norway in 43 years

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Norway on Monday, May 18, for a landmark visit that marks the first standalone bilateral trip by an Indian Prime Minister to the Nordic nation and the first PM-level visit from India in 43 years. The visit combines bilateral engagements with Norway and participation in the 3rd India-Nordic Summit in Oslo, reflecting India's growing strategic and economic focus on the Nordic region.

According to senior Ministry of External Affairs officials, "At the invitation of the Prime Minister of Norway, PM Modi is on an official visit for bilateral engagement and the



on May 19."

Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to hold talks with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre on Monday, followed by an audience with King Harald V and Queen Sonja.

India-Norway Business and Research Summit, where discussions are expected to centre on trade, technology, investment and implementation of the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).

TEPA PUSHES TRADE AND INVESTMENT TIES

The India-EFTA TEPA came into force on October 1, 2025, becoming India's first free trade agreement with developed European countries. The agreement aims to attract \$100 billion in investments and create one million direct jobs over 15 years.

India has also created a dedicated EFTA Desk under Invest India to fast-track projects and investments linked to the agreement. Bilateral

stood at nearly \$1 billion in 2024-25, while India's services exports to Norway touched \$876 million in 2024.

Norway's Government Pension Fund Global, regarded as the world's largest sovereign wealth fund with assets nearing \$2 trillion, has invested close to \$30 billion in Indian capital markets.

A senior official said, "Apart from foreign direct investment, from which we get substantial amounts from various European partners, another investment that we get from Norway, for instance, is from the Government Pension Fund, which is about \$28 billion. And we are looking to increase basically the investment that they have in Indian capital

From Arctic cooperation and shipbuilding to a \$100 billion trade pact and Nordic investments, PM Modi's Norway visit is set to open a new chapter in India's engagement with Europe's strategic

News box

Fire breaks out at flat in Sector 84, residents raise lack of fire safety equipments

GURGAON.(Agency)

A fire broke out in a ninth-floor flat at a high-rise society in Sector 84 on Sunday morning, prompting residents to raise concerns over inadequate fire safety arrangements and poor maintenance in the condominium.

The incident occurred around 7.30am at Antriksh Heights society when flames erupted inside a locked apartment. The occupants were out of town at the time and no injuries were reported, though furniture and household items inside the flat were gutted in the blaze.

Residents said the fire was first spotted by an ex-serviceman who was exercising in the society's central lawn and noticed smoke billowing from the upper floors. As the smoke intensified, several residents and security guards rushed upstairs to contain the fire before it spread to adjoining flats. According to residents, the flat was locked from outside and there was no proper emergency equipment available to break open the door. The group eventually forced entry using hammers before attempting to douse the flames with hoses. "The smoke had filled the entire apartment and visibility was extremely poor. Residents and guards tried to control the fire till the fire brigade arrived," a resident said. During the rescue attempt, one resident sustained minor injuries on his hand. Residents also alleged that the society's first-aid box lacked even basic medicines and bandages.

Fire officials later brought the blaze under control after sustained efforts. Residents said the fire remained confined to one room, preventing a major disaster in the multistorey tower. Following the incident, several residents accused the society management of ignoring repeated complaints regarding faulty fire extinguishers, inadequate firefighting equipment and the absence of trained emergency response staff.

Body found with severe face injuries in vacant plot of Badshapur

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The body of an unidentified man was found inside a concrete cable pipe on a vacant plot in Badshapur on Sunday morning with severe injuries to his face and strangulation marks on his neck, police said.

Police received a call regarding the body around 8.30am on Sunday. "Prima facie, it appears to be a murder case. The face of the deceased, was smashed with a stone, possibly to prevent identification," an officer said. Stones covered with blood were found close to the site. The deceased is suspected to be between 20 and 30 years old. Police believe the deceased was killed by strangulation and then his body was dumped in the vacant plot. The body has been sent for an autopsy, which will determine the exact cause and timing of death.

Investigators are examining CCTV footage from roads and establishments near the area to trace the deceased's movement and identify any suspects or vehicles involved in dumping the body. Missing persons records from Gurgaon and nearby districts are also being checked to establish the deceased's identity. The officer said an FIR will be registered after further investigation. "We are trying to identify the deceased, after which the family will need to be traced," he added.

Monsoon 2 months away, coordination gaps, clogged drains deepen flood risk

Faridabad.(Agency)

With the monsoon less than two months away, residents of Sector 31 fear another season of severe waterlogging and flooding due to the lack of a functional drainage system in the area. They alleged that poor coordination among multiple agencies, clogged drains and delayed execution of approved projects continue to leave the sector vulnerable during heavy rain.

Residents said the situation is particularly grim in low-lying areas and stretches along the highway, where rainwater accumulates due to blocked natural slope and inadequate stormwater drainage connectivity.

"Most parts of Sector 31 either lack a proper drainage network or the existing drains are in poor condition.



Several drains are clogged with silt and debris, while some stretches have been encroached upon. Proper desilting has not been carried out for nearly five years," said the RWA president of Sector 31, BS Yadav.

Residents alleged that despite repeated complaints, civic agencies have failed to execute the approved projects aimed at reducing flooding. "Every monsoon, the same roads and houses get inundated. Plans were approved earlier to increase green belt absorption areas to reduce rainwater runoff, but the work was never executed," said a resident, Sudhir Yadav. Residents added that damaged drains with broken covers and clogged channels at several locations have further worsened the situation. Residents said immediate desilting and repair works are needed to prevent flooding during the upcoming monsoon.

Residents also blamed overlapping jurisdiction among civic bodies for delaying solutions. "There are too many agencies involved — MCG, GMDA, NHAI and HSPV — but no one takes ownership of the problem. Meetings were held earlier and a tender was even approved for a sump and lifting system to divert excess rainwater, but the project never took off," said the general secretary of the RWA, Arvind Chadha.

Screen time stress: Residents reflect on digital overload

GURGAON.(Agency)

How much screen time is too much? When mental health expert Dr Chetna Luthra asked a roomful of city residents whether they often forgot things — where they'd kept their keys, whether they'd switched off the gas — the response was telling. Almost everyone in the room could relate, and the hands went up almost instantly. The moment came during a session hosted by The Times of India at its Let's D-Stress event at Raheja Vedaanta on Sunday, where residents gathered for a candid, often uncomfortable conversation about a question many quietly wrestle with: whether phone time should be limited.

Dr Luthra, a clinical psychologist at Marengo Asia Hospital, pushed the audience to consider whether their forgetfulness was ordinary absent-mindedness — or a symptom of something more systemic. One

participant admitted to forgetting milk boiling on the stove, only realising when it spilled over. Explaining how to recognise phone addiction early, Dr Luthra said the signs often show up in daily routines. "Changes in sleep cycle, fluctuations in appetite, mindless overeating while using phones, and an inability to concentrate are some of the first indicators that screen time is becoming excessive," she noted. She also pointed out that post-Covid, screen time has surged significantly as work, socialising and entertainment shifted to mobile devices, reducing real-life interactions within communities. Drawing an important distinction, she explained that not all screen time is harmful. "There is a clear difference between purposeful use and passive consumption. Reading books or long-form content online engages the mind and improves focus, whereas



endless scrolling or watching reels leads to fragmented attention and mental fatigue," she said.

Dr Luthra highlighted how early habits are shaping dependency. "Today, almost everything is available on phones. Many parents unknowingly introduce children to screens very early — giving them phones to make them eat or playing lullabies on platforms like YouTube to calm them. Over time, this creates a pattern where the child begins to associate comfort and routine with screens," she explained. She added that

reduced exposure to outdoor activities and nature is worsening the problem.

"Children and even adults are spending less time in natural environments, which is essential for mental well-being. This disconnect is further pushing people towards excessive phone use," she said.

She also cautioned against overreliance on AI tools for emotional support. "Platforms like ChatGPT can provide information, but they are not a substitute for human connection or a safe emotional space. Instead of depending on screens, people should make an effort to talk to friends, family or seek professional help when needed," she said. She advised the audience to set clear boundaries. "Make simple rules — create a timetable for phone use and avoid using phones while eating," she said. The session left many reflecting on their daily routines, turning a casual conversation into a moment of self-awareness.

Man gets life term for rape of 7-year-old in 2019

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A special POCSO court on Saturday sentenced a Mainpuri resident to a life term in prison extending till the end of his natural life and imposed a fine of Rs 51,000 for raping his 7-year-old niece.

Judge Kumar Gaurav observed that the evidence presented had proven the accused had gone into the minor's room while her parents were not there and forced himself upon her. She was only saved after a distant relative heard her cries, took her away and informed her father. The minor's father then registered a complaint at the Ecotech-III police station and the accused was booked under sections 376 and 452 of the IPC along with Section 5/6 of the Pcsa Act.

The judge declared the accused guilty of house trespass and rape, and also ordered that Rs 45,000 from the fine amount be given to the minor for her rehabilitation.

"The accused's act not only physically harmed an innocent girl but also caused her mental trauma throughout her life. The crime committed by the convict is so heinous and disgusting that it cannot be imagined in a civilised society. Any punishment given to such a person is less," the court observed.

The survivor was younger than 12 years old at the time of the incident in 2019. According to Section 376AB of the IPC (as amended in 2018), whoever commits rape on a woman under the age of 12 years shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than 20 years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of that person's natural life, and with fine, or with death.

During trial, the defence counsel argued that the survivor's testimony was not enough to prove the incident, since no one other witness on record could corroborate it. He further said the minor's father owed the accused some money and hence a false case was registered.

Special public prosecutor Chavanpal Singh said the victim's testimony was proven by medical and scientific evidence, and thus, the survivor being a tutored witness was completely eliminated.

Man held for Rs 3.5 crore spice trade fraud involving over 20 firms

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 24-year-old man was arrested for allegedly cheating more than 20 companies of nearly Rs 3.5 crore by procuring goods on credit, selling them in the market and defaulting on payments through bounced cheques.

The accused, identified as Saurabh Goyal, a resident of Sector 5 and proprietor of Pushpanjali Enterprises, was arrested by the Economic Offences Branch II from the area on Friday.

According to police, the fraud surfaced after representatives of over 20 companies lodged a complaint at Sector 14 police station on Oct 7, 2025. In the complaint, the firms alleged that Pushpanjali Enterprises and its operators — including Saurabh Goyal, Manish and Virendra Goyal — had dishonestly procured goods worth crores of rupees from multiple



suppliers. Investigators said the accused placed bulk orders for products such as spices, cumin, almonds and other commodities, assuring suppliers that payments would be cleared promptly. However, the cheques issued in the company's name later bounced.

Police alleged that after obtaining the goods, the accused sold them in the market, collected cash payments and then shut down their offices, switched off their mobile phones and absconded without clearing dues. "During interrogation, Saurabh Goyal admitted that he, along with his associates, procured goods from multiple firms through Pushpanjali Enterprises and cheated the companies by deliberately issuing bounced cheques," a police officer said.

Police estimate the fraud amount at around Rs 3.5 crore, though investigators said the exact amount and details of related transactions are still being verified.

Goyal was produced before a local court on Saturday, which remanded him to five days in police custody. Police said efforts are underway to trace and arrest the remaining accused in the case.

Airport boom: Commercial plot price hits Rs 758cr in heart of city

Noida.(Agency)

With the city's land market heating up ahead of the airport's expected launch in June, Noida Authority is set to throw open 35 plots across industrial, institutional, commercial and hotel categories, with reserve prices stretching from Rs 65 lakh to a staggering Rs 758 crore.

Officials said the top-end pricing reflects the spike in investor interest driven by the Noida International Airport, which is scheduled to begin commercial operations on June 15.

The plot scheme will open on May 19. Applicants can deposit the earnest money by June 9, while the last date for submission is June 11.

"The Authority has decided to launch plots under different categories. The scheme will open on May 19, EMD can be submitted by June 9, and the final submission date is June 11," CEO

Krishna Karunesh said.

The biggest chunk is in the industrial segment, where 19 plots will be allotted in sectors 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 64, 80, 162 and Phase-II. These plots, sized between 115 and 8,000 sqm, are meant for manufacturing and processing units. Reserve rates range from about Rs 24,000 to over Rs 57,000 per sqm, taking plot prices from Rs 65 lakh to Rs 18 crore.

The institutional basket includes land for senior secondary schools, hospitals, nursing homes and corporate offices. Unlike the industrial and commercial plots, these will be allotted through an interview process rather than e-auction.

For schools, the Authority has listed two plots — an 18,954 sqm parcel in Sector 19 at Rs 143 crore and a 5,230 sqm plot in Sector 42 at Rs 21 crore. Two hospital plots are also on offer — 10,680 sqm in Sector 117 for Rs 70 crore and 10,224 sqm in Sector 145 for Rs 89 crore.

For nursing homes, a 1,160 sqm plot in Sector 47 is priced at Rs 18 crore, while a 1,000 sqm plot in Sector 41 carries a reserve price of Rs 11 crore. Two 1,950 sqm plots in Sector 153 have also been offered for corporate offices at Rs 18.6 crore each. The costliest offerings are in the commercial builder category for plots above 20,000 sqm. A 29,408 sqm plot in Sector 18 has been priced at Rs 758 crore, the highest reserve price in the scheme. Two more large commercial plots — 23,454 sqm in Sector 96 and 37,058 sqm in Sector 93-B — are priced at Rs 401 crore and Rs 547 crore, respectively.

Among smaller commercial plots, a 10,031 sqm parcel in Sector 94 is priced at Rs 186 crore, while a 2,536 sqm plot in Sector 18 is listed at Rs 99 crore.

The Authority has also put three hotel plots on the block in sectors 71, 124 and 142, priced at Rs 148 crore, Rs 245 crore and Rs 159 crore, respectively.

Gaps in drains, delayed STPs: Why sewage from Gurgaon ends up in Yamuna

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Even as Gurgaon and Faridabad continue to expand rapidly, their sewage and drainage infrastructure has failed to keep pace. Large volumes of untreated wastewater are still flowing through overloaded drains linked to the Yamuna despite the presence of operational sewage treatment plants (STPs). Official records reviewed by TOI show Gurgaon has 12 operational STPs with a combined capacity of 415 MLD (million litres per day). However, only around 388 MLD sewage is reaching these plants, even though the city is estimated to generate nearly 433 MLD sewage daily. This gap indicates that a significant quantity of wastewater is bypassing the formal sewer network and flowing directly into drains.

Officials estimate that around 287 MLD untreated sewage from Gurgaon continues to enter open drains connected to the Najafgarh drainage system, which eventually feeds the Yamuna in Delhi.

STPs are facilities that treat sewage from homes, markets, apartments and industries before the water is discharged into drains or rivers. But in Gurgaon, major gaps in sewer connectivity, interception systems and drain management have prevented large sections of the city from being linked to treatment infrastructure.

A senior Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) official said many STPs were originally designed based on projected populations, but rapid and unplanned urban growth created sewage loads outside the planned network.

"Illegal colonies came up later and were never part of the original sewage calculations. Now either those colonies have to be connected to sewer networks or interception pipelines have to be laid to divert that water to STPs," the official said. The problem has worsened over the past decade as areas along Dwarka Expressway, New Gurgaon, Sohna Road and Manesar expanded faster than sewer and drainage infrastructure.

Earlier surveys under the Yamuna Action Plan identified more than 287 MLD untreated sewage entering major drains from Gurgaon and adjoining areas. This included 55.4 MLD flowing through Badshapur drain leg-I and another 78 MLD through leg-II. Pollution hotspots were also found at Udyog Vihar discharge points, Yakubpur outfall and several unidentified openings feeding the Najafgarh drain network. Officials identified at least 17 discharge points where sewage interception and treatment are still required.

