



World in flux, Putin and Xi likely to be in New Delhi for Brics Summit

India is set to host a set of world leaders, including Russian and Chinese Presidents Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, in September for the Brics Summit 2026. This comes as the world is torn over two wars with New Delhi walking the tightrope as the Brics President.

New Delhi.(Agency)

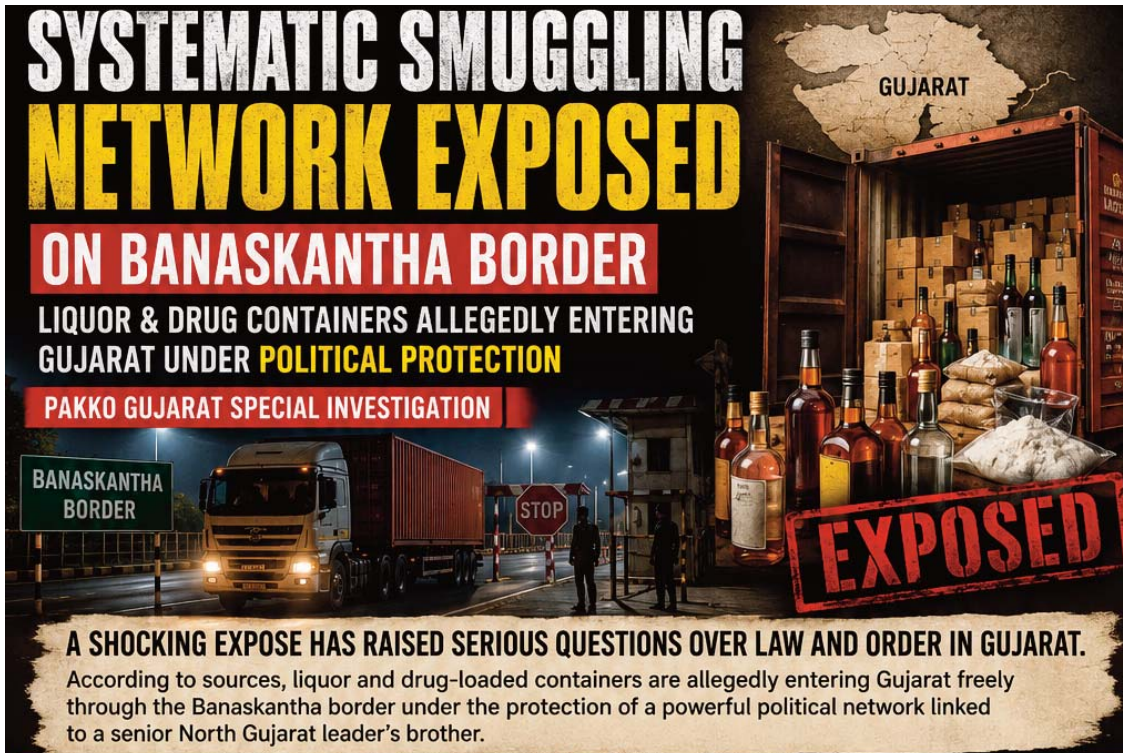
Amid the turmoil in the world, India is set to be the stage for a powerful meeting of world leaders in September as it hosts the Brics Summit. Russia has confirmed the participation of President Vladimir Putin, while Chinese President Xi Jinping is likely to attend the summit in New Delhi on September 12 and 13. Putin's participation in the two-day Brics summit has been confirmed by the Russian Embassy in South Africa. Russian officials also confirmed that, according to a report in Russia's news agency Tass. Xi's likely attendance at the Brics Summit in New Delhi was reported by The Indian Express on Wednesday. It cited sources to say that "Xi's participation in the BRICS Summit is the most anticipated visit". Xi's visit, if that materialises, will be the first to India since October 2019 when he met Prime Minister



Narendra Modi at Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu. The Galwan Valley clashes in June 2020 and the tense Tawang border standoff in December 2022 had a chilling effect on Sino-Indian ties. It was on the margins of the Brics Summit in Russia's Kazan that Modi and Xi met for the first time since the border standoffs. The timing of the Brics summit and the presence of the leaders from Russia and China — the two prominent nations in the bloc — expected to attend is particularly significant amid visible internal divisions within the bloc over key geopolitical issues, especially the Iran war. The cracks became evident after Brics talks between the deputy foreign ministers and special envoys of the 11-member bloc were held on April 24 in New Delhi. The talks failed to produce a joint statement, with disagreements emerging over the US-Iran war, tensions between Iran and the UAE, and the reported wording changes proposed by India on the Israel-Palestine issue. This led to a diplomatic stalemate.