Hemant Kumar, chief engineer, GMDA, said authorities are trying to stop

untreated discharge entering the three major drain systems linked to the Yamuna network. "In leg one, almost all untreated discharge has been stopped. In leg two, we are identifying points that need to be tapped because much of the drain is underground. In leg three, MCG has assured that all untreated discharge points



will be tapped within three to four months," Kumar said. He acknowledged that large quantities of sewage are still escaping treatment because of missing sewer links and untapped discharge points. "We are working to fix this within a year. New STPs are also being developed and are expected to be completed by 2027. We also plan an additional STP at Dhanwapur by 2030," he added. According to HSPCB officials, the solution goes beyond building more

STPs and requires extensive interception and tapping work across drains. "It is not just about building STPs. Separate tapping, interception and sewerage plans are underway. In some drains, dozens of discharge points have been identified where untreated water is entering," an official said. Experts say this explains why rivers remain polluted even when treatment plants are technically operational. "If sewage itself does not reach the treatment plant, the river still gets polluted," said Akanksha Tanwar, regional officer (North Gurgaon), HSPCB. To address the growing mismatch between sewage generation and treatment capacity, GMDA has proposed four new STPs — 100 MLD plants each at Dhanwapur, Behrampur and Sector 107, along with a 40 MLD facility at Naurangpur. Most are expected to be completed by 2027. A 25 MLD STP at Manesar and Naharpur Kasan is expected to become operational by Aug 2025, while a 2 MLD plant at Bajghera remains under construction. The review found that similar problems persist in Faridabad, another major urban centre in Haryana's Yamuna catchment area. Two STPs in Faridabad, including the 45 MLD Badshapur plant, were found failing to meet prescribed discharge standards.

Major fire on stationary passenger train in Bihar, 2nd incident in two days

A coach of the Sasaram-Patna passenger train caught fire at Bihar's Sasaram station on Monday, a day after a similar blaze on the Thiruvananthapuram-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express in Madhya Pradesh.

Sasaram. (Agency)

A major fire broke out in a coach of the Sasaram-Patna passenger train at Sasaram railway station in Bihar's Rohtas district on Monday while the train was stationed at the platform, officials said.

Fire brigade personnel and railway officials rushed to the spot soon after the blaze was reported and launched firefighting operations to bring the situation under control. No casualties were reported in the incident.

The incident comes a day after a fire broke out in the Thiruvananthapuram-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district on Sunday. All passengers from the affected coach were safely evacuated, and no injuries or

casualties were reported.

Confirming the fire incident in Sasaram, Railway Protection Force (RPF) Inspector Sanjeev Kumar said there was no information about any passenger being harmed in the fire incident.

"The fire broke out in one coach of the Sasaram-Patna passenger train while it was standing at Sasaram railway station. There is no report of any passenger casualty," Kumar said.

Officials from the railway administration and fire services remained at the site to assess the damage and ascertain the cause of the fire. On Sunday, a fire broke out in



the Thiruvananthapuram-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express near Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh, damaging two coaches and disrupting traffic on the busy Mumbai-Delhi rail route for several

hours.

While no casualties were reported in the train fire, a van carrying repair equipment to the site later overturned in the district, injuring five railway staffers.

Train services on the Mumbai-Delhi route were severely affected after the blaze damaged overhead electrical equipment. Rail traffic was restored after more than seven hours, even as an investigation into the incident continued.

According to West Central Railway officials, the fire broke out at around 5.15 am in the B-1 coach of the Rajdhani Express between Vikramgarh Alot and Lunirichha stations under the Kota

railway division. The luggage-cum-guard van attached behind the coach was also damaged in the blaze.

The affected coach, carrying 68 passengers, was evacuated within 15 minutes, and all passengers were brought to safety, officials said.

Meanwhile, the West Central Railway Zone has constituted a high administrative grade-level inquiry committee to investigate the incident. The panel comprises senior officers from the West Central Railway, the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai, and the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO). The committee is headed by the Principal Chief Safety Officer of the West Central Railway.

Short news

Ajmer cops arrest 9 after youth abducted, forced to drink urine

Ajmer. (Agency)

Police Sunday arrested nine people accused of abducting a 21-year-old man and assaulting and brutalising him over an alleged community dispute. The arrests were made within 12 hours of a video of the incident going viral on social media. Police said the video shows the man being tied to a tree, beaten up, garlanded with shoes and slippers and forced to drink urine.

"The crime was heinous, inhuman and cruel. We constituted a team to investigate the case and all nine accused were arrested within 12 hours," said Ajmer SP Harsh Vardhan Agarwala.

The victim, Jeetu (21), a resident of Babaicha under Gegal police station, filed a complaint late Saturday evening after the video began circulating online. The accused have been identified as Prakesh Nath (23), Ravinder Nath (28), Ram Lal (23), Hemraj (24), Goru Nath (22), Vikram Nath (20), Devi Lal (43), Shayari (70) and Sugna (43).

"The video was uploaded online to spread fear in the community," a police official said. "A special team raided the houses of the accused and arrested them Sunday morning," he added.

Police sources said the incident stemmed from anger over Jeetu's marriage to a divorced woman. "A woman who was previously married to one Mahendra of Beer village reportedly divorced him and married Jeetu. Her former in-laws demanded a settlement under the local 'Nata pratha', under which a woman's new partner has to pay her former husband," they added. According to the complaint filed by Jeetu, he had gone with another person to collect wood from a farmhouse around 9am Saturday.

Fifth woman dies in Kota, hospital-acquired infection suspected

Kota. (Agency)

A 20-year-old pregnant woman died at the govt-run New Medical College Hospital (NMCH) Sunday, taking to five the number of women who have died in Kota govt hospitals in the past fortnight. Most of the deceased exhibited symptoms like kidney failure and urinary blockage, which experts say point to a likely hospital-acquired infection.

Five-months-pregnant Shireen was admitted to NMCH on May 6 for a minor procedure of the uterus. Her condition worsened the next day, with her family reporting a urinary blockage and signs consistent with a kidney infection. Family members alleged NMCH doctors pressured them to move her to a private hospital after her condition deteriorated. "It was Shireen's first pregnancy, and to save her life, the family spent Rs 4 lakhs on medicine at a private hospital," Shireen's uncle Mohammed Azaj told Sunday. The family shifted her back to NMCH Saturday, where she died around 3.30pm Sunday, Azaj said, alleging the hospital staff had forced the earlier transfer.

NMCH additional principal, Dr RP Meena, confirmed that Shireen was brought back from a private hospital Saturday. "She was brought here in a critical condition and put on a ventilator. She died Sunday afternoon," he said. Meena added that Shireen had undergone a minor uterus procedure at NMCH and was referred out "on her family's demand" to a facility of their choice. Her body was handed over to the police, he said.

Raw material costs up 60 per cent, exporters in Karur seek govt aid

KARUR. (Agency)

The Karur Textile Manufacturers and Exporters Association (KTMEA) has expressed concern over the severe crisis confronting the textile sector owing to a sharp rise in raw material prices and an acute labour shortage, attributing the situation to the ongoing West Asia war and geopolitical tensions. At a recent meeting of the association held in Karur, industry representatives discussed the mounting challenges faced by the textile sector. Addressing reporters after the meeting, KTMEA president P Gopalakrishnan said the prices of raw materials required for textile manufacturing had risen by 30% to 60% over the past few months.

He said the ongoing war and geopolitical tensions involving the US, Israel and Iran had led to a steep increase in the prices of



several essential materials used in textile manufacturing, including petroleum-based products such as polyester, chemicals used in dyeing units, polythene and packing materials. "Delays in international shipping and shortages in imported goods have also significantly increased the cost of dyeing, printing and other job-work processes," he said.

Industry leaders further stated that the 30% to 40% increase in cotton yarn prices in India had come as a major setback to the textile sector. Expressing discontent, Gopalakrishnan said the union government had failed to take adequate measures to regulate cotton yarn prices. Speaking about the labour shortage, KTMEA joint secretary A Sethupathi said the issue had emerged as one of the biggest challenges for the sector. He said many migrant workers had returned to their native places owing to elections and other reasons, while participation from local workers had also declined considerably. Stating that the textile industry in Karur serves as a livelihood source for thousands of workers, the association urged both the state and the centre.

Fossil-fuelled growth: India home to over 35% of world's 'dirtier & richer' cities

BENGALURU. (Agency)

India may have taken the term "filthy rich" literally. Indian cities' growth remains tied to polluting fossil-fuel use and consequent pollution while China and several other countries have pulled ahead on cleaner urbanisation, according to a study in Nature Cities in which researchers analysed 5,435 cities worldwide between 2019 and 2024 using satellite-based nitrogen dioxide data and GDP estimates.

Of the 390 cities globally classified as 'dirtier and richer', where economic growth coincided with rising pollution, 138, or nearly 35.4%, were in India. While metros such as Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata showed cleaner growth trends, the study says many Indian urban centres continue to depend heavily on fossil fuel-intensive transport,

industries and electricity generation.

As part of the study, the researchers used satellite observations of nitrogen dioxide (No2), a pollutant strongly associated



with fossil fuel combustion from transport, industries and thermal power generation, and paired the data with city-level GDP estimates to classify urban centres into four categories: 'cleaner and richer', 'dirtier and richer', 'cleaner and

poorer', and 'dirtier and poorer'. Globally, around 80% of cities with significant trends fell into the "cleaner and richer" category, where economies expanded while NO2 pollution declined. Major metropolitan regions across East Asia, Western Europe and North America showed varying degrees of success in decoupling economic growth from fossil fuel-linked pollution.

However, of the 902 Indian cities examined in the study, 15.3% showed a statistically significant increase in NO2 levels between 2019 and 2024.

India also dominated the study's "dirtier and richer" category, described by researchers as cities where GDP per capita rises alongside increasing pollution. Of the 390 cities worldwide in this category, 35.4% were in India, the highest share for any country.

NMC floats fresh cleaning tenders despite claim of water surplus

Nagpur. (Agency)

Even as the Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) continues to maintain that the city has adequate drinking water supply from the Pench and Kanhan rivers, the civic body has floated fresh tenders worth over Rs24 lakh for cleaning and repairing public wells in three zones — Satranjipura, Dhantoli, and Hudkeshwar-Narsala — triggering questions over the necessity of repeated expenditure on groundwater sources.

The tenders issued by NMC's Public Health Engineering Department include dewatering, desilting, cleaning, repair works, and installation of information boards at multiple public wells. The move comes despite the corporation repeatedly assuring citizens that Nagpur receives nearly 765 MLD water from surface sources and faces no major shortage of drinking water.

Critics and civic observers have termed the decision contradictory, questioning whether the wells are genuinely required for potable use or are merely turning into recurring maintenance liabilities funded by taxpayers.

Executive engineer Shrikant Waikar said NMC is set to clean 352 wells in the coming days, and the three tenders are part of the exercise. "It is an annual exercise carried out before the summer and monsoon seasons," he clarified.

The issue assumes significance because civic records from previous years already showed expenditure exceeding Rs1.24 crore on cleaning hundreds of public wells across the city. Despite repeated desilting drives, several wells allegedly remained neglected, while some appeared repeatedly in successive contracts.

Recently, the corporation also approved additional expenditure running into crores for cleaning hundreds more wells under groundwater management and summer preparedness measures. Officials justified the move by claiming that traditional water sources needed revival to support emergency water availability during extreme summer months.

However, an earlier study conducted by the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) flagged contamination concerns in many public wells.

I'm trapped, can't talk: Noida woman, found dead in Bhopal, sent this last text

Twisha Sharma's family has intensified its protest over her mysterious death in Bhopal, demanding a fresh AIIMS Delhi post-mortem and refusing last rites, while her final "I am trapped" message to a friend has added a new layer of intrigue to the case.

Bhopal. (Agency)

"I am trapped, bro. Baas tu mat phasna (Just, don't get trapped yourself). Can't talk much. I'll call when the time is right," Twisha wrote to Minakshi on Instagram.

Her friend Minakshi replied: "I am worried about you, Tuk tuk. I love you. I love you so much. I am with you." However, Twisha Sharma's call to her friend never came. The next day, the 31-year-old, who was two months pregnant, was found hanging at her home in Bhopal. That was the last message she sent her friend, urging her not to get married.

Twisha, who was from Noida and married into a Bhopal family of lawyers and a retired judge, was found dead under mysterious circumstances on May 12. On



Sunday, Twisha's family protested outside the residence of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, demanding a fresh post-mortem examination at AIIMS Delhi. They also refused to perform her last rites, saying they would do so only after learning the truth behind her death.

The family has accused Twisha's husband and in-laws of prolonged mental and

physical abuse, and alleged that they were trying to influence the investigation. It also demanded that Twisha's body be preserved properly for post-mortem purposes and said the ongoing probe had not inspired confidence.

Speaking to , Twisha's father, Navnidhi Sharma, said the family could not meet the chief minister as he was occupied with a visiting delegation, but they did speak to his OSD instead. He claimed the OSD acknowledged deficiencies in the police investigation.

Navnidhi Sharma also said the family had requested that Twisha's body be preserved at minus 4 degrees Celsius, arguing that storage at 4-5 degrees Celsius could lead to decomposition. He alleged that this was being done at the

behest of the accused and said the family would again approach the court seeking directions to lower the temperature.

On Sunday, the family remained outside the CM House for several hours, insisting on a direct meeting with the chief minister. Police personnel and senior officers tried to persuade them to hold talks with administrative officials, but the family refused to leave without an assurance from the chief minister. Navnidhi Sharma also threatened self-immolation if justice was not delivered.

Ever since the incident, the family alleged foul play in Twisha's death and questioned the credibility of the investigation. It demanded a second post-mortem examination and said the initial report from AIIMS Bhopal was unsatisfactory.

‘Ghadari Babian da Munshi’ Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, the custodian of memory

What he always called himself was perhaps the most accurate description of his life's work: “Ghadari Babian da Munshi” — the clerk of the old Ghadarites. There was humility in the phrase, but also an entire philosophy. He never claimed to be a historian in the institutional sense, nor a public intellectual seeking recognition. He saw himself simply as a custodian of memory, preserving papers, photographs, testimonies, proceedings, and scattered fragments of a revolutionary past often neglected in Independent India.

For more than three decades, I worked with him, learned from him, and slowly understood what a life of commitment without noise or self-advertisement truly meant. With his passing, I have lost not merely a friend, mentor, and guide, but a living archive of an entire tradition of revolutionary remembrance.

Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich belonged to that rare generation that still had direct access to the fading world of the Ghadarites and revolutionaries of the early 20th century. Beginning in the 1960s, while teaching at Guru Nanak Engineering College, Ludhiana, he travelled through villages on his bicycle, meeting old Ghadarites, recording memories, collecting photographs, preserving letters, and documenting whatever survived in trunks, cupboards, and fading family recollections. He possessed qualities indispensable for archival work but rarely celebrated publicly: patience, discipline, orderliness, and trustworthiness. He catalogued and indexed material with astonishing care. Yet what distinguished him equally was his generosity. He never treated documents as private possessions or instruments of prestige. Anyone who approached him sincerely for research found his doors open.

His association with the family of Bhagat Singh and with figures connected to the revolutionary movement deepened over time. Through the martyr's nephew Jagmohan Singh and others, he came into close contact with the surviving memory-world of the Lahore Conspiracy Case generation. He remained connected with revolutionaries and family members, including Shiv Verma and Kishori Lal.

My association with him began around 2002, when he, along with Prof Kuldeep Puri, came to my office carrying a manuscript based on papers collected by Giani Kesar Singh of Canada. He was uncertain whether the material could become a meaningful book. The manuscript eventually became a volume on the trial of Madan Lal Dhillon, published in 2003, but more importantly, it began a collaboration that profoundly shaped my own intellectual life. Before meeting him, my interest in revolutionary history was largely that of an enthusiastic reader and collector. With him, it became disciplined work, almost a mission. He possessed the material, the instinct for preservation, and the patience to pursue obscure leads for years. I perhaps brought editorial organisation, and a different kind of analytical restlessness. Some of our most significant work emerged from this collaboration: the publication of the Lahore Conspiracy Case Tribunal judgment; volumes on the Ghadar Movement, the Babbar Akalis, and the Komagata Maru episode; records of proscribed literature; memoirs and biographies of revolutionaries; and perhaps most remarkably, the recovery and publication of proceedings of the Bhagat Singh Tribunal carrying Sukhdev's handwritten remarks, foundations rather than mythology, reconstruction.

It is Time to Align the Mandate With the Leader

VD Satheesan, Ramesh Chennithala, and KC Venugopal have engaged in a permanent, circular struggle for the throne

Another set of elections and another theatre of absurdity is unfolding in different parts of our great democratic country. The performance in this farce is nothing short of spectacular. A total disregard for people's mandate, shameless clinging to power, trading that would shame horses, and totally amoral acts for power are what it has unveiled, but it hasn't got us to raise anything more than a yawn. It is business as usual in the circus of our politics. Across state capitals, the mandate of the voter is treated as a minor administrative detail to be bypassed, bartered, or explicitly violated.

Nowhere is this truer than in Kerala. The Congress-led United Democratic Front secured a thumping majority of 102 seats, riding an anti-incumbency wave. Throughout the campaign, VD Satheesan was projected as the leader of the charge. He had even declared that he would go into political exile if the UDF lost. It seems, despite the victory, political wilderness is his fate. The moment the victory was secured, the democratic process morphed into a classic backroom brawl. Satheesan, Ramesh Chennithala, and KC Venugopal have engaged in a permanent, circular struggle for the throne.

The speculation mills in Thiruvananthapuram and Delhi are working overtime, with leaked reports alternatively claiming that the newly elected MLAs favour Venugopal—who did not even contest the Assembly elections—or that the public sentiment is firmly behind Satheesan. Adding to this paralysis is the veteran Chennithala, the senior-most among all Congress leaders sans AK Antony. When Chennithala stepped aside from the post of Leader of the Opposition in 2021 to make way for Satheesan, it was widely understood within party corridors that he had been promised the Chief Ministerial candidacy for this very election. Now, with the prize in sight, those promises appear as fleeting as election manifestos. The entire state is held hostage, waiting for a sealed envelope to descend from the Congress high command in New Delhi. It is an extraordinary setup: the sovereign will of the people is reduced to an advisory note of a family, sitting in an air-conditioned room thousands of miles away. It is like a distant emperor of Delhi bestowing a regional governorship in the medieval era. The Congress has run this bait-and-switch routine with practised ease in Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh—using popular local faces to harvest votes, only to install high-command loyalists once the ballot boxes are sealed.

If Kerala represents the paralysis of victory, Tamil Nadu offers a masterclass in ideological bankruptcy. The charismatic actor Vijay, armed with massive box-office appeal but absolute zero administrative or political

experience, secured 108 seats with his newly minted party. Lacking the numbers to cross the majority mark, he needed allies.

What followed was a breathtaking display of political gymnastics. Parties like the Congress, the CPI(M), and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML)—who had spent the entire campaign operating inside the DMK-led alliance, warning voters about the grave dangers of Vijay's political inexperience—instantly suffered from collective amnesia. They abandoned their alliance, performed a flawless backflip, and marched into Vijay's tent. The hypocrisy is staggering. For these parties, secularism, ideology, and manifestos are merely decorative wrappers; the moment a Cabinet berth is

dissolution of the party's minority wing, replacing the inclusive prime ministerial slogan with a stark, transactional decree: “Jo hamare saath, hum unke saath” (Those who are with us, we are with them).

Though made prior to his elevation, these remarks sit in direct, jarring conflict with the solemn constitutional oath he took on May 9. Under the Third Schedule of the Constitution, a Chief Minister swears to “do right to all manner of people in accordance with the Constitution and the law, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.” How does a leader who has publicly championed governing only for those who align with him square that sectarian philosophy with an oath that demands absolute, impartial duty to every single citizen, regardless of how they

voted? This glaring contradiction highlights a systemic vacuum. If the system allows a leader to ascend to the highest executive office of a state with a documented public track record of rejecting universal governance, then the oath itself risks being reduced to empty theatre. There must be strict, enforceable measures to ensure that no elected leader can make a mockery of their constitutional pledge. The judiciary must hold the power to immediately monitor, censure, or even suspend any executive head who acts or governs in direct violation of their oath of impartial service. If a corporate executive can be ousted for violating their fiduciary duty to the stakeholders, a chief minister who compromises their constitutional duty to any section of the citizenry must face swift, systemic consequences. The systemic decay across these states makes a compelling case for moving away from the Westminster model and adopting a direct presidential or

gubernatorial election at the state level. Under a direct election model, the voter's choice is absolute and unalterable. There is no room for a high command to swap the candidate after the election. There is no opportunity for opportunistic entities to trade their alliance partners overnight for a piece of the ministerial pie. A directly elected leader would have a clear mandate, a fixed term, and the ability to appoint a Cabinet of actual administrative experts rather than incompetent MLAs who must be appeased to prevent a government collapse. The elected head of the government would have time to govern rather than herding a group of amoral elected representatives, keeping them together by offering whatever they can squeeze from the minority governments, who vanish to private resorts and topple governments at will and for a price.



dangled, the wrapper is discarded, proving that their only true guiding principle is the pursuit of power at any cost. Meanwhile, West Bengal pushed the boundaries of constitutional absurdity. Following a decisive election in which the Opposition secured a clear majority, the outgoing Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee, simply refused to accept the results. In an unprecedented standoff, she refused to submit her resignation, forcing Governor RN Ravi to step in and utilise his constitutional powers to dissolve the Assembly just as its term expired. But the ideological transition of Bengal's leadership carries its own heavy baggage. The newly installed Chief Minister, Suvenudh Adhikari, is the same leader who, in a highly publicised outburst, explicitly called for halting the national slogan “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas.” He went on record to demand the

Waterlogged woes: Neglect of drainage infra ruining Nuh farms

Ignoring waterlogging will endanger both livelihoods and food security

THE plight of farmers in Haryana's Nuh district, where over 5,000 acres of farmland have remained submerged for years, is not an isolated tragedy. It is part of a much larger ecological and governance crisis steadily spreading across the state. From Rohtak and Jhajjar to Hisar, Sirsa and Fatehabad, thousands of acres of agricultural land are battling chronic waterlogging and rising soil salinity, turning once-fertile fields into barren “sem” zones. The roots of the crisis lie in decades of flawed water management. Excessive dependence on water-intensive paddy cultivation, seepage from unlined canals, over-irrigation and poor drainage infrastructure have steadily raised groundwater levels across Haryana's flat plains. Monsoon rainfall merely exposes these underlying structural failures. Experts have repeatedly warned that without scientific drainage systems and groundwater regulation, large parts of the state risk long-term ecological degradation. For farmers, the



consequences are devastating. Fields remain uncultivable for successive seasons, crop losses pile up, debts rise and families dependent entirely on

agriculture are pushed towards desperation. Many cultivators are now forced to buy foodgrains despite owning land. Yet the official response remains painfully slow and fragmented. The contrast between urban and rural priorities is striking. Urban flooding in cities such as Gurugram quickly attracts emergency interventions and infrastructure spending, while submerged villages continue to wait for compensation and basic drainage solutions. Temporary measures like shallow tubewells may offer limited relief, but they cannot substitute for comprehensive planning.

Haryana urgently needs a long-term strategy involving canal lining, sub-surface drainage, crop diversification, groundwater monitoring and climate-resilient rural infrastructure. Waterlogging is a warning about the unsustainable model of development imposed on the state's ecology. Ignoring it further will endanger both livelihoods and food security.

Guy Gibson and the night of the ‘Dam Busters’

Born in Shimla and raised in Britain, the RAF officer led the daring attack on Nazi Germany

Exactly 83 years back, on the night of May 16-17, 1943, a legendary exploit of World War II (1939-1945) took place. This was the night of the ‘Dam Busters Raid’ when two critical dams of Germany, the Mohne and Eder, were bombed and breached. Nazi Germany's powerful military machine was fed by propaganda and racial arrogance — it epitomised what the historian and philosopher Hannah Arendt called “the banality of evil”. The Nazi political system was backed by a formidable industrial base. In turn, this industrial base relied substantially on the water, electric power and transportation provided by the hydro dams that fed Germany's industrial heartland in the Ruhr valley.

Codenamed ‘Upkeep’, in a technique similar to that of skimming a stone over water (something that most of us have tried as children), in 1942, a bomb had been developed that could skip over protective nets and once it hit the walls of a dam, it would sink and detonate like a depth charge, causing maximum damage. In early 1943, the 617 Squadron of Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) had been formed with the specific purpose of destroying these dams. The squadron was led by its Commanding Officer, Guy Gibson — who became something of a legend. By the age of 26, Gibson had completed 170 airborne operations. He was awarded Britain's highest military honour, the Victoria Cross, and in his time was one of the most highly decorated RAF officers. Gibson had joined the RAF in 1936, and by the age of 23, he held the rank of Wing Commander. That night, Gibson first did a dummy run over the Mohne Dam and stated that he ‘liked the look of it’. After a series of failed sorties, the dam was finally breached. Led by Gibson, the aircraft that still had their bombs flew towards the Edersee and just short of 2 am, the Eder Dam was also breached. Years back, a friend who retired as one of India's seniormost Army officers somewhat rhetorically



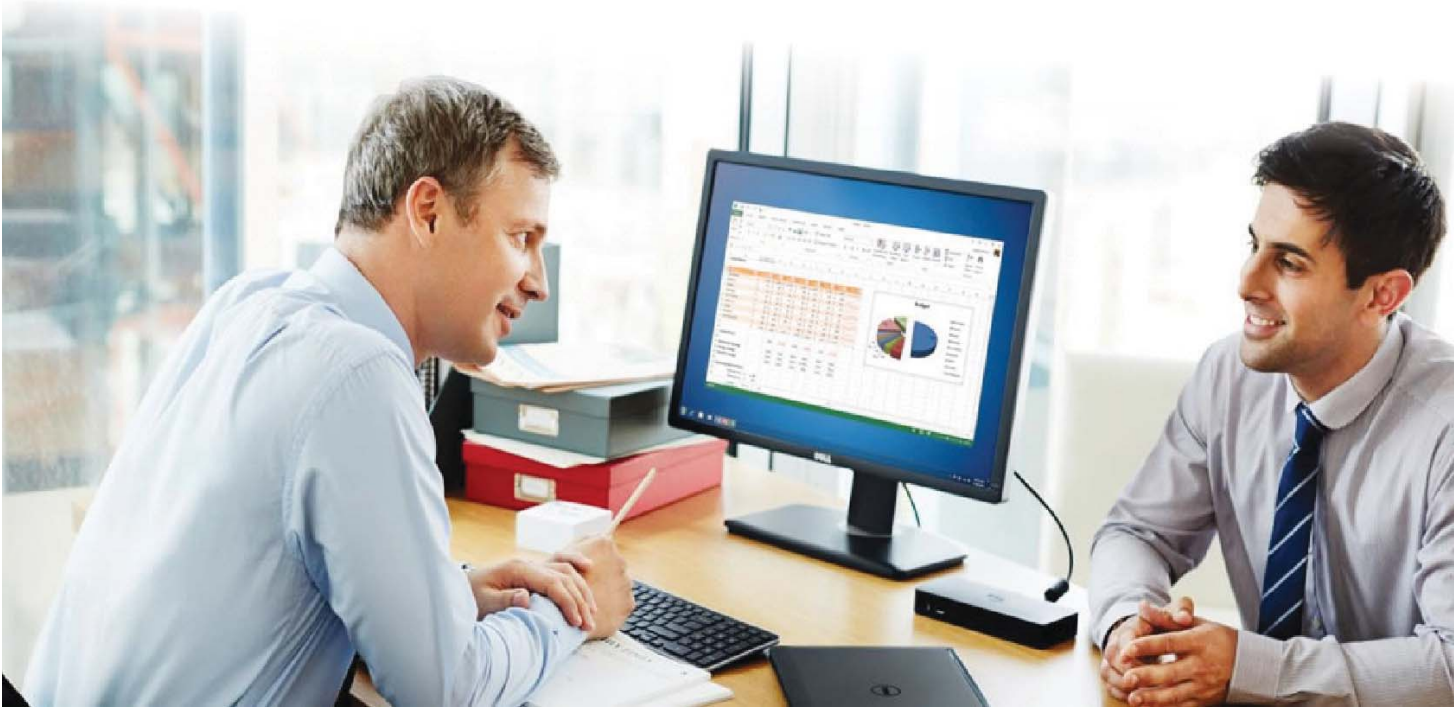
asked me: “Do you know what is the first thing taught to a soldier?” As a somewhat ignorant civilian, I bumbled a bit, till he broke in and answered his own question: “It is — identify the target and destroy it.” Published in 1951, Paul Brickhill's bestselling book, which went through several reprints, ‘The Dam Busters’, carried a Foreword by ‘Marshal of the RAF’ Lord Tedder. He wrote: “...scientist, commander and operator working together as a close-knit team... it shows efficiency interpreted in

the short term as ‘accuracy’, and in the long term as ‘maximum effect with minimum effort’.” The sources of this book may have been somewhat limited as at that time, many documents and details were not available or were still classified. While the impact these raids had on Germany's war machine was meagre, the psychological impact was enormous and was a major morale booster for the Allied Forces. So why this story? And why here? There is a small village in Cornwall named Talland.

Perhaps, derived from this hamlet, Talland is the headquarters of Himachal's Forest Department in Shimla — and this is where this extraordinary story began. Born at Talland, Shimla, on August 12, 1918, Guy Penrose Gibson was the son of Alexander James and Norah Gibson. His father was an officer of the Imperial Indian Forestry Service who was posted in Shimla and who, in 1922, became the Conservator of Forests for the Shimla Hill States. The parents separated when Guy was barely six and custody of Guy and his two siblings was given to his mother, who moved back to Britain. Unfortunately, on their return to Britain, Gibson's mother began drinking heavily and subsequently, became an alcoholic. Almost needless to add, the childhood of the young Guy and his elder brother, Alexander, and sister, Joan, was unstable. The mother's occasional violence towards the children also reared its soul-destroying head. Relatives pitched in with money and moral support, while their school also helped where it could. Almost nothing is known of the father after the separation. Guy Gibson was a mediocre student and from an early age, wanted to fly. After initially failing to join the short service commission on medical grounds — it is believed that the reason given was that his legs were too short — he was later accepted. Apart from the famous ‘Dam Busters Raid’, he also conducted daring single-handed attacks on the formidable German battleship, Tirpitz. Gibson was killed during a sortie in 1944. While it was disbanded periodically, the 617 Squadron is still part of the RAF. Its insignia in a roundel shows a dam being fractured by bolts of lightning and marks the moment when the dams were hit in 1943. The squadron's motto is in French: ‘Après moi, le deluge’, and translates as: ‘After me, the flood.’

5 most lucrative

Careers



Read on to find out...

Translators

With globalisation, the demand for translation and language-related services has witnessed a significant increase. Making a career in this field requires specialised training and a professional orientation. Today, translators are hired not only to promote literature and cross-cultural activities, but also to help companies keep pace with globalisation.

Professionals are in high demand in BPOs and localisation companies, embassies and multinational organisations. Graduates with a Bachelor's degree in a foreign or Indian language, with basic IT training, can earn anywhere between Rs 30,000 to 40,000 per month as freshers. The IT revolution and popular use of web 2.0 technologies worldwide have further increased the employment opportunities for translators. As more and more

multinational companies look to enter the Indian market, speakers of Hindi and other Indian languages are in high demand.

Advertising professionals

Though a traditional favourite, the advertising industry has evolved to encompass mobile and digital advertising along with media like TV and print.

A passion for the field, coupled with the willingness to adapt to a dynamic

environment and ability to perform under pressure are crucial. One must also be creative and have strong people skills.

One can enter any of the varied sub-fields of advertising, media planning and buying, production, digital marketing, events and activation, channel marketing, radio, PR, outdoor and ambient media marketing, etc. Freshers can expect anything between Rs 3,00,000 to 5,00,000 a year.