Systematic Smuggling Network Exposed on Banaskantha Border Liquor & Drug Containers Allegedly Entering Gujarat Under Political Protection

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Makan Banaskantha. A shocking expose by Mahanagar Metro has raised serious questions over law and order in Gujarat. According to explosive claims made by sources, liquor and drug-loaded containers are allegedly entering Gujarat freely through the Banaskantha border under the protection of a powerful political network linked to a senior North Gujarat leader's brother. The allegations have created panic among locals and intensified concerns over the growing influence of illegal smuggling syndicates in the region. 'Green Corridors' for Bootleggers? Sources claim that several sensitive border points including: Gundari Border, Nainava Border, Amirgadh Checkpost, Ambaji Chapri Border, Jambudi Checkpost have allegedly turned into "safe corridors" for illegal liquor and narcotics smuggling into Gujarat. Sources further allege that containers loaded with contraband move through these routes regularly during late-night hours without strict checking. Crores Collected in the Name of Top Police Officers? The report further alleges that a man identified as Suresh Chaudhary, said to be a close middleman linked to Banaskantha SP circles, is al-



legedly operating a massive extortion and protection racket involving bootleggers across the district. According to sources, huge sums of money are allegedly collected in the name of senior police officials and influential offices. The allegations also suggest that smugglers receive "safe passage" after paying weekly protection money. Former LCB Staff Under Scanner Serious accusations have also surfaced against certain former LCB-linked personnel and alleged intermediaries accused of collecting money in the name of Range IG officials. Sources

claim these individuals possess deep knowledge of the district's illegal liquor trade networks and allegedly exploit it for financial gain. Police Escort Inside Containers? In one of the most shocking claims, sources allege that police personnel are sometimes made to sit inside liquor containers to ensure uninterrupted movement across taluka borders, with personnel allegedly changing at different jurisdiction points. Big Questions Raised Who is responsible for Banaskantha allegedly becoming a hub for liquor and drug trafficking? How long

will this alleged protection racket continue? Will higher authorities order an impartial investigation into these allegations? If a fair and transparent probe is not conducted, concerns are growing that Banaskantha could emerge as a major center for narcotics and illegal liquor operations, putting the future of local youth at serious risk. Citizens and social organizations are now demanding strict action and an independent inquiry into the alleged network operating across the border region.

Vijay's TVK rules out cabinet berths for AIADMK rebels after VCK, CPM warnings

Chennai.(Agency)

Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) has conveyed to its allies that rebel AIADMK MLAs extending support to the party will not be accommodated in the cabinet, amid strong objections from the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and Left parties. The clarification comes after speculation over possible ministerial berths for a section of rebel AIADMK legislators backing the TVK-led arrangement in Tamil Nadu. VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan said his party had already made its position clear to TVK and warned that extending cabinet positions to rebel AIADMK members could force allies to rethink their support. "I had said this a few days ago myself. If TVK were to welcome the rebel AIADMK group and give them cabinet posts, we may have to reconsider our support," Thirumavalavan said. He, however, added that the party had now received assurances from TVK that no such move was being contemplated. "We have received information that there are no such attempts. TVK has informed that there will be no cabinet posts for the rebel AIADMK faction," the VCK leader said. Sources indicated that the CPI(M) had also taken a similar stand and expressed reservations over any formal power-sharing arrangement involving breakaway AIADMK legislators. TVK general secretary Aadhav Arjuna, earlier in the day, said Chief Minister Vijay would soon announce a cabinet expansion and that the party remained open to power-sharing with allies. He said the Chief Minister wanted to accommodate parties that had stood for social justice, especially the Congress, which backed TVK. Aadhav said Vijay had insisted that Congress join the cabinet.