Actuaries

Actuaries are risk experts. They use their mathematical skills to help measure the probability and risk of future events, juggling complex data and making sense of it to inform business decisions. Useful to many industries where a single decision can have a major financial impact, this creates a great demand for actuaries' skills throughout the financial sector. While the traditional areas of life insurance and pensions are still at the heart of the actuarial profession, general insurance, investment and risk management are seeing very strong growth, indeed general insurance is now the second most popular area for the student base.

Apart from an understanding of how businesses operate, strong technical skills are crucial to succeed in this industry. Even more important is the ability to communicate the technicalities of topics of risk and insurance to non-specialists. Professionals can work in the insurance industry, actuarial consulting firms of multinational insurance companies in their outsourcing setups and risk management and information technology. In India, there is an increase in demand for skilled actuaries as multinationals grow and expand their businesses into the country.

IT programmers developers

Application programmers create and modify computer applications. They write codes to create software applications. Familiarity with programming languages and general software is madatory. Strong analytical and logical reasoning can be an added advantage. Freshers can earn upwards of Rs 4 lakh per annum.

Veterinarian

Veterinary medicine focuses on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases and illnesses among animals. Apart from curing, it also focuses on the well-being and welfare of animals, qualifying veterinarians to fulfill a variety of roles. Apart from being compassionate towards animals, those who wish to make a career in this field must have keen interest in medicine and science, with basic English speaking skills. Knowledge of an additional local language always comes handy. Those who wish to make a career in this field must also be patient, must have an eye for detail, good observation skills and the will to work at odd hours. A number of private as well as public firms are now taking up veterinary and animal husbandry as



an entrepreneurship venture, particularly in areas of modern farming, biotechnology, genetic engineering, nanotechnology, vaccines, diagnostics, feed and value added animal products thereby opening up new avenues for veterinary graduates. Veterinarians can work as livestock development officers, posted in interiors of the country to reach out and assist the rural population. Besides this, veterinarians also have the opportunity to be placed in the defense and paramilitary services.

Cover letter Essentials

Most hiring managers these days prefer that candidates send them a cover letter while applying for a position in their organisation. Here are a few things an ideal cover letter must include.

A cover letter is a two-minute elevator pitch for someone to get interested in the product i.e. the resume. Hence, it should be appropriately packaged and presented. If this pitch fails to impress, the chance of getting the opportunity is lost. In today's world, where there are other sources of references like LinkedIn, Twitter, web blogs and where resumes are mainly sent through emails, the cover letter assumes more importance and has to stand out from a vast pool of applications. Though one should not care too much about the "rules" and should try to be memorable and nail down their competencies well to stand out, there are certain points to consider while writing a cover letter.

- Customise your letter:

Cover letters need to be made specific to the job opportunity one is



applying for; it cannot be the same for all jobs. This is the first impression a candidate can create and it has to be specific as to why she is the best candidate for the job. In a few lines, the cover letter should contain a summary of one's experience and an optimism of why the candidate thinks this opportunity is best suited for them.

- Research:

A good amount of research has to be done about the organisation one is applying to. Research should be done about the company's vision, leadership team, company's success and challenges, products and the latest news on the organisation. This helps the candidate to refer to some of these aspects as part of the cover letter to create a connection. One needs to get a good sense of the company's tone, language and culture, which are crucial elements that one should mirror while writing.

- Focus:

One should focus on what needs to be highlighted. The cover letter need not be a reposition of resume or a summary of the resume. It should focus on the skills and capabilities which have been acquired through the previous employment experiences and how it connects to the present opportunity. Focus more on quality parameters than quantity. If one is applying for a job in tech, they might talk about how the company's technology is changing people's lives and how thrilling it is to be a part of this transformation. If one is applying for a job in fashion, they can talk about how fashion has changed since the 90s and the factors influencing today's fashion trends. Everything has a hidden history. Use it to show expertise and interest.

- Be realistic: Downplay the use of adverbs like "absolutely thrilled for the opportunity" or "very excitedly applying!" Just showcase your competency and why you make the ideal fit for the position. Cut the fluff. Avoid, at all costs, describing yourself as a "team player" or a "people person"; instead, show off your skills with descriptive statements like: "I'm an expert communicator with X numbers of years' experience and with the ability to bring together diverse departments to develop a cohesive programme." It is longer, but stronger.

- Testimonials:

Finally, while you are ending the cover letter, do provide a solid testimonial which may be from your professional social account as the final pitch of why this resume matters the most. This is the resume brand with customer testimonial; choose it properly as it should be the best one for this opportunity.

Establishing a start-up of any kind isn't easy and managing it is an altogether daunting task. Here are a few tips to lead a new venture competitively.

A vital quality for successful entrepreneurs, leadership skills are important while being at the helm of a start-up. It is niche since holding the reins of a new venture entails effectively managing employees who leave the allure of big organisations to work in a different environment and take up opportunities that wouldn't usually come their way.

Shubhra Bhardwaj, CEO, founder and director, Ferriswheel (an event management firm) says that styles of leadership change depending upon the size of the company and its employee base. Talking about the distinguishing features of a start-up, he says, "The driving force behind a successful start-up is thinking out-of-the-box. The environment in such a company is also homegrown and informal as opposed to a large company where employees are bound by well laid out codes of conduct."

According to Andrew Warren Smith, managing director, DDI India, the largest issue confronting start-ups is the risk of failure. "With a 90% failure rate amongst start-ups, leaders must be aware that the odds are stacked against them. Large corporates thrive by maintaining their status quo repeating successes of the past and leveraging scale to remain competitive. Hence, it is important for leaders to back their desire to succeed with innovations that can not only disrupt the status quo, but also carve a niche for the organisation."

He elaborates further saying that leadership in start-ups goes beyond merely possessing entrepreneurial and commercial skills and has to be coupled with a strong execution capability. "Entrepreneurs today must identify market opportunities and implement robust and sustainable plans that can quickly and efficiently capitalise on these factors."

BOOST EMPLOYEE MORALE

An essential quality of a good business leader is to instill a sense of confidence among his/her employees. This is especially important in start-ups where individuals are constantly trying to prove their mettle in newer ways. A little pat on their backs can surely help them go a long way.

Says Swapnil Kamat, founder, CEO and

How to run a successful Start-up



chief trainer at Work Better, an executive education and training firm, "Irrespective of the size of an organisation there are a few things that help improve employee morale. Acknowledging their contributions towards the growth of the company, appreciation of the efforts put in and updating them about the progress of the firm are some of the ways to keep them going."

"As a start-up leader, it's quite stimulating for me to be around my team whenever difficult situations arise. This brings a lot of positive energy and a sense of oneness to work. One thing that keeps me as well as my team motivated is ongoing communication - addressing work issues, discussing matters and giving honest feedback to each other," expresses Bhardwaj.

PEOPLE MANAGERS VS SUBJECT-MATTER EXPERTS

As a start-up leader, it is important to be observant of your people, understand their aspirations and give them timely feedback all year round in order to get the most out of them. It is also important to let your employees know that subject matter experts are as important and vital to an organisation as senior ranking managers, in charge of handling teams of employees.

Secondly, a start-up leader needs to play an active part in helping each team member understand their strengths, weaknesses and what the organisation expects from them.

TO SUCCESSFULLY LEAD A

START-UP:

Be resilient and always on the lookout. Leaders of start-ups need to be passionate and ambitious, display high-levels of energy and initiative. Typically dissatisfied with the status quo, they must be competitive and reluctant to take no for an answer. They must also be good at identifying opportunities for new products, services and markets. Be confident and engaging. Such leaders convey a simple, vivid picture of the organisation's vision and goal and generate energy and enthusiasm that can invoke passion among employees to work towards a common goal. Be ready to take risks. Leaders of start-ups need to recognise risks and pursue actions that have acceptable levels of risk.

They need to proactively build and align stakeholders, capabilities, and resources for getting things done quickly. They must also be flexible to adapt to change and mend the work environment accordingly. Be self-aware and receptive. Start-up leaders need to be aware of their impact on others, seek input, be receptive to feedback and take action to improve themselves based on such feedback. Have a solid vision. Your vision of the company is vital and must be backed with conviction. The ultimate test, however, is instilling it among employees and encouraging them to put in their best effort towards the company.



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

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

biases that expectedly result in smaller and less varied employee pools. The lesser the diversity (read the lesser the females), the more stereotypical it gets. This is the reason why women may find progressing and outpacing in these industries can be riddled with hurdles. It is not very hard to enter a male-dominated profession, but it's tougher to survive in there. Among other obstacles, many women struggle with pre-set notions that certain jobs demand skillsets that are linked to masculinity. To inject some positivity here, let's take a look at 5 ways that women can come into their own in any profession.

Self-analysis

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

Networking

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

5 ways to succeed in a male-dominated Workplace

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

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

Promote your own self

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

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

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

Beware of stereotypes

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

Find a mentor

Many women must have walked the same path as you and have figured out how to overcome the obstacles along the way. Instead of simply winging it and risking more mistakes, approach them for their guidance. Connect with one or two women you admire and seek their advice when needed. If you do not know of someone directly, use social websites to connect with people in similar fields. Just remember that there are many successful women out there and most of them are proof that being hardworking, resolute, smart and thick-skinned in the face of critical reviews at their work; have enabled them to rise to the top, with or without familial support. Go on girl! You can be a shero too!

Here's why prioritizing Work is important

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Make a work list:

Pen down every possible thing you can do in a day;

- Categorize urgent vs important:

See if you have any tasks that need immediate attention and if not completed soon, will have serious negative impact on business and people;

- Evaluate value importance:

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

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

- Cut the cord:

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

Mehul Shah, MD, Collabera, describes the Pareto principle in the context of prioritization of workload, "The Pareto principle states that of the things you do during your day, only 20 per cent produce 80 per cent of your results. It emphasizes on putting more energy in prioritizing your tasks in the first hour at work and focus on the 20 per cent that matters. When the fire drills of the day begin to sap your time and something in the schedule has to slip, make sure it's not part of that 20 per cent."

Prioritization also enables employees to maintain clarity on the ultimate goals of the organization. Sailesh Shetty, VP human resources & services, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, explains, "Organisations should make every employee understand the role he or she is playing in solving the issues important for the organisation. Employees should have clarity on what is expected from them; this enables them to prioritise better. When the employer engages employees every day in analysing and solving problems, they feel highly motivated."

Thus, prioritisation can make a lot of difference in employee efficiency and productivity.

Tips to crack your job Interview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

competencies.

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

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

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

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

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

- Speak about your career vision. When you know how the job fits in the grand picture of your career, the interviewer is most likely to choose you because it creates certainty. This is rare because many engineering graduates are disillusioned and openly talk about being explorers. Be clear where you wish to go. Employers would not like to waste time, money and effort on individuals who are continually exploring. If that is the case, go for career advice or seek other professional help before interviews.

In the case of engineers, interviewers' expectations are going to be specific. They look for thought leadership, precision in all you do, the ability to comprehend a problem

and create solutions, an innovative mindset and critical thinking. As an engineer, your ability to lead a team will carry tremendous weight. Above all, one must "look and feel" like an engineer and not a casual person from nowhere.

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



Pilot was clutching controls: Witness reveals morgue horror after Air India crash

Romin Vohra, who lost three family members in the Air India crash last June, told the Daily Mail that he witnessed scenes inside the hospital morgue that he "can never unsee".

New Delhi.(Agency)

A man who gained access to the morgue where victims of the fiery Air India AI-171 crash were kept has revealed he witnessed scenes he "can never unsee", including the body of the plane's captain still clutching the aircraft's steering column. The London-bound Air India flight, a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, crashed into the hostel building of BJ Medical College in Ahmedabad within seconds of takeoff. The disaster killed 260 people, including 241 passengers and crew on board and 19 people on the ground. Only one flier miraculously survived. Among those killed were Romin Vohra's aunt Yashmin, his brother Parvez, who worked for Amazon in London, and his three-year-old niece.

Speaking to the Daily Mail, Vohra said he managed to gain entry into the mortuary because he had worked as a pathology lab assistant at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital during the Covid-19 pandemic and still knew people there. He hoped to identify the remains of his relatives. Instead, he walked into a vision straight out of hell.

According to Vohra, many of the bodies had been laid side by side on the floor. He recalled seeing severed heads and limbs, a charred mother with her child still in her arms, and the skull of a little girl that he desperately tried to match with a photograph of his niece. But one image, he said, stood apart from the rest.

Vohra claimed he saw the body of Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, the pilot in command of



the ill-fated flight, placed separately in a corner of the mortuary. "He was still in a sitting position," Vohra told the Mail. "His back was burnt, but the front of his body was absolutely perfect."

He said the captain's white uniform shirt, complete with four gold stripes on the shoulders, dark tie and trousers, appeared

intact. Even his shoes were still on.

What shocked him most, however, was what Sabharwal was allegedly still holding. Vohra claimed the pilot remained clutching the aircraft's double-handled yoke -- the steering column used to control the plane -- which may have broken off during impact or while rescuers removed him from the cockpit.

The Mail reported that a doctor who was purportedly present in the mortuary also backed Vohra's account.

If accurate, aviation experts said the detail could support the argument that Captain Sabharwal was trying to save the aircraft until the final seconds. In its preliminary report released on July 12 last year, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau

said the fuel supply to both engines was cut off within one second of each other shortly after takeoff, leading to confusion inside the cockpit.

The report mentioned cockpit voice recordings in which one pilot asked, "Why did you cut off?" while the other replied, "I didn't." The exchange triggered speculation that pilot error may have contributed to the crash. Captain Sabharwal's family and pilot bodies, however, have strongly objected to the preliminary findings. His 88-year-old father, Pushkaraj Sabharwal, along with the Federation of Indian Pilots, approached the Supreme Court alleging the report was "profoundly flawed" and unfairly focused on pilots who were no longer alive to defend themselves.

UP woman dies saving 3 kids from fire; daughters moved by ladder, infant in sheet

New Delhi.(Agency)

A tragic incident has come to light from Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, where a woman lost her life in a fire incident, but not before she ensured the safety of her children. While the tragedy took place on May 12, a video showing the heartbreaking moments and the mother's selfless and heroic act surfaced on social media only as late as Saturday, May 16.

The clip shows the woman stranded on the terrace of a multi-storey residential building as smoke rises from



a fire, supposedly on a lower floor. She struggled amid the thick smoke for 30 minutes to help her three children get evacuated.

As the fire continued to spread, she wrapped her one-year-old baby in a bedsheet and managed to pass them over to her neighbours across the lane. After the infant was pulled to safety, the neighbours placed a ladder between the two buildings. As a result, the woman managed to send her two young daughters to safety as well. However, she herself died after being trapped in the smoke and fire. The incident took place during a major blaze at the house of a crockery trader.

DMRC to run 24 additional trips every Monday

New Delhi.(Agency)

The DMRC announced a series of measures aimed at encouraging more people to shift from private vehicles to public transport across Delhi-NCR. It said it will introduce 24 additional trips with the deployment of six extra trains every Monday from May 18, while similar arrangements may also be made on other days depending on passenger demand.

The move comes as part of efforts to strengthen mass



transit systems and improve urban mobility amid growing emphasis on energy security, environmental sustainability and reduced dependence on petroleum-based transport. According to the corporation, the additional services are aimed at handling a possible increase in passenger footfall and ensuring smooth and uninterrupted operations during peak travel periods.

It said passenger demand will be monitored closely, and further steps will be taken whenever required. It will also deploy additional security personnel, open extra ticket counters, activate spare door frame metal detectors and baggage scanners, and take steps to reduce waiting time at frisking points.

Highlighting the metro network's role in integrated transport connectivity, the corporation said several metro stations are linked with railway stations, interstate bus terminals, airport terminals, the Namo Bharat RRTS, Noida Metro and Rapid Metro Gurugram.

Delhi to be startup hub with Rs 10 cr push for women: CM

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi government will provide collateral-free loans of up to `10 crore to women-led startups and self-help groups in the capital, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Sunday. The government will also provide platforms in malls and large shopping complexes across the city to help indigenous products made by women self-help groups (SHGs) reach a wider market.

"We are working on a wider scale to make the women of the capital self-reliant, entrepreneurial, and economically empowered. Arrangements have been made for providing the collateral-free loans," she said. She added the government would act as guarantor for such loans extended to women's startups and SHGs while addressing the



inauguration of a two-day 'Mega Self Help Group (SHG) Mela-2026' organised in Rohini. Gupta said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently promoted the vision of 'Vocal for Local', 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', and 'One District, One Product'. The women of the country, while staying at home, are not only increasing their family income

through small-scale industries and handmade products but are also strengthening the country's economy, she said. "People often run after foreign brands, whereas handicrafts, khadi, household products and handmade items made in India are second to none in quality. The only requirement is better branding and marketing of these products," the chief minister said.

She said that today India is rapidly moving towards self-reliance in every sector, including defence, space, agriculture and manufacturing, and Indian products are being exported across the world. In such a situation, there is also a need to provide national and international recognition to household and handmade products.

District judge sent to judicial academy for arguing with Rohini court bar chief

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Sunday transferred Rohini Courts' district judge accused of misbehaving with a lawyer in the courtroom to the Delhi Judicial Academy in a "diverted capacity" with immediate effect.

A heated exchange between the lawyer and the judge was captured on a mobile phone, and the video of the incident had gone viral on social media. The altercation reportedly began after the judge denied the lawyer's request for a pass over. The lawyer was president of the Rohini Court Bar Association.

District Judge Rakesh Kumar was replaced by Delhi Judicial Academy Additional Director Dheeraj Mittal. A court source said

that an inquiry has also been ordered in the matter. The Coordination



Committee of All District Court Bar Associations, meanwhile, has

requested all members of the District Court Bar Associations of Delhi to abstain from judicial work on Monday across all district courts of Delhi "in protest and to uphold the dignity and independence of the legal fraternity".

Reacting to the transfer, committee coordinator advocate Tarun Rana termed the high court action as "swift" and said, "The judge's judicial work has been taken away. The action means the high court has, prima facie, found substance in the complaint against the conduct of the judicial officer. It is very rare to pass an order on a Sunday sending a judicial order in diverted capacity."

Culprit goes scot free, HC raps officials

Justice Chandrasekharan Sudha directed the chief secretary, to ensure that such a callous or laid-back attitude on the part of the investigating officials should not be repeated in the future.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi High Court has set aside a 10-year jail term awarded to a man, saying that despite the seizure of such a large quantity of heroin that can destroy entire generations, the culprit goes scot-free only because of the "anomalies" committed by the "extreme carelessness" of probe officials in the recovery and investigation of the case.

Justice Chandrasekharan Sudha directed the chief secretary, to ensure that such a callous or laid-back attitude on the part of the investigating officials should not be repeated in the future. The judge was hearing an appeal by the accused against his conviction and jail term awarded by the trial court for allegedly being found possessing 1kg heroin on May 18, 2012, by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials.

"Heroin is quite a dangerous drug, and such large quantities of it can destroy entire generations. However, it appears that the officials of the DRI have not assigned the importance that this case so greatly deserved. It also appears that it was only because of such a lackadaisical approach and extreme carelessness on the part of the officers concerned that the benefit has gone to the accused," the judge said.

The judge said there certainly was a strong and grave suspicion against the accused, "But suspicion, however strong, cannot take the place of proof." The judge added that strict compliance with the formalities was necessary because of the stringent punishment that was provided under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

"Whether the mistake was intentional or unintentional, the result is disastrous," the judge said, noting that the drug supposedly had a value of more than Rs 3 lakh in the year 2012, which was "certainly not a small amount".

The judge said there was no material on record to show in whose custody the samples drawn remained for three days till they were sent to the FSL. "The samples, the seal, the seizure memo, the facsimile seal, etc. were never deposited in the malkhana. The seal at all times continued to remain with the raiding team. These aspects are in gross violation of rules," the judge said.

Why 8 lakh pharmacies across India are calling for shutdown on May 20

New Delhi.(Agency)

Chemist associations across India have called for a nationwide shutdown on May 20 to protest against the growing business of online medicine platforms and e-pharmacies. The All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) has announced the bandh, while the Retail Distribution Chemist Alliance (RDCA) Delhi has also extended support to it. However, emergency medicine services will continue during the strike.

Around 12.5 lakh members of the All India Chemists Association are part of the organisation, and nearly 7-8 lakh pharmacies across the country are expected to remain shut during the strike.

The issue

According to the chemist bodies, temporary permission given to online

medicine sellers during the Covid-19 pandemic is continuing even after the pandemic ended. Sandeep Nangia, president of RDCA Delhi, said many online pharmacy platforms are operating without proper regulation, which is creating problems for traditional chemists.

"The retail pharma community is not seeking confrontation, but survival in an increasingly unequal business environment," Nangia said.

Chemist associations said online platforms are offering heavy discounts and fast home delivery, making it difficult for small medical stores to compete. They also claim medicines are being sold online without proper monitoring. "Medicine is not just another delivery item. It is a health responsibility," Nangia said. "Medicines should be dispensed only under proper legal systems, registered

pharmacist supervision, and valid prescriptions wherever required."

Small stores bear the brunt. Trade representatives also said costs for running small pharmacies have gone up



sharply in recent years. Rent, electricity bills, salaries, and compliance expenses have increased, while profit margins have remained low. Many small chemists, especially those in local markets and smaller towns, said they are

struggling to survive.

At the same time, chemist bodies argued that neighbourhood pharmacies continue to play an important role in healthcare access across the country. "Small chemists still serve every colony, every town, every emergency, and every patient," Nangia said. "Independent pharmacies are often the first point of healthcare access for millions of people."

The trade bodies are demanding stricter rules for online medicine sales, equal business conditions for offline chemists, and stronger policy support for small pharmacy owners. "The issue is not only about business; it is also about protecting healthcare access for the common public," Nangia said. "Saving retail pharmacy means saving India's healthcare accessibility."

Sensex recovers to end 77 points up, Nifty above 23,600; IT stocks rally

New Delhi.(Agency)
Benchmark stock market indices recovered to close in green, rebounding over 900 points from the day's low as Dalal Street saw buying after early selloff. IT stocks were major gainers. The S&P BSE Sensex added 77.05 points to end at 75,315.04, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 6.45 points to close at 23,649.95. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said that the prolonged stalemate between the US and Iran continues to cast a shadow over near-term sentiment, yet the equity market managed to recover intraday losses and closed on a flat note, supported by value buying in IT and banking stocks."The ongoing earnings season has provided a constructive narrative, though caution persists as higher bond yields, elevated crude oil prices, and a weakening rupee reinforce inflationary concerns. Investors appear to be adopting a staggered allocation strategy rather than waiting for complete clarity, particularly in export-oriented sectors," he added. After the closing bell, Tech Mahindra Ltd led the Sensex gainers, rising 4.97%. It was followed by Infosys Ltd, which gained 2.15%. Bharti Airtel Ltd moved up 1.74%, while Bajaj Finserv Ltd added 1.37%. HCL Technologies Ltd also ended higher, rising 1.24%.Tata Steel Ltd saw the sharpest fall, dropping 3.21%. Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd declined 2.89%, NTPC Ltd was down 2.46%, State Bank of India Ltd slipped 2.38%, and Maruti Suzuki India Ltd fell 1.64% at the close. "A meaningful breakthrough in diplomatic negotiations with Iran—especially regarding uranium stockpiles and sanctions—remains critical for reducing volatility and enabling a decisive upward move in the market," said Nair.

Gold is financial armour, public appeals alone won't help: Experts on PM Modi's austerity call

HYDERABAD.(Agency)
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent appeal asking Indians to avoid excessive gold purchases has reopened a long-running debate about the country's dependence on imported bullion. The country's gold imports have surged sharply in recent years, with official estimates placing imports at nearly \$72 billion in FY2025–26. While Modi's remarks were aimed at reducing pressure on the rupee, industry voices argue that India's relationship with gold runs far deeper than economics and cannot be changed through public appeals alone."Someone who has a marriage at home or wants to buy gold will buy it regardless," said a market expert, Rajesh Agarwal, familiar with the bullion trade. "If the PM says don't buy gold, people are not suddenly going to stop buying it. That's not realistic in India."Industry observers say the precious metal is not treated as a luxury purchase but as a form of financial security that can be relied upon during emergencies. "People see gold as financial armour," the expert remarked.Drop in jewellery sales even before PM's appealThe bullion market, meanwhile, was already facing weakness before the PM's comments. Traders say soaring prices, volatility and cautious consumer spending had already slowed jewellery demand this quarter. "Demand was already weak this quarter. However, the PM's remarks did not create a huge impact," the expert noted.

SpaceX IPO date and valuation: All you need to know about Elon Musk's blockbuster market debut

NEW DELHI.(Agency)
Elon Musk's SpaceX is aiming to list its shares on the Nasdaq as early as June 12, Reuters reported, in what could be the biggest stock market flotation of all time. The company is targeting a raise of about \$75 billion at a valuation of roughly \$1.75 trillion, a massive step up from the \$1.25 trillion combined valuation set when SpaceX merged with Musk's artificial intelligence startup xAI in February. The listing is one of the most anticipated IPOs in years and is expected to headline a crowded IPO calendar that could also include AI heavyweights Anthropic and OpenAI, both of which are expected to tap public markets this year. **SpaceX IPO timeline and ticker** SpaceX has accelerated its IPO timeline, with the company now aiming to make its prospectus public within days, a roadshow launch targeted for June 4 and the share sale as early as June 11, Reuters reported. The company will trade under the ticker SPCX on the Nasdaq. The new timeline represents a faster-than-expected schedule, moving forward from an initial target of late June. A swift review of SpaceX's IPO paperwork by the US Securities and Exchange Commission was partially responsible for the accelerated timeline, sources told Reuters. **Why Nasdaq over NYSE** The listing marks a major victory for Nasdaq over its rival the New York Stock Exchange. It comes on the heels of Nasdaq's newly launched "fast entry" rules to speed up the inclusion of newly listed large-cap companies into its benchmark Nasdaq-100 index, a move designed to attract high-profile listings like SpaceX. **Banks backing the SpaceX IPO** Morgan Stanley, Bank of America, Citigroup, JPMorgan and Goldman Sachs are the lead bookrunners for the offering.

Sensex opens over 800 points lower, Nifty below 23,400; Tata Steel down 4%

New Delhi.(Agency)
Benchmark indices opened sharply lower on Monday morning, tracking weak global cues and broad-based selling across sectors, with financials, IT and metal stocks dragging the market lower in early trade. The 30-share Sensex fell 807.71 points, or 1.07%, to 74,430.28, while the Nifty 50 slipped 249.75 points, or 1.06%, to 23,393.75 as of 9:18 am. The sharp decline came amid mounting concerns over surging crude oil prices after Brent crude climbed to \$111 per barrel, intensifying fears of imported inflation for India, which relies heavily on crude imports. Higher oil prices are expected to increase pressure on the country's trade deficit, weaken the rupee further and raise concerns over fuel price hikes in the domestic market. The Indian rupee also weakened sharply, slipping below the 96

mark against the US dollar, adding to worries over imported inflation and sustained foreign fund outflows. Market participants also remained cautious as rising US Treasury yields continued to weigh on emerging markets. The US 10-year bond yield climbed to 4.62%, reducing the appeal of riskier assets and prompting continued foreign portfolio investor outflows from Indian equities. Selling pressure was visible across nearly all major sectors in early trade. Banking, IT, auto and metal stocks were among the worst hit, while broader market sentiment also remained weak with midcap and smallcap indices trading lower alongside the benchmarks. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Limited, said global cues are likely to keep

domestic markets under pressure in the near term."Brent crude has spiked to \$111 on absence of initiatives to open the Strait of Hormuz. Elevated crude may force further depreciation in the rupee could aggravate the cycle of currency weakness and FPI selling, although policy measures to stabilise the rupee may be announced soon. According to Vijayakumar, export-oriented sectors such as pharmaceuticals could continue to outperform amid the volatility due to their defensive nature and dollar revenue exposure. He also noted that leading private sector banks remain fundamentally strong despite near-term pressure from foreign investor selling, making them attractive for long-term accumulation during market corrections. Analysts said investors will continue to closely monitor developments in global crude markets, movement in bond yields and currency trends, as elevated energy prices could complicate the inflation outlook and reduce the possibility of aggressive monetary easing going forward.



Liberty Mutual increases stake in Liberty General Insurance to 74%

New Delhi.(Agency)
US-based Liberty Mutual Insurance on Monday said that it has increased its shareholding in Liberty General Insurance Limited (LGI) to 74 per cent. This development follows its earlier stake increase in Liberty Mutual's stake from 49 per cent to 55.40 per cent in September 2025. Liberty General Insurance is a joint venture between Summit Asia Investments Holdings Pte. Ltd., a group company of Liberty Mutual Insurance Group and Enam Securities. As of December 2025, Liberty Mutual Insurance had nearly 55.4 per cent stake, Enam Securities had 26 per cent and DP Jindal owned Diamond Dealtrade had 18.6 per cent stake. Commenting on this development, Matthew Jackson, President, Liberty International Insurance APAC, said: "India remains an important market for Liberty Mutual as we build our

business across Asia Pacific, supported by strong fundamentals and significant opportunity for growth. Increasing our shareholding in Liberty General Insurance allows us to further develop the business and bring our



global capabilities more directly to the market." Post the government announcement of 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) along with better investment norms and higher management control for foreign players is fuelling interest in the Indian

insurance sector, with more focus on non-life insurance. The general insurer commenced operations in 2013 as a joint venture between Liberty Mutual Insurance and the Videocon Group - Liberty Videocon General Insurance. However, in March 2018, owing to financial difficulties, Videocon exited the venture by selling its entire stake to the DP Jindal Group and Enam Securities. It was set up with the aim of providing comprehensive retail, commercial and industrial insurance solutions. The company has an employee strength of over 1,300 and a presence across 95+ locations in 28 states and Union Territories. Its partner network includes over 6,500 hospitals and more than 6,100 auto service centres.

How India's richest are investing differently, and what you can learn from it

New Delhi.(Agency)
If you track where serious money is moving in India, you will notice something quietly happening over the last two years. Families managing serious wealth — we are talking Rs 10 crore and above — are no longer as excited about mutual funds as they once were. They are not rushing into real estate either. Instead, they are moving into AIFs. And not just any AIFs — specifically, SME-focused ones. The question worth asking is: why? THE MUTUAL FUND CEILING IS REAL Mutual funds have done a lot of good for Indian investors. They brought discipline, SIPs, and diversification to millions of people who had no other structured entry into equities. But they come with a ceiling built right into their design. Sebi's

diversification rules mean a mutual fund manager cannot put 20% of the corpus into one high-conviction bet. They cannot go deep into a micro-cap company with a Rs 200 crore market cap, even if the business is exceptional. The mandate forces breadth, and breadth often comes at the cost of depth. This is fine for most investors. But for someone who genuinely understands markets and wants to capture the full growth potential of India's next decade, mutual funds can start to feel like a speed limiter. WHERE DO AIFs COME IN? Alternative Investment Funds are structured differently. Category I and Category III AIFs, in particular, allow fund managers to run concentrated portfolios with fewer stocks, higher conviction, and deeper research. They

are not open to everyone. The minimum ticket size is Rs 1 crore, which naturally limits the investor base to those who can take on a longer horizon and higher risk. But that exclusivity is partly the point. When a fund is not chasing millions of retail investors, the manager can often think with a longer-term, sharper focus. THE SME OPPORTUNITY MOST INVESTORS ARE STILL SLEEPING ON Here is where it gets interesting. India has over 5,000 companies listed on the BSE SME and NSE Emerge platforms. Most of them receive little to no analyst coverage. Large institutional funds often cannot buy them because the market capitalisation is too small or liquidity too thin. Retail investors, meanwhile, often do not even know they exist..



potential military options against Iran during upcoming discussions. Rupee's record slide has intensified worries over India's macroeconomic outlook, particularly as a larger-than-expected trade deficit and muted capital inflows leave the economy more exposed to external shocks. "The ongoing geopolitical uncertainty and energy-driven macro pressures continued to fuel strong dollar demand globally, pushing the rupee beyond the Rs 96 mark," said Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money. He added that the currency weakness has raised investor anxiety over "India's rising import bill, worsening inflation trajectory, and potential slowdown in economic growth at a time when the macroeconomic environment is already under severe strain."