Abhishek Banerjee owns 43 Kolkata properties? BJP puts out list, TMC calls it fake

Kolkata.(Agency)

The Bengal BJP has circulated a list of 43 properties allegedly linked to Abhishek Banerjee, prompting a fresh political row. What has drawn particular scrutiny is a jointly owned property linked to Sayani Ghosh. However, TMC MP Saayoni Ghosh has denied any connection to it. The Bengal BJP has released a list of 43 properties allegedly linked to TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee, including several said to be jointly owned with his aides and family members. Sources said that the Suwendu Adhikari-led government would conduct a detailed probe into the ownership details. The development comes a day after the TMC-controlled Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) issued notices to 17 properties associated with Mamata Banerjee's nephew. The Trinamool Congress, however, dismissed the list as false and not credible. What has drawn particular scrutiny is a jointly owned property linked to one "Sayani Ghosh". Several social media users speculated it to be Jadavpur MP, Saayoni Ghosh. The address of the property mentioned in the document was 19D, Seven Tanks Lane. However, the Lok Sabha MP nipped the controversy in the bud, denying any connection to it. "I can't say who it is, but it's definitely not the Saayoni Ghosh who started from a humble background with no windfall profits made from politics to date. For those trying to defame me without any evidence - stop now!" Ghosh tweeted. "Please know, I won't budge an inch, I won't let it pass. Legal action will be taken for spreading fake news. This 'Ghosh' won't be bullied," she further said. ABHISHEK BANERJEE'S PROPERTIES UNDER LENS According to the list, the 43 properties, located across posh areas in Kolkata, are either under joint ownership or in the name of Abhishek Banerjee. However, it must be noted here that it doesn't specify whether it is the Diamond Harbour MP. The mobile numbers of the owners are also listed.



In Bastar, Amit Shah's warning: 'Maoism will return in disguise, don't be misled'

Raipur.(Agency)

A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah declared India 'Maoist-free', he warned people that it will "return in disguise" and urged people not to be misled. Shah was addressing a press conference in Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district on the second day of his two-day visit to Bastar Tuesday after chairing the 26th meeting of the Central Zonal Council (CZC), comprising Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Chief ministers of all four states attended the meeting. Addressing a question about the lack of train services in Bastar, Shah said the Maoist conflict meant the region stayed behind in the



"We will empower all tribals, create infrastructure, irrigation facilities and railways will reach as well. Let this first phase end, then a complete development plan for Bastar will also be made," he said. May 19, 2026 marks the 75th anniversary of the formation of India.

development in Bastar, he said, adding that in addition to the earlier announcement of converting 70 police camps into one-stop centres for over 370 government schemes and benefits, a dairy cooperative network would be set up in the next six months. "Tribals need not go far for small things. We will also provide skill development and promote dairy activities to make them self-employed. We will give the tribals one cow and one buffalo. Through cooperative societies they will be able to sell their milk. Chhattisgarh's Deputy CM has gone to Gujarat and understood the cooperative dairy model. In the next six months, we will create a dairy network in Bastar," he said.

he said. "I believe Bastar will be considered free from Naxalism only when the journey from security to trust, from development to prosperity, and finally to satisfaction is fully accomplished." Since Naxalism spread due to poverty, the new police camps-turned-development centres would address the issue in future, he said. "Violence is not the solution for anything. Democratic values, mutual cooperation, and the concept of development alone can become the foundation of an individual's progress," he said. He also cautioned tribals against the resurrection of the Maoist ideology, saying: "As Bastar moves towards becoming a developed region, I want to caution the people of Bastar that the

Promises dairy cooperative network in next six months; sets 2031 deadline for Bastar development



## News box

## Decomposed body of man found in pickup truck

GURGAON.(Agency)

A man was found dead under mysterious circumstances inside a pickup vehicle in the Wazirabad area on Tuesday morning. Police said the body was completely decomposed, indicating that the man may have died days ago.

The victim, identified as Sanjay, was a resident of Jind and worked as a driver at a logistics company in Gopalpur. An officer said that he parked his vehicle on the night of May 16 and the car had remained there for the past three days. The body was discovered after locals noticed a foul smell emanating from the parked pickup vehicle and a swarm of flies hovering around it. "A passerby alerted the police, following which a team from the Sector 93 police post reached the spot," the officer added. The team found the body lying inside the vehicle and immediately cordoned off the area. The body was later shifted to the mortuary for postmortem examination. Police officials said the exact cause of death will be known only after the autopsy report is received.

"During preliminary investigation, police did not find any major visible injury marks on the body. However, due to the advanced stage of decomposition, officials said it was difficult to determine whether foul play was involved," police said. They suspect the man may have been under the influence of intoxicants at the time of his death, though all angles are being examined.