Will petrol and diesel prices rise again after Russian oil waiver ends?

India may face fresh pressure on petrol and diesel prices after the US let a waiver on Russian oil purchases expire. With crude above USD 100 and West Asia tensions high, refiners and consumers could come under added strain.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Petrol and diesel prices in India were increased for the first time in nearly four years on May 15. Now, concerns are growing that fuel prices may come under even more pressure after the US allowed a key sanctions waiver on Russian oil purchases to expire. The development comes at a time when global crude oil prices are already rising sharply because of the ongoing West

Asia conflict and fears of supply disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important oil shipping routes. RUSSIA OIL WAIVER ENDS AT A CRUCIAL TIME On Saturday, the Trump administration allowed a sanctions waiver on Russian seaborne oil to lapse after a month-long extension. The waiver had earlier allowed countries including India to continue buying Russian crude cargoes without facing immediate sanctions-related risks. The timing is critical for India because the country has increasingly relied on discounted Russian crude over the past two years to protect itself from rising global oil prices. According to reports, India's imports of Russian crude had climbed sharply in recent months. One report estimated imports at nearly 2.3 million barrels per

day in May, while another placed imports at around 1.88 million barrels per day as of May 14. WHY INDIA IS WORRIED ABOUT CRUDE OIL PRICES AGAIN That discounted Russian oil had acted as



an important cushion for India at a time when global energy markets remained volatile. But with the waiver ending, Indian refiners may now face stricter compliance checks, sanctions risks and

financial hurdles while buying Russian crude. At the same time, crude oil prices are again moving higher. Oil prices extended gains on Monday after efforts to end the US-Israeli war on Iran appeared to stall. Concerns increased after a nuclear power plant in the UAE reportedly came under attack, while reports suggested US President Donald Trump was expected to discuss military options on Iran. Brent crude rose 1.81% to USD 111.24 per barrel, while WTI crude climbed 2.15% to USD 107.69 per barrel. The surge in oil prices is important for India because the country imports nearly 85% of its crude oil requirements. This makes domestic fuel prices highly sensitive to global crude oil movements and geopolitical disruptions.

Short news

Six-pointed star: A forgotten board, a living memory

Chennai.(Agency)

On a visit to Odisha last year, I was fascinated to hear from a local about a game played on a six-pointed star. The six-pointed star has long been a well-known design element in numerous places across India. From the traditional kolams of South India to geometric designs in architecture and textiles, there have been many aesthetic references to the six-pointed star.

However, when looked at from a traditional game perspective, the more popular grid is the five-pointed star. Played in numerous places from Tamil Nadu in the south to Rajasthan in the north, this single player game called Panch Kone or Nakshatra Vilayattu, has fascinated people for generations. The board can be found etched on the floor of temples and monuments.

Although etchings of the six-pointed star are seen, they are usually dismissed as designs and not given serious consideration as games. So, when I heard about a game on this board, I was intrigued. The game, according to the local, was played by two players, each with five game pieces. The pieces were placed on the board, and each player tried to destroy the other player by jumping over and killing the opponent's game piece. This was a quick and simple game — easy to understand, quick to learn, and fun to play. But the local could not remember a name for the game which was not altogether surprising as the creativity related to games in India was usually limited to the game itself and rarely extended to the naming of the games. At first glance, these grids, like many others, appear as designs — grids, lines, and patterns that we recognise as decorative or ornamental.

Builders sell mortgaged flats, shops without financier's consent

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

A financing firm has accused two partners of a real estate firm of selling mortgaged flats and shops worth over Rs 2.5 crore without its consent. Navrangpura police on Saturday filed a case of cheating and breach of trust in the matter. The complaint was filed by the territory business manager of the home finance firm, who alleged that the accused had mortgaged several units in their project at Shilaj-Ambli in Nov 2023 and secured loans worth Rs 3 crore.

Police said the mortgaged properties included two ground-floor shops and several flats. The loan amount was disbursed into the builder firm's bank account after mortgage documents and agreements were executed.

Investigators said the borrowers regularly paid instalments till Jan 2025, while one loan linked to one flat was fully repaid and closed. However, after defaults began in Feb 2025, the finance company initiated a legal review of the mortgaged properties.

A search report submitted by an advocate allegedly revealed that several mortgaged units had already been sold to third parties without obtaining the mandatory no-objection certificate (NOC) from the finance company.

Police said the properties were allegedly sold through registered sale deeds between July 2024 and June 2025 without informing the lender. The complainant alleged that the accused caused wrongful losses of Rs 2.54 crore, including pending dues, interest and related charges.

Police turn heat on Union minister Bandi Sanjay's son, add 'repeated rape' charge

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

Cyberabad Police, as part of the investigation into the Pocco case involving Union minister Bandi Sanjay's son, Bandi Sai Bageerath, have altered the charges by adding Section 64(2)(m) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which pertains to repeatedly raping the same woman.

The offence carries a minimum punishment of 10 years' jail, which may extend to life imprisonment.

The other charges under Sections 74 and 75 of the BNS — relating to assault or use of criminal force against a woman with intent to outrage her modesty, and sexual harassment — along with Section 5 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (Pocso) Act, have been retained.

After taking Bageerath into custody on Saturday night, police formally declared his arrest and later produced him before the court. The magistrate remanded him in judicial custody till May 29. He was subsequently shifted to Cherlapally Central Prison amid tight security.

Lawyers accompanying Bageerath at the time of his arrest said they were in the process of filing a bail petition. The case was originally registered on May 8 by Pet Basheerabad Police based on a complaint lodged by the survivor's mother. Following the registration of the case, the accused allegedly went missing, and police said efforts to trace him proved unsuccessful. On Saturday night, he reportedly surrendered before the police at Manchirevula in Narsingi.

Facing the heat of a water cut: A 10-day water jolt amid hot summer in Ahmedabad

Mumbai.(Agency)

For Ahmedabad residents, water supply has always been a luxury since the 1990s. For over 25 years, the city has enjoyed largely uninterrupted water supply, mainly from the Narmada and Mahi rivers, thus ensuring a regulated level of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) than the city's ground water.

On May 7, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) announced a 10-day cut in water supply on account of pre-monsoon repair work of the Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) lining of the Narmada Canal to be carried out by the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd.

By that time, a yellow alert had been declared in Gujarat's biggest city as temperatures hovered around 40-43 degrees Celsius.

Kotarpur Water Works, which treats and provides nearly 70 per cent of the city's total water supply of 1,100 million litres per day, saw a shortfall of nearly 60 MLD. A 10 to 15 per cent cut in the daily supply of water hit a population of nearly 50 lakh across the city's

five zones — North, West, East, Central and South.

Officials say that shortage in supply was adjusted with borewell water, however, most of the residents The Indian Express spoke with complained of deterioration in the



quality of water, pressure issues and shorter supply duration.

Janak Mistry, a shop-owner and resident of Kalupur in the walled city, said: "The water supply in the morning is only running for one-and-a-half hours now. We don't even get water two hours. The pressure has also

greatly reduced." His wife Kalpana said she now finds it difficult to run the household. "We've reduced water usage quite a bit; our courtyard has been unwashed for the past three days. We generally fill buckets of water in the morning and splash it across the courtyard in the afternoon to help cool down the house. But we've been unable to do that because we don't have any water left after completing our daily chores," she said.

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For some residents, the water cut is just an amplification of an existing struggle. Bhalabhai Thakor, a resident of Shahpur, says water pressure has always been a problem in his neighbourhood. "We have installed a motor. Without it, the water flow is very weak and we struggle to fill our tank." He also complained that there had been no official communication or prior notice from the AMC before the water cut. His family only found out when they experienced the disruption themselves.

Built to raze? Greater Chennai Corporation's pricey 3D bus shelters fail practicality test

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Banking on its aesthetic appeal and novelty over practicality, the Greater Chennai Corporation's decision to replace the existing bus shelters with the more expensive 3D-printed ones across the city is proving to be a costly mistake.

For a city like Chennai, where roads are dug up frequently, constructing permanent concrete bus shelters has resulted in a recurring expenditure for the civic body. Unlike stainless steel bus shelters that can be dismantled and relocated during civic works, the 3D-printed concrete structures are permanent installations that cannot be shifted, only demolished and built again.

TNIE has learnt the first 3D-printed bus shelter in the state at the Marina is now likely to be demolished, less than two years

after its installation, due to the construction of new concrete bus shelters along the stretch by the Chennai Metropolitan



Development Authority as part of the Marina Heritage Corridor Project.

Corporation sources told at least 10 other bus shelters along the stretch are likely to be

removed.

Even under these circumstances, the civic body is set to go ahead and construct an additional 80 such 3D shelters, to add to the 70 shelters that already exist. Officials said while stainless steel shelters can be dismantled and reassembled at other locations, only requiring a new foundation, 3D-printed shelters have to be completely demolished. The corporation spends more on 3D-printed shelters compared to conventional stainless steel shelters. While around Rs 13.9 lakh is being spent on each 3D-printed shelter measuring 6x2.5 metres, a review of previous tenders by TNIE shows stainless steel shelters of the same size were constructed for around Rs 11 lakh - Rs 12 lakh. Larger stainless steel shelters measuring 9x3 metres cost around Rs 14.5 lakh.

Kolkata sees spurt in EV sales: Beltala PVD leads race with green vehicles outpacing diesel units

Kolkata.(Agency)

Electric vehicles (EVs) have outpaced traditional diesel-powered vehicles in Kolkata. Nowhere is this green dominance more definitive than at Public Vehicles Department (PVD) in Beltala, Kolkata's largest vehicle registration hub, which has witnessed a steady decline in the enrolment of diesel vehicles.

The trend coincides with the central govt's clean energy push. The issue acquired more urgency in the wake of the West Asia conflict, which triggered a call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a drastic reduction in petrol and diesel consumption.

In 2022, the Beltala office had registered 2,854 diesel units. In 2025, that figure contracted sharply to 2,075 units. This year, till April 30, 875 diesel-powered vehicles were registered.

In contrast, PVD has seen a spurt in the registration of vehicles run on green

energy. In 2022, 824 BOVs (battery-operated vehicles) were registered in Beltala (there was no application for Pure EVs that year).



Last year, Beltala registered a whopping 3,724 EVs — 532 BOVs and 3,192 Pure EVs — far more than the diesel units recorded (2,075).

The momentum seems to have stayed intact, with Pure EVs racking up 1,729 registrations in the first four months of 2026. As for BOVs, 28 units were registered during the period.

Despite the surge in EV count, petrol-powered vehicles remain the market leader. PVD logged a massive 19,651 petrol units in 2025 and 3,260 units till April 30 this year. Experts said Kolkata could have seen the rollout of more EVs had there been enough fastcharging infrastructure spread across the city.

The green revolution in car registration is not confined to the city's core zone. Two other regional transport offices in Kolkata — Behala and Salt Lake — have seen a similar trend. In 2025, Behala logged just 457 diesel vehicles against

a combined EV surge of 942 units (195 BOVs and 747 Pure EVs). This year, till April 30, 676 EV units were registered, compared with 191 diesel vehicles. No EV was registered in that RTO in 2022. From 2022 to last year, Behala has seen a drop in the registration of diesel vehicles from 472 to 457.

Nearly 6 in 10 cancer patients in T are women, shows first Cancer Atlas

Hyderabad.(Agency)

Women accounted for nearly six out of every 10 cancer patients treated in Telangana over the last five years, according to the state's first-ever Cancer Atlas prepared using data from the Rajiv Aarogyasri Health Care Trust. The report — titled Cancer Incidence and Prevalence Mapping Across Telangana — analysed cancer cases recorded between April 2020 and Sept 2025 and identified nearly one lakh cancer patients across the state. Of these, 59,994 — close to 60% — were women, while 40,300 were men, indicating a significantly higher cancer burden among female patients.

Prepared by oncologist and cancer advisor to the Telangana govt, Dr Nori Dattatreyaudu, the report was recently submitted to chief minister Revanth Reddy. According to the findings, the annual cancer incidence among women was estimated at around 62 cases per one lakh female population, compared to 42 cases per lakh among men. The highest burden was observed among women aged between 39 and 48 years, followed by those above 62 years and women in the 49-55 age group.

The Atlas further revealed that women outnumbered men across almost all adult age categories, with the widest gender gap recorded among those aged 39 to 48 years. In this group alone, 15,198 women underwent cancer treatment compared to 8,318 men.

‘Language doesn’t matter.. Passengers only convey location & negotiate fares’: How Mumbai views Marathi mandate

Mumbai.(Agency)

Outside Thane railway station, most passengers walk up to a shared auto and ask if the driver will take them to a particular location. The driver calls out a locality name. Passengers climb in. The ride proceeds with barely a word exchanged. This is how Mumbai's auto and taxi ecosystem works. It runs on functional shorthand, not language.

Yet it is precisely this ecosystem that the Maharashtra government has decided to examine. Since May 1, a state-wide verification drive is underway across all 59 RTOs, assessing whether auto and taxi drivers possess "working knowledge" of Marathi, as required under Rule 24 of the Maharashtra Motor Vehicles Rules, amended in 2019. Mumbai and its suburbs

have around 2.8 lakh auto-rickshaw permit holders and 20,000 taxi permit holders. Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik has warned that drivers unable to demonstrate proficiency by August 15 could risk losing their permits.

To understand what commuters actually think, The Indian Express spoke to nearly 400 people across Mumbai Central, South Mumbai, Andheri, Borivali, Virar, Panvel, Wadala, Thane and Kalyan over the last ten days. What emerged was not a city clamouring for Marathi-speaking drivers. Nearly 60 per cent opposed making Marathi compulsory, 25 per cent supported it, and 15 per cent took a middle position. But behind those numbers lies a more layered conversation about language, livelihood and what it means to belong to a



city.

For most commuters, the opposition isn't about Marathi. It's about proportion. "A driver's behaviour and honesty matter more than language," said Ramesh Yadav, 34, a delivery supervisor from Uttar Pradesh living in Virar for 12 years. "Most commuters just want a safe ride and someone who doesn't refuse short

distances. Language is honestly secondary." Near Mumbai Central, Yusuf Contractor, 52, a businessman born and raised in Mumbai, made the same point. "People care more about whether the driver is decent and knows the roads. There's hardly any conversation during most rides anyway," he said.

At Bandra, Rashi Sheikh, 38, a garment shop worker originally from Maharashtra, framed it as a question of livelihoods. "Mumbai has always survived because people from everywhere come here to work. Forcing one language creates unnecessary fear among migrant workers," she said. This sentiment was consistent across areas from Malad to Lower Parel, cutting across age groups and communities.

NEWS BOX

Kotla feels like an away ground: Hemang Badani's brutal verdict on Delhi Capitals' home woes

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Delhi Capitals finally snapped their miserable run at home with a crucial five-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals in their final league match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, keeping their IPL 2026 playoff hopes alive.

Yet, even victory could not hide the frustration simmering within the camp over what head coach Hemang Badani believes has become a deeply unsettling disconnect between the team and its own home conditions. As has often been the case this season, Badani did not shy away from addressing Delhi's troubled relationship with the Kotla surface. DC managed only two wins in seven matches at home this season, losing five consecutive games in between despite building a squad that was expected to thrive in familiar conditions. "We've stopped discussing the surface. We play this as an away venue," Badani said after the win.

That one line perhaps best captured Delhi Capitals' bizarre home campaign in IPL 2026. For the second time this season, and far



more directly this time, Badani suggested that DC had effectively been stripped of any meaningful home advantage. The numbers only reinforce his argument. Delhi's home season began and ended with victories, but the five defeats sandwiched in between gave them a staggering 71.4 percent loss record at home, the worst among all 10 IPL teams this season. "If you break the season into two halves, what's happened at home and what's happened away, we've had four wins in six games away and we have primarily struggled at home," Badani said. The trend extends beyond this season. Since the start of IPL 2025, Delhi Capitals have won only three of their 12 matches in Delhi. "That pretty much tells you how this surface has been for us," Badani said. "It hasn't been conducive to our style of play. We've, at many times, not been able to figure out what the surface is like."

Jose Mourinho breaks silence on Real Madrid rumours



NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho has broken his silence on rumours linking him with a sensational return to Real Madrid, admitting that there is contact between him and the club. However, in a classic Mourinho fashion, he has insisted that no formal offer has been made to him so far.

Speaking on Sunday, May 17, Mourinho confirmed that discussions around his future are expected to intensify this week as uncertainty continues to surround Madrid manager Alvaro Arbeloa.

"My future should be decided this week," Mourinho told reporters.

"I have a proposal from Benfica. I don't have a proposal from Real Madrid. At the same time, I was saying that to hide that there is nothing, we cannot do that, there is something, but not with me directly.

"I need time, I need space, I need time to make my decision and this week I think is going to be very important."

Mourinho, 63, has emerged as one of the leading candidates to take over at Real Madrid after guiding Benfica through an unbeaten Primeira Liga season. The veteran coach is currently contracted with Benfica until June 2027, although the Portuguese club are reportedly pushing to extend his deal further.

WHY REAL MADRID NEED A NEW MANAGER?

The links to Madrid have gained momentum amid growing turmoil at the Spanish giants this season. Real Madrid are currently battling an internal crisis after a disappointing campaign that has seen them fall behind in the La Liga title race and struggle in Europe.

Reports in Spain have also suggested that tensions inside the dressing room have escalated in recent months, with multiple confrontations allegedly taking place between senior players. Questions have also been raised about the tactical direction of the team under Arbeloa, who took charge ahead of the current season.

IPL Play of the Day: Mitchell Starc comes clutch to rip the life out of Rajasthan

IPL 2026, DC vs RR: Mitchell Starc

rattled Rajasthan Royals with a

sensational over in which he picked up

three wickets, laying the foundation

for Delhi Capitals' five-wicket win on

Sunday at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in

New Delhi.

New Delhi. (Agency)

They say T20 matches can turn in the space of a few overs, but on Sunday, Mitchell Starc produced one over that completely changed the game on its head. Delhi Capitals beat Rajasthan Royals by five wickets, but the victory may not have been possible had Starc not stepped up at the crucial moment. Without Starc, the Capitals could already have been knocked out of the competition, left to play only for pride for the remainder of

the tournament.

With the Royals blazing along at 160 for two in 14 overs, they looked well on course to reach a total in the region of 240. Instead, they failed to even cross the 200-run mark, eventually managing only 193 for eight. The man responsible for that dramatic turnaround was Starc, who broke the Royals' back by taking three wickets in the 15th over. That spell completely derailed Rajasthan's innings, leaving them with little chance of recovering.

Starc finished with superb figures of 4-0-40-4 and was deservedly named Player of the Match. Having played enough cricket at the highest level, stepping up in moments of crisis has almost become second nature to him. He has done it time and again for Australia, played a massive role in helping Kolkata Knight Riders win the IPL title in 2024, and is now once again showcasing his class for the Capitals.

HOW MITCHELL STARC ROCKED THE ROYALS

When Riyan Parag took Mukesh Kumar for 23 runs in the 12th over, scoring runs looked far



too easy for the Royals. However, Starc pulled things back brilliantly for the Capitals, with Rajasthan managing only 33 runs in the last six overs while losing six wickets in the

process.

The 15th over began with Dhruv Jurel collecting a single to deep midwicket, but what followed was pure destruction. On the

very next delivery, Starc removed the dangerous Parag, who had smashed 51 off just 26 balls. Starc cleverly rolled his fingers over an off-speed delivery, forcing Parag into a mistimed slog that was brilliantly caught by Axar Patel running in from long-on.

The carnage continued immediately as Donovan Ferreira walked in and departed for a golden duck. Starc banded in a short-of-length delivery outside off, Ferreira attempted an ambitious heave first ball, but once again Axar Patel completed the catch in the deep.

Although Ravi Singh denied Starc a hat-trick with a boundary through midwicket, the Australian had the final word. Slipping in another slower delivery, Starc trapped Ravi Singh plumb lbw as HawkEye confirmed three reds.

CSK vs SRH Preview: MS Dhoni's potential farewell masks playoff qualification drama in Chennai

New Delhi. (Agency)

Chennai Super Kings are set to play their final home game of the Indian Premier League 2026 season. It is arguably their most important game of the campaign, against SunRisers Hyderabad, as a loss would almost certainly knock them out of the playoff race. Having said that, the result itself might not be the biggest story heading into the game.

With CSK playing their final home fixture of the season, almost all the focus is on Mahendra Singh Dhoni and whether he will feature against SunRisers Hyderabad. The speculation comes from the promise Dhoni has repeatedly made over the last few years: that he would play his final T20 game in Chennai, in front of the passionate fans at the MA Chidambaram Stadium.

That possibility has completely changed the mood around the fixture.

In a season filled with injuries and strains, Dhoni has played hide-and-seek with the

fans. After injuring his calf at the start of IPL 2026, he largely stayed away from the limelight. On multiple occasions this season, reports emerged from the CSK camp suggesting that the legendary captain was perfectly fine physically but was



choosing to stay away in order to provide opportunities to younger players who could become the core of the franchise in the coming years. And truthfully, that transition has already started to show signs of rebuilding.

This season has seen players like Kartik Sharma, Urvil Patel and Ramakrishna Ghosh step up for the side. Alongside the likes of Ayush Mhatre, Dewald Brevis and Noor Ahmad, CSK appear to be building a young core that could keep the franchise competitive in the near future.

But the final home game of the season changes all of that. The fans want Dhoni. The fans need Dhoni.

More than anything else, they want clarity. Has Dhoni already played his final IPL game? Will he return next season? Or will one of the most iconic careers in Indian cricket quietly come to an end without a farewell on the field?

With Suresh Raina arriving in Chennai ahead of the fixture, the rumours around Dhoni's final appearance have only grown stronger over the last 48 hours.

And yet, beneath all the emotion, there remains a serious cricketing question for CSK to answer. This is still a must-win game.

IPL chairman Arun Dhumal interview: Leagues over bilaterals, real life over reels

Dharamsala. (Agency)

The mountains do not care about the IPL. They sit behind the HPCA Stadium in Dharamsala the way they always have, enormous, indifferent, white-tipped, while below them ten franchises and their billions of dollars and their social media controversies play out across two months of Indian summer. It is a good place, then, to find some perspective.

Arun Singh Dhumal is in his office at the stadium, and he is in no hurry. He leans back, he smiles often, he pauses before answering in the way that people do when they have actually thought about something rather than just rehearsed a line. He is the chairman of the Indian Premier League, the second most valuable sports league in the world, a tournament whose two franchise sales in a single March week, Royal Challengers Bengaluru at \$1.78

billion and Rajasthan Royals at \$1.63 billion, made front pages well beyond the sports desk. He is also the younger brother of Anurag Thakur, the former BCCI president and Union Cabinet minister, and



the son of Prem Kumar Dhumal, twice Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. Cricket and politics and administration are, for him, not separate worlds. They are simply the air he has breathed since boyhood.

He grew up in Jalandhar, at a school that produced half the Punjab Ranji Trophy team. His cousins played Duleep Trophy and Ranji Trophy cricket. His brother Anurag played India Under-15 and Under-19. Arun captained the cricket team at his engineering college and played for his university. The love for the game was never in doubt. The path into administration came later, circuitously, as these things often do, through eligibility rules and Supreme Court orders and the particular accidents of timing that shape careers.

He became HPCA president, then resigned within 10 days to contest the BCCI treasurer's election in 2019, which he won. He grew the BCCI treasury by Rs 6,000 crore between 2019 and 2022. When the IPL chairmanship came up, it was first offered to Sourav Ganguly, who declined. Dhumal stepped in. He has not looked back.

Virat Kohli turns livewire in Dharamsala, fans believe he is India's greatest athlete

Livewire at 37, Virat Kohli left fans in awe during RCB's win over PBKS in

Dharamsala. A viral clip of his

electric fielding sparked massive

social media reactions, with fans

hailing the icon as the greatest

athlete India has ever produced.

Dharamsala. (Agency)

Virat Kohli turned into an absolute livewire on the field during the Royal Challengers Bengaluru's fixture against the Punjab Kings in Dharamsala on Sunday, May 17. The 37-year-old showed no signs of slowing down, which left many fans in awe of his efforts.

A video went viral on social media capturing snippets of Kohli's relentless on-field hustle,

and fans were completely amazed that he was able to do what he did at this stage of his career. The overwhelming fan consensus online suggested that Kohli might just be the greatest athlete India has ever produced.

'His Energy at This Age is Wild'

The internet exploded with awe as netizens contrasted Kohli's age with his teenage-like work ethic. On X (formerly Twitter), one viral post showcasing his electric fielding quickly went viral, pointing out how a 37-year-old, was still covering half the ground like a man possessed.

Another user rapidly echoed the sentiment in the replies. One user commented that his energy at this age is completely wild, while another went as far as to say that Kohli could still comfortably outrun and out-field most 20-year-olds in the game today. For many across social media, the display was the ultimate testament to his commitment, proving that he still carries the most passion in the country. Leading the Charge into the

Playoffs

Kohli's electric energy in the outfield was the perfect sequel to his batting masterclass earlier in the evening. Laying a solid



foundation for RCB on a batting-friendly surface, he smashed an authoritative 58 off 37 balls, anchoring a crucial 76-run partnership with Devdutt Padikkal (45). In doing so, Kohli crossed the 500-run milestone for the season—marking a historic, record-extending 9th time he has

scored 500+ runs in a single IPL edition.

Clinical RCB Become First to Qualify Driven by Kohli's intensity and a spectacular 40-ball 73 not out from Venkatesh Iyer, RCB posted a daunting 222 for four.

In reply, Punjab Kings were kept under a tight leash by RCB's disciplined pace attack. Veteran seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar struck early, removing Priyansh Arya in the opening over to throw PBKS off balance. While Shashank Singh kept up a valiant fight with a bold 56 off 27 balls, it wasn't enough against RCB's sharp fielding units.

Fittingly, Kohli himself cut down Punjab's rising momentum by pocketing a neat, flat catch at long-off to dismiss the dangerous Suryansh Shedge (35). RCB successfully restricted PBKS to 199 for eight, securing a 23-run victory to become the first team to officially lock in an IPL 2026 playoff berth, all while their talisman proved he remains the gold standard of world-class fitness.



Tara Sutaria

Says Yash Is 'Incredible As A Human And Co-Star', Calls Working On Toxic 'Satisfactory'

Tara Sutaria is currently at the Cannes Film Festival, where the actress has opened up about the experience of working on Yash's upcoming action thriller Toxic: A Fairy Tale For Grown-Ups. The actress revealed that working on the film was very "satisfactory and pleasing" to her. At the ongoing Cannes Film Festival, Tara Sutaria opened up about her experience during a conversation with The Hollywood Reporter India, calling the film one of the most creatively fulfilling experiences of her career so far. "Doing Toxic to me is so satisfactory, it's so pleasing," she said, before adding, "I also just want to be on sets that make me feel good, that are led well with integrity and with purpose and intention, and we have all of these things with Geetu Mohandas and with Yash."

The actor went on to speak emotionally about collaborating with Geetu Mohandas, describing the filmmaker's leadership and creative environment as something truly special. "It has been like the joy of my life," Tara shared. "To work with Geetu and to be led by a woman, it's a world of difference on set." When asked about her character, Rebecca, Tara remained careful not to reveal too much and added, "She's fascinating," before immediately saying, "All of the women in this film are fascinating."

"It has also been really interesting to see so many women come together alongside Yash. He has been incredible both as a human being and as a co-star," she shared. Reflecting on the collaborative energy on set, she continued, "To see all of us women come together at different ages and stages of our lives, careers, all of it, and really celebrate each scene... when we are together, I just sit and observe because it is so rare to do that and to experience another. It's been really the joy of my life."

More about Yash's Toxic

With Toxic, the collaboration between Yash and Geetu Mohandas signals a shift in how action cinema can be imagined, blending scale with sensitivity, and grit with a distinctly fresh perspective. What further elevates the film is its powerful lineup of female characters, with actors like Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Huma Qureshi, Rukmini Vasanth, and Tara Sutaria playing pivotal roles, making it even more intriguing to see how these narratives unfold within a genre traditionally dominated by male perspectives.



Mouni Roy Follows Suraj Nambiar On IG After Divorce Announcement; What About Disha Patani?



Actress Mouni Roy and businessman Suraj Nambiar's social media activity has caught everyone's attention amid their divorce announcement. While Mouni Roy still follows Suraj on Instagram, the businessman does not follow his estranged wife on the social media site. Previously, eagle-eyed fans had noticed that Mouni Roy and Suraj Nambiar had unfollowed each other on Instagram. They even noticed that Disha Patani had unfollowed Suraj before he had allegedly deactivated his account. Suraj's account was visible again when he and Mouni jointly announced their divorce.

Now, it has been verified that Mouni Roy still follows Suraj while he does not follow her back. As for Disha Patani and Suraj Nambiar, they continue to unfollow one another. Meanwhile, Mouni Roy has also not deleted her wedding photos with Suraj, contrary to reports.

While Mouni only features once on Suraj's profile, and that too, without her face, the businessman can be seen on the actor's profile once scrolled down. Mouni Roy's wedding post and the pictures of the happy and cosy moments that she once shared with Suraj have gone viral again amid the divorce. Fans have taken to Mouni's comments section to send their love.

However, in a shocking turn of events, they have also taken to Disha Patani's comments section to troll the actor. The trolling began after social media users claimed that Disha Patani had unfollowed Suraj Nambiar on Instagram around the same time divorce rumours about Mouni and Suraj started gaining traction online.

This sparked a wave of speculation across gossip pages and Reddit threads, with some users attempting to connect Disha to the couple's personal issues without any evidence. Disha and Mouni have long been known to share a close friendship. Because of their visibly affectionate friendship and close public bond, sections of social media began circulating jokes, memes, and baseless theories involving Disha.

Ayushmann Khurrana Recalls Breaking Up With Tahira After Roadies Win: 'She Laughed At Me'



Ayushmann Khurrana recently called himself a "green flag husband," but the actor admitted that he was not always that way. During a candid conversation while promoting Pati Patni Aur Woh Do, Ayushmann revealed that after winning MTV Roadies at the age of 20, he broke up with his then-girlfriend, Tahira Kashyap, who is now his wife. Ayushmann appeared on Raunaq Rajani's YouTube channel with his co-stars Wamiqa Gabbi, Rakul Preet Singh and Sara Ali Khan. During the chat, the actor opened up about relationships, early fame and how he went from being what he called a "deep red flag" to a "green flag husband."

Ayushmann On Breaking Up With Tahira

While discussing people who end relationships after achieving success, Ayushmann recalled going through something similar in his own life. He said, "I have gone through a similar situation. I was 20 at that time. I said the same things to my girlfriend, who is now my wife. She started laughing and asked me, 'What has happened to you?' I had just won Roadies, but in my head, I was the most popular guy in Chandigarh."

The actor added, "I broke up with her for a while to focus on myself. I was like, 'I don't have time for relationships. I have to invest time in myself.'" Ayushmann then joked about how men often evolve with age. He said, "Men have this deep tendency of starting off as a huge red flag and then suddenly becoming a green flag by the time they are in their mid-30s. I think it's a journey we all take. I think I am a green flag now." However, the breakup did not last very long. Around six months later, Ayushmann realised his mistake and reconciled with Tahira. The couple eventually got married when he was 24.

By the time Ayushmann made his Bollywood debut as a lead actor with Vicky Donor, he had already become a father of two children.

Ayushmann Says He Donated Sperm During Roadies

Talking about Vicky Donor, which revolved around sperm donation, Ayushmann joked, "Even before starting Vicky Donor, I was already a father. I took method acting a bit too seriously." The actor then revealed that he had actually donated sperm in real life before doing the film. He shared that it happened during a task on Roadies.