## Gang caught smuggling cattle inside ambulance near Nuh; 1 injured, 2 escape

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A group of cattle smugglers were intercepted near the Nuh-Hodal road on Tuesday morning, leading to an encounter in which one of the accused was injured and the other two managed to flee. The trio were transporting two cows, one bull and one calf in an Ecco car that functioned as an ambulance. The cattle were rescued after the incident.

According to police, the encounter took place when a Crime Branch team, led by sub-inspector Mahendra Singh, was on patrol duty near the Mumbai Expressway. Acting on a tip-off that some residents of Utwar village were transporting cattle towards Uttar Pradesh for slaughter, police laid a barricade on the road to intercept the vehicle, an officer said.

The ambulance seemed suspicious to the team and it was signalled to stop, he said. "However, on seeing the police party, the driver accelerated the vehicle and the occupants opened fire on the police team in an attempt to flee," he added. Police chased the vehicle for several kilometres before one of its tyres was punctured.

Following this, the accused abandoned the vehicle near Sarpanch Dhaba and attempted to escape on foot into nearby fields while continuing to fire at the police team, the officer said.

"During retaliatory firing by the police, one accused, Hamas, 43, a resident of Uttwar village, Palwal, sustained bullet injuries in both legs. He was overpowered and taken to Nalhar Medical College in Nuh for treatment. The two others managed to escape," the officer added. Hamas has four cases registered against him in Nuh district, one in 2017 and one in 2018 and two in 2020. He was arrested in July 2022 and was later granted bail in all four cases. Investigators said the animals were tied with ropes and packed tightly inside the ambulance. The police team also recovered a country-made pistol, 10 live cartridges and three empty shells from the spot.

## Brain clot, ruptured spleen: Autopsy shows grievous external &amp; internal injuries on Deepika

Noida.(Agency)

The autopsy report of 24-year-old Deepika Nagar, whose family has accused her in-laws of killing her after months of dowry harassment, has found multiple grievous external and internal injuries. The examination found severe contusions on her face, thigh, forearm, chest, abdomen and arms, along with bone-deep wounds on the knee and injuries near the waist.

Deepika, according to her in-laws, jumped from the third floor of their house in Greater Noida's Jalpura village. Her family, however, alleged she was tortured and thrown from the terrace to make her death appear as a suicide. Following a complaint, her husband Ritik Nagar and father-in-law Manoj were arrested on Monday. Five other accused, including her mother-in-law, remain absconding, and four teams have been formed to trace them.

The autopsy documented a large swelling of approximately 12 cm x 9 cm on the right side of Deepika's face, bleeding from the left ear, a massive contusion measuring roughly 38 cm x 14 cm on her right thigh, injuries on the left elbow and forearm, a bone-deep wound on the left knee, circular contusions above the right iliac crest and around the right arm, and deep abrasion marks on the chest and abdomen.

Internally, doctors found a haematoma (clot) on the left side of the brain, indicating severe head trauma. The spleen was ruptured, internal bleeding was observed across multiple areas, the left kidney appeared pale, and the chambers of the heart were found empty — consistent with massive blood loss, according to the autopsy report. It also mentions visible blunt-force trauma on the face and right thigh. Deepika was married approximately 18 months ago. Her family said they had spent nearly Rs 1 crore on the wedding, yet her in-laws allegedly continued to demand additional dowry, including cash and a Fortuner SUV. She was said to have been regularly tortured over the demands and pressured to bring jewellery each time she visited her parents.

Police sources said it remained unclear whether the injuries were sustained before death or were a consequence of hitting an iron grille or net after the fall. ACP Rajeev Kumar Gupta said the investigation team was working with doctors to establish the cause of death.

## BJP Leader Bhanwar Singh Palada's Delhi Visit Sparks Political Buzz

## Mahanagar Metro

**Delhi/Jaipur.** Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Bhanwar Singh Palada is currently on a significant visit to New Delhi, where he held important meetings with top BJP leadership, triggering discussions across political circles. During his Delhi tour, Palada met BJP National President Nitin Naveen and discussed key organizational strategies, strengthening party structure, and increasing grassroots-level worker participation. Political observers are viewing this meeting as a crucial development ahead of upcoming political activities. Continuing his high-profile engagements, Palada also met Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. The discussion reportedly focused on regional development projects, tourism expansion, and resolving



local public issues. Palada is said to have raised several important matters related to the development of his region and urged for swift action. Sources suggest that these back-to-back meetings are politically significant and indicate active brainstorming on future orga-



nizational planning and strengthening the BJP's influence at the grassroots level. The Delhi visit has intensified speculation in political corridors, with many seeing it as a sign of growing strategic importance for Bhanwar Singh Palada within the party framework.