Alia Bhatt

To Star In Tumbbad 3 As Female Lead, Set To Make Extended Cameo In Tumbbad 2: Report

Alia Bhatt is one of the most talented and loved actresses in Indian cinema, and the actress, who is currently at the Cannes Film Festival, is said to be a part of the popular Tumbbad franchise. Reports suggest that the actress will shoot a 15-day-long extended cameo in Sohum Shah-led Tumbbad 2, while she will also play the lead in the third part of the franchise. As per a source close to the development, who shared details with Bollywood Hungama, "Alia is doing a 15-day extended cameo in Tumbbad 2, and it's a character that is integral to the overall narrative of the film. That's not all, her character will carry forward in the third part, which is the finale of the Tumbbad trilogy. Tumbbad 2 will introduce Alia Bhatt as the central character of Tumbbad 3, alongside Sohum Shah."



The report further claims that Alia will finish the cameo shoot by the end of May, and then she will move to the last leg of Love

& War. "Love & War restarts from June and will be wrapped up by August 2026. The Sanjay Leela Bhansali directorial hits the big screen on Republic Day 2027," the source added.

Director Adesh Prasad's sequel is set to delve deeper into the dark, cursed mythology surrounding the deity Hastar, expanding on the eerie lore established in the first film. It will explore the dangerous consequences of awakening forces that were never meant to be worshipped, promising a more intense and unsettling narrative that builds on the original's haunting premise.

Recently, Sohum Shah and Nawazuddin Siddiqui shared the poster and announced the release date. "A sinful past, an ominous future. The hunger rises, the legacy of greed continues..." Mark your calendars #Tumbbad2 arrives on 3.12.2027 #PralayAayega," read the caption.



NEWS BOX

Faced with war, crackdown against Baha'is rising in Iran

ROME. (Agency)

The Baha'i community in India has been deeply distressed by the war in Iran, which has seen an uptick in persecution of Iranian Baha'is. Many Indian Baha'is are originally from Iran and continue to have relatives in that country. With the Islamic Republic regime tightening its grip and brutally crushing any internal opposition during the conflict, the crackdown has been harsh on Iranian Baha'is, the country's largest non-Muslim minority community. "There's a history of persecution of Iranian Baha'is that became a systematic state policy after the 1979 Islamic Revolution," says Nilakshi Rajkhowa, representative of the Baha'i office of public affairs. "Whenever there is a crisis in Iran, Baha'is are made scapegoats. The Islamic Republic constitution doesn't even recognise the Baha'i faith, and there was even a 1991 memorandum that called for blocking the development of Baha'is from all sides."

The Islamic Republic has long denied Baha'is basic rights such as access to education, govt employment, and even cemeteries to bury their dead. During the latest conflict, dozens of Baha'is have been detained, charged or prosecuted without due process. They include cousins Peyvand and Borna Naeimi.

According to Iran Human Rights, 30-year-old Peyvand was arrested on Jan 8 in Kerman. He was accused of encouraging other Iranian youth to protest, wasn't given a lawyer, and was reportedly subjected to torture in detention, including mock executions.

Borna was arrested on March 1 and similarly subjected to torture. The authorities extracted forced confessions out of the cousins under extreme duress for the killing of three security personnel, according to the Baha'i International Community and Amnesty International. The most common allegation levelled against Baha'is in Iran is espionage at the behest of Israel. "This is complete nonsense. The founder of the Baha'i faith, Baha'u'llah, was exiled in the 19th century, and his final resting place is near Haifa in modern-day Israel. The Islamic Republic regime keeps linking Baha'is to Israel because of this. But modern Israel didn't even exist back then, it was part of the old Ottoman Empire," says Farah Motallebi, who was born and raised in Tehran.

"Last July, my mother-in-law passed away in Shahrood in eastern Iran, where she was denied burial. They had to carry her body 300 km to another city for burial. This is the consistent persecution we have faced for 40 years."

Donald Trump-Xi Jinping summit: Taiwan absent from White House China visit summary amid Iran, trade focus

world.(Agency)

White House on Sunday released a fact sheet on US President Donald Trump's visit to China, outlining agreements on trade, investment and the Iran crisis but making no mention of Taiwan despite the issue dominating discussions during Trump's meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

According to the fact sheet, the two countries agreed to establish new "US-China Board of Trade" and "US-China Board of Investment" mechanisms to manage bilateral economic and investment issues.

The document stated that Trump and Xi agreed that Iran "cannot have a nuclear weapon", called for reopening the Strait of Hormuz and agreed that "no country or organisation can be allowed to charge tolls". The White House also said Trump would host Xi in Washington later this year and that both countries would support each other as hosts of the G20 and APEC summits.

Trade, rare earths and Boeing deals highlighted The fact sheet said China would address US concerns over shortages of rare earth minerals and critical materials, including yttrium, scandium, neodymium and indium. It also announced that China had approved an initial purchase of 200 Boeing aircraft for Chinese airlines, describing it as the first major commitment for American-made Boeing planes since 2017. Additionally, China committed to buying at least \$17 billion worth of US agricultural products annually in 2026, 2027 and 2028, besides earlier soybean commitments made in 2025.

6 Of A Family Among 10 Shot Dead In Mexico, Domestic Dispute Suspected

World.(Agency)

Ten people were shot dead in central Mexico in what appeared to be a domestic dispute, local officials said Sunday, the latest spasm of violence in a country that is preparing to co-host the World Cup beginning next month. Six men, three women and a minor died in a shooting inside a home in the municipality of Tehuiztingo, located approximately 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of Mexico City, the government of



the state of Puebla said in a statement. Nine people died at the scene from gunshot wounds and one woman died while being

transported to the hospital, prosecutors said. "Our working theory in the investigation is that this was a family-related matter," said Puebla state prosecutor Idamis Pastor.

Of the 10 victims, six were members of a single family, and the other four were "workers," Pastor added.

2 US fighter jets collide, explode during Idaho air show, crew eject safely

Videos shared online showed the two aircraft colliding in the air before breaking apart. Moments later, four parachutes could be seen descending toward the ground.

World.(Agency)

Two US fighter jets collided mid-air during an air show at Mountain Home Air Force Base on Sunday, forcing the air base into lockdown. The crash happened during the Gunfighter Skies Air Show in Idaho, United States. According to local media, an aircraft incident occurred shortly after 12:30 pm (local time). Emergency crews rushed to the scene as thick black smoke rose near the crash site.

The aircraft involved in the accident were two EA-18G Growler fighter jets. The jets crashed around two miles outside the base.

ALL FOUR CREW MEMBERS EJECT SAFELY

Videos shared online showed the two aircraft colliding in the air before breaking apart. Moments later, four parachutes could be seen descending toward the ground.

According to the Idaho Statesman, an announcer at the show told the crowd that

all four crew members safely ejected from the aircraft.

Four crew members safely ejected after two military jets collided mid-air during an air show near Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho on Sunday, the US Navy later said.

Mountain Home Air Force Base says emergency responders remain at the scene while investigators examine the crash.

"Emergency responders are on the scene and investigation is underway and more details will be released as they become available," a spokesperson told Reuters.

Authorities canceled all remaining events scheduled for Sunday after the crash.

Mountain Home Police also confirmed the base had been placed under lockdown

Thousands attended the event to watch military aircraft displays and aerial demonstrations. Air show organisers had spent nearly two years preparing for the event.

Safety teams and maintenance crews were stationed across the base throughout the weekend.

The crash has revived concerns over past incidents at Mountain Home air shows. In 2018, a hang glider pilot died after crashing onto the runway during an event at the base.

A Thunderbirds jet also crashed during a 2003 air show at Mountain Home. The pilot survived after ejecting seconds before impact.



following the incident.

The Gunfighter Skies Air Show returned this weekend for the first time in eight years.

Gaza strikes kill eight as Israel-Hamas ceasefire efforts falter

world.(Agency)

Israeli strikes killed at least eight Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, health officials said, as ceasefire efforts meant to end fighting between Israel and the Hamas militant group falter. In the weeks since halting its joint bombing with the U.S. in Iran, Israel has stepped up its attacks in Gaza, where Hamas has been tightening its grip, even as Israeli troops remain in control of more than half the territory. Medics said an Israeli strike killed one Palestinian near a police post and another at a tent encampment in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. The Israeli military said it killed a militant who posed an immediate threat to it. Separately, Gaza medics said another Israeli airstrike killed at least three people at a community kitchen near Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza area. The Israeli military said the strike targeted a Hamas commander developing anti-tank missiles. Gaza medical officials said three more Palestinians were killed, one in a shooting incident in Khan

Younis in the southern Gaza Strip and two others in an Israeli airstrike near a bakery in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. On Saturday, the Israeli military said Izz al-Din al-Haddad, the head of Hamas' armed wing in Gaza, was



killed in what it described as a precise strike on Gaza City on Friday. Forces in the area Hamas confirmed Haddad's death but stopped short of threatening revenge.

HAMAS COMMANDER KILLED IN CAR

The Israeli military said it had also killed

Bahaa Baroud, a Hamas Operations Headquarters commander, in an airstrike on Saturday, accusing him of planning multiple imminent attacks against troops and Israeli civilians in recent weeks. The military said Baroud

posed an immediate threat and was targeted in a precise strike, adding measures were taken beforehand to reduce civilian harm, including the use of precision munitions and aerial surveillance. Gaza health officials said Baroud, along with another person, was killed in the airstrike, which targeted their car in Gaza City. Israel and Hamas remain deadlocked in indirect talks to advance U.S. President Donald Trump's post-war plan for Gaza that is meant to end more than two years of fighting with Hamas disarming as Israeli troops withdraw from Gaza. Some 870 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes since the October ceasefire, according to figures that do not distinguish between combatants and civilians. Four Israeli soldiers were killed by militants during the same period.

Drone strikes UAE nuclear plant as US and Iran signal they are prepared to resume war

DUBAI.(Agency)

A drone strike sparked a fire on the edge of the United Arab Emirates' sole nuclear power plant on Sunday in what authorities said was an "unprovoked terrorist attack." No one was blamed, but it highlighted the risk of renewed war as the United States and Iran signaled they were ready to fight again.

There were no reported injuries or radiological release. The UAE, which has hosted air defenses and personnel from Israel, recently accused Iran of launching drone and missile attacks. Tensions have risen over the Strait of Hormuz, a vital energy waterway gripped by Iran, which is under a U.S. naval blockade. "For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left

of them," U.S. President Donald Trump posted on social media shortly after a call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, which sparked the war by attacking Iran with the U.S. on Feb. 28. Trump has repeatedly set deadlines for Tehran and then backed off before they expire. Iranian forces are "fully prepared to confront any new potential attack," Brig. Gen. Reza Talei-Nik, an Iranian Defense Ministry spokesperson, told state media. State television has shown news anchors holding rifles. The Iran ceasefire remains tenuous, with diplomatic efforts for a more durable peace having faltered. And fighting has heated up between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon despite a nBarakah plant can provide a

quarter of the UAE's energy. The UAE Defense Ministry said three drones came over its western border with Saudi Arabia, with the other two intercepted. It was investigating who launched them. Iran and allied Shiite militias in Iraq have launched drone attacks targeting Gulf Arab states in the war. The attack, "whether carried out by the principal actor or through one of its proxies, represents a dangerous escalation," Anwar Gargash, a diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, said on social media. A nominal ceasefire there. The \$20 billion Barakah nuclear power plant was built by the UAE with the help of South Korea and went online in 2020. It is the only nuclear power plant in the Arab world and can provide a quarter of the energy.

Hantavirus-hit MV Hondius set to dock in Rotterdam for disinfection

JERUSALEM.(Agency)

The hantavirus-hit cruise ship MV Hondius was due to dock in Rotterdam on Monday morning for disinfection, with Dutch authorities preparing quarantine arrangements for the 25 crew members and two medical staff remaining on board. Local authorities said quarantine facilities had been set up for some of the non-Dutch crew, though it was not clear yet if they would stay there for the full recommended 42-day quarantine period. The Dutch-flagged luxury cruise ship had been carrying around 150 passengers and crew from 23 countries when a cluster of severe respiratory illnesses among passengers was first reported to the WHO. Three people - a Dutch couple and a German national - have died since the start of the outbreak.

NOTHING LIKE COVID, SAYS WHO

The vessel, operated by Oceanwide Expeditions, had been stranded off Cape Verde, its intended final destination, earlier this month after authorities barred passengers from going ashore due to the outbreak. The WHO and the EU asked Spain to manage the evacuation at the Canary Islands, after which the ship departed for Rotterdam with a skeleton crew and two additional medical staff.

Hantavirus is primarily spread by rodents but can be transmitted between people in rare cases and after prolonged, close contact. Incubation can last about six weeks. World Health Organization on May 2. Crew, passengers who already left the ship and people in contact with them have been quarantined in several countries around the world.

The current outbreak involves the so-called Andes virus, which has circulated in Argentina and Chile for decades. Ship samples show no meaningful variation in the virus, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has said.

On Friday, the WHO revised its case count to 10 from 11 after an inconclusive U.S. case tested negative. As of May 15, there were 10 WHO reported cases - eight confirmed and two probable - including the three deaths. British Columbia's government said on Saturday one Canadian, who had been a passenger on the Hondius, had also tested positive for hantavirus. The WHO said on Sunday it was waiting for official updates but that this would make it 11 cases. It said earlier this month more cases were expected to emerge from the outbreak but stressed that the situation was nothing like COVID and did not constitute a pandemic. Due to the long incubation period, the search for new cases could continue for months, testing authorities' post-COVID communications playbook. The WHO recommends monitoring and quarantining high-risk contacts for 42 days after exposure, while advising low-risk contacts to self-monitor and seek medical care if symptoms develop.

France launched a special task force in February to examine possible crimes linked to Epstein that may have taken place in France or involved French nationals accused of helping his operations.

World.(Agency)

The investigation into Jeffrey Epstein and his alleged network has expanded after 10 previously unknown suspected victims recently contacted French authorities following the release of fresh US court documents linked to the convicted sex offender. Paris' top public prosecutor said, France launched a special task force in

February to examine possible crimes linked to Epstein that may have taken place in France or involved French nationals accused of helping his operations. The move followed the release of another batch of documents from the US Justice Department's long-running Epstein investigation.

Paris Public Prosecutor Laure Beccuau said nearly 20 people had contacted investigators since February. "Some were already known to investigators, but we also had new victims come forward, ones we didn't know at all. There are around 10 of them," Beccuau told RTL Radio, as quoted by AFP. She added that several of the alleged victims currently live outside France.

INVESTIGATORS DIG THROUGH EPSTEIN FILES

Investigators in Paris are now reviewing telephone records, address books, computer materials and names that appeared in the US documents as they attempt to trace possible French

connections to Epstein's operations. "We have also got back out Mr Epstein's computer, his telephone records, his address books," Beccuau said, adding that French authorities would seek



international assistance as part of the inquiry. So far, prosecutors say no major suspect has been formally questioned in the renewed investigation.

"It is only once we have fully understood Epstein's relationships with the other key figures in France that we will hear from the defendants," Beccuau said. Epstein died in a Manhattan jail cell in 2019 while

awaiting trial on charges of trafficking underage girls for sex. His death was ruled a suicide.

WHO ARE THE KEY FIGURES IN FRANCE'S EPSTEIN PROBE?

Several people already linked to earlier investigations in France have again come under focus as prosecutors widen the probe. Among them is former modelling agent Jean-Luc Brunel, who had been accused of rape and trafficking minors for Epstein before he died in prison in 2022. Prosecutors believe Brunel played a role in recruiting and transporting young women connected to Epstein's network. Former Elite modelling executive Gerald Marie is also under investigation over allegations of sexual assault and trafficking-related offences. He has denied wrongdoing. French media reports also identified modelling scout Daniel Siad as another figure under scrutiny. Two former models have accused him of grooming them with the aim of introducing them either to Epstein or Marie.