## Khaki Under Fire in Ankleshwar GIDC: Allegations of Police Protection for Illegal Liquor Network Raise Serious Questions

## Mahanagar Metro

**Ankleshwar | Gujarat.** Despite Gujarat's strict prohibition laws, shocking allegations emerging from Bharuch district have raised serious concerns over law enforcement and illegal liquor operations in Ankleshwar GIDC. According to explosive claims and local sources, bootlegger Ramesh Vasava is allegedly operating a large illegal country liquor network near Ankleshwar GIDC Police Station under alleged police protection. The report claims that local enforcement agencies have failed to act despite the open sale of illicit liquor in labor colonies and surrounding areas. Poor Workers and Youth Allegedly Becoming Victims Sources allege that areas near Ankleshwar Railway Station and GIDC labor settlements have become hotspots for illegal liquor activities, where toxic substances are reportedly being sold openly, affecting poor workers and local youth. Questions are now being raised over why authorities have allegedly remained silent despite repeated complaints from citizens. Middleman 'Dattu' Allegedly Handling Entire Network The report further claims that a man identified as Dattu, said to be a close associate and middleman linked to the liquor syndicate, allegedly manages weekly collections and coordination between bootleggers and certain police circles. According to discussions within local circles, large sums of money allegedly move regularly from Ankleshwar Police Station to Bharuch LCB-linked networks

through this alleged arrangement. Bharuch LCB's Role Under Scanner Serious allegations have also surfaced against certain officers linked to Bharuch LCB. Sources claim that confidential information provided by concerned citizens allegedly reaches bootleggers shortly afterward, resulting in intimidation and violent attacks on whistleblowers. The accusations have triggered outrage among local residents, with many questioning whether enforcement agencies are acting as protectors of the law or silent partners in illegal operations. Fears of a Major Toxic Liquor Tragedy One of the most alarming claims in the report suggests that hazardous chemicals from nearby industrial factories may allegedly be used in the preparation of illicit country liquor. Locals fear that if immediate action is not taken, Ankleshwar could witness a major toxic liquor tragedy in the future, putting countless innocent lives at risk. Allegations of Monthly 'Protection Money' Sources further allege that illegal operators are paying monthly protection money amounting to lakhs of rupees to maintain uninterrupted operations. Discussions regarding alleged "settlements" and illegal financial dealings involving local police circles have intensified across the district. Public Demands Immediate Investigation The allegations have sparked demands for a fair and independent investigation into the alleged nexus between bootleggers, middlemen, and law enforcement officials. Citizens are now asking: • Why



are illegal liquor networks operating openly despite prohibition laws? • Who is protecting these alleged operations? • Will higher authorities order strict action before another major tragedy occurs? As public anger grows, pressure is mounting on the Gujarat administration and senior police officials to ensure accountability and restore public trust in law enforcement.

## Haryana hikes employment subsidy, offers EPF reimbursement to push local hiring

## Gurgaon.(Agency)

In an employment push, Haryana has unveiled a generous package of financial incentives aimed at boosting local hiring, attracting large investments and lowering operational costs for industries. The govt says the new industrial policy was designed to directly encourage companies to recruit local youth through the Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam (HKRN) portal while strengthening the state's appeal as a competitive industrial destination.

Officials say the multi-layered incentive structure creates a "win-win" framework — ranging from employment generation subsidy (EGS) to 100% reimbursement for hiring through HKRN to help industries planning to relocate.

At the heart of the reform is a sweeping enhancement of the EGS. Industries can now claim up to Rs 1 lakh per employee per year for 10 years, a substantial incentive that officials believe will drive large-scale recruitment. The support is even higher for priority groups — women, Scheduled Castes, Divyangs, Agniveers and ex-servicemen — for whom companies can receive Rs 1.2 lakh

per employee annually, reinforcing the state's focus on inclusive growth. A major highlight of the policy is the unprecedented support for companies hiring through HKRN. "Industries that recruit youth registered on the portal will receive 100% reimbursement of both employer and employee EPF contributions for five years," said an official of the industry department. He described this as the most cost-effective hiring channel now available to industries, making local recruitment financially attractive while creating structured employment pathways for Haryana's youth.

To further ease business operations, the policy offers net SGST reimbursement ranging from 30% to 70%, depending on the scale of the project. The benefits extend for seven years to large units, 10 years to mega units, and up to 12 years for ultra mega projects under special packages. Capital subsidies have also been raised significantly — 5% to 20% for large units, and up to 30% for

mega and ultra mega projects located in prime or focus areas. In addition, Haryana is offering expansive support for industries planning to relocate. Domestic firms shifting operations to the state can claim Rs 5 crore in assistance, while

push towards innovation-led growth and encouraging industries to establish advanced facilities within Haryana.

For youth, it promises enhanced job avenues, especially for those registered on HKRN, along with targeted opportunities for women, SCs, Divyangs, Agniveers and ex-servicemen. For industries, the policy cuts wage costs, removes the EPF burden for HKRN hires for five years, reduces tax outflow and eases the financial pressure of expansion or relocation. For Haryana's economy, it strengthens the manufacturing and services base, boosts formal job creation and positions the state more competitively for future investments.

The official claims that, with a blend of employment subsidies, tax benefits, relocation assistance and R&D incentives, Haryana's new industrial policy aims to create a robust, inclusive and investment-friendly environment — one that the govt believes will generate long-term employment.



relocating international units are eligible for Rs 10 crore, a measure designed to bring global manufacturing and investment into the state's ecosystem. The policy also extends incentives for research and development, signalling a

# Twist in Nashik TCS case? Man alleges his new home was bulldozed by mistake in hunt for Nida Khan

**Hanif Khan, 31, has petitioned the Bombay High Court saying Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation's pre-dawn bulldozers demolished his property while targeting structures linked to corporator Matin Patel, who allegedly sheltered accused Nida Khan**

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

When the Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation (CSMC) sent bulldozers pre-dawn to pull down houses in connection with the search for Nashik TCS case accused Nida Khan, they may have razed one structure wrongly. This is what Hanif Khan, 31, has alleged, in his petition to the Bombay High Court. On Monday, hearing his plea along with that of AIMIM corporator Matin Patel, premises linked to whom were also demolished, the Aurangabad Bench of the Bombay High Court Monday slammed the CSMC, saying it did not appear to have followed procedures in carrying out the action.

The demolition drive on May 13 covered two properties allegedly linked to Patel as

well as the house where Nida stayed, which Khan says he had bought. Additionally, neighbouring structures, including a building material shop and another residential property, were also demolished.

Khan, a handyman who takes up small construction jobs, says he had bought the 600 sq ft house, in Chhatrapati Sambhaji's Kausar Bagh, just two months earlier. Patel, an acquaintance, sought his permission to use it during the period Nida was allegedly sheltered there briefly by him, as per Khan.

All his family's savings had gone into the house, and he had all the papers, he told The Indian Express. Documents submitted by him in court show that he



and his brother-in-law purchased the house for Rs 27 lakh, through a registered sale deed executed on March 12 this year, at the Joint Sub Registrar Office in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar. Nida, one of the TCS employees facing allegations of conversion attempts at the

Nashik office, reportedly was living there when police were looking for her. Asked about Khan and Patel's submissions to court regarding the demolition, the CSMC said it had followed all due procedures, and that the structures razed were unauthorised. On why a notice purportedly bearing Matin Patel's name was initially pasted on a property which Khan says was his, Chhatrapati Shivaji Mayor Sameer Rajurkar told The Indian Express: "It is the administration which drafted the notice and they will be in a better position to answer these questions."

Officials from the corporation's Encroachment Department declined to comment, saying the matter was sub-judice. Recalling how he stood watching

as his house was brought down, Khan says: "It was heartbreaking. This was the first house the family had ever owned... We thought instead of spending our life in rented homes, we should buy something of our own... We were waiting to renovate it before shifting in." Khan told court he and brother-in-law Syed Sarwar Syed Afsar had purchased the property from one Aamer Khan Akhtar, paying Rs 3 lakh as earnest money in February and the remaining Rs 24 lakh at the time of registration. According to Khan, sometime in the first week of May, Patel, whom he describes as a friend and local political figure, asked if he could use the premises temporarily. "He said some guests were coming. Since he was known to us and was a local corporator.

## Short news

**Konkan coast set to witness nuclear projects as state govt inks MoUs**

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

Maharashtra's coastal Konkan may witness several nuclear power projects totalling 20,400 MW, based on the MoUs signed by the state government with power companies in the country. The state government on Tuesday signed MoU with Adani Power Limited, which will invest Rs 1,50,000 crore in the state, generating 6,000 MW of power and is expected to create 12,000 direct and indirect jobs.

According to senior officials from the state's Power Department, the company is considering setting up a nuclear power plant at Barsu in Ratnagiri district. Barsu was a chosen place to set up a petrochemical refinery, but the project was stalled following strong opposition from the locals.

As per another MoU, Reliance Industries will invest Rs 2,00,000 crore to generate 7,200 MW of power and may provide over 1,00,000 jobs. The company is considering Purnagadh in Ratnagiri district as a location to set up the power plant.

Similarly, NTPC Limited will invest Rs 1,00,000 crore, with an expected generation of 7,200 MW of power, creating 5,000 jobs. The company is interested in setting up its power plant at Devgad in Sindhudurg district.

Apart from these MoU, another was signed with Lalitpur Power Generation Company Limited (Bajaj Group) which may invest Rs 2,00,000 crore in the state, generating 5,000 MW of power and creating 3,000 jobs. The company has not given its preferred location as of now.

**Karnataka HC seeks consideration of census duty exemption plea on medical grounds**

**BENGALURU. (Agency)**

When a government servant, on account of medically substantiated limitations, expresses an inability to discharge physically demanding duties, the competent authority is required to examine such representation with due sensitivity and in accordance with law, the Karnataka High Court said, while directing the Bengaluru South Corporation Commissioner to consider the petitioner's plea.

The petitioner, Sharadamma KS, sought exemption from work as a census enumerator on medical grounds as she could not discharge such duties, and a reasoned order as per law.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadam passed the order recently while disposing of Sharadamma's petition, after she approached the court as the commissioner did not consider her representations dated April 8 and 10, seeking exemption from duties for house listing and housing census operations.

In order to substantiate her inability to discharge such duties, the petitioner furnished a medical certificate issued by the competent authority in the district hospital, which declared the petitioner medically unfit to stand for prolonged periods and also unable to walk long distances.

Noting that the nature of duties attached to census work, particularly house listing and enumeration, require extensive physical exertion, including prolonged standing, walking and undertaking door-to-door data collection, the court observed that it cannot lose sight of the fact that the census, though of paramount public importance, demands considerable physical endurance from personnel engaged in such tasks.

## Now feeding street dogs not possible at any time in Chandigarh as MC brings in 'uniform timings'

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

Feeding street dogs in Chandigarh now will not be possible at any time during the day as the civic body has brought in "uniform timings" for the same.

"The Municipal Corporation (MC), Chandigarh has fixed uniform timings for feeding community/stray dogs at all designated feeding spots across the city to maintain proper management and uniformity. The decision has been taken after reviewing different feeding timings being followed in various areas and representations received from stakeholders," a statement issued by the MC on Tuesday said.

In summers, the morning timings to feed will be 7 am to 9 am, while in winters it will be from 8 am to 10 am. The evening

timings in summers will be 7 pm to 9 pm, while in winters, it will be from 6 pm to 8 pm.



The MC has notified that feeding of community dogs should be done only at designated spots and within the prescribed timings. Sanitary inspectors and field staff have been directed to ensure strict

compliance and regular monitoring in all sectors and areas of Chandigarh. The corporation has also appealed to residents and animal feeders to cooperate and follow the guidelines for better public convenience and management.

The Chandigarh Pet and Community Dogs Bylaws 2025 mention designated places away from elderly and children play areas will only be allowed for feeding, specified limit to keep a pet dog and penalties up to Rs 13,400, and banning of ferocious breeds, among others. As per the bylaws, a family may be allowed to keep dogs as per the limit prescribed by the administration. If dogs over the prescribed limit are found to be kept in a house by a family, then the unregistered dogs will be impounded, and a penalty will be imposed on the owner.

## AP's Konaseema district set to implement plasma technology for garbage disposal

**AMALAPURAM. (Agency)**

BR Ambedkar Konaseema district has taken the initiative to provide an effective solution to the waste management problem in urban local bodies.

For the first time in the State, the district is set to implement the plasma technology for waste management on an experimental basis. Though this technology is already being implemented in nine cities, including Bhubaneswar, Mumbai and Hyderabad, District Collector Mahesh Kumar Ravirala has taken the lead in introducing it as a pilot project in Andhra Pradesh.

Operating at a temperature of 1,000 to 1,200 degrees Celsius using electricity, the plasma technology machine burns all types of waste. It also

processes chemical components, including hazardous materials such as glass, fibre, and electronic waste.



Under the plasma technology, 95% of waste is incinerated, leaving only 5% as ash. Plasma Technology is one of the

projects of MIRAI Clean Energy Solutions Private Limited. The machine operates in compliance with the Pollution Control Board norms. If the pilot project is successful, it can be replicated and urban local bodies need not spend huge amount on maintenance of dump yards.

Mahesh Kumar said, "This is the first project of its kind in Andhra Pradesh. If successful, the expansion of plasma technology will significantly simplify waste management in urban local bodies, and there will be no need to set up dump yards on vast tracts of land, incurring a huge expenditure."

Amalapuram Municipal Commissioner V Nirmal Kumar noted that garbage disposal has become a complicated issue in the town.

**Fuel price hike raises Kharif cultivation costs, deepens financial burden on AP ryots**

**VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)**

Rising petrol and diesel prices are set to hit the farming community hard across the State at a crucial time when cultivators are preparing for the Kharif season and intensifying operations related to agriculture.

Farmers allege that the recent hike of around Rs 4 per litre (including Tuesday hike of 90 paise) in petrol and diesel prices, with diesel prices crossing the Rs 100 mark, has placed an additional financial burden on them even before the sowing season begins.

At present, farmers are engaged in land preparation works such as levelling, ploughing and tillage to make fields suitable for cultivation. Most of these operations are carried out using tractors and diesel-powered agricultural machinery. Farmers said fields are generally ploughed and levelled two to three times under the broadcasting method before sowing starts.

Earlier, tractor owners used to charge around Rs 800 per acre for a single round of ploughing or tillage work. However, following the latest increase in diesel prices, the charges have reportedly gone up to nearly Rs 1,000 per acre for every round of operation.

Farmers pointed out that this alone would increase cultivation expenditure by Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 per acre during the initial farming stage.

The burden is even higher in the traditional paddy cultivation method involving seedling transplantation. In this method, fields require four to five rounds of wet tillage and puddling operations before transplantation can be taken up. Farmers said these activities consume more diesel and require prolonged tractor usage, resulting in a steep rise in operational expenses.

Apart from field preparation, fuel price hikes are also expected to increase harvesting costs in the coming months. During harvest season, tractors are extensively used for threshing operations. Farmers said tractor operators were earlier charging nearly Rs 1,000 for threshing activities, but the rates are now expected to increase to around Rs 1,500 due to the diesel price hike.

Many farmers are also increasingly depending on mechanised harvesting and threshing machines due to labour shortages in rural areas. At present, machine operators charge nearly Rs 4,000 per hour for harvesting activities. Farmers fear that these charges too may witness a further hike in the coming weeks owing to rising diesel prices.

## Mohali land rates double in 3 years: Why ED raids hit real estate boom

**Three Vigilance FIRs — Guava Orchard scam, Suntec City CLU case and Pankaj Bawa case — form basis of Enforcement Directorate scrutiny into Punjab's land-use and planning ecosystem**

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

Three FIRs registered by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau — the Guava Orchard compensation scam, the Suntec City change of land use (CLU) case and the FIR linked to Chief Town Planner Pankaj Bawa — have together opened the door for the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to probe Punjab's land, revenue and town-planning machinery.

The first FIR that paved the way for the ED in Punjab was the Guava Orchard Compensation Scam registered by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau in 2023. The case alleged that officials of GMADA, the Revenue Department and the Horticulture Department colluded with private players to fraudulently claim nearly Rs 137 crore as compensation for guava orchards on land acquired for

Aerocity and IT City projects in Mohali. Investigators alleged that once land acquisition plans became known, guava trees were either planted or falsely shown in records to inflate compensation claims.

The ED later registered a Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) case on the basis of the Vigilance FIR, conducted raids across Punjab and Chandigarh, and began tracing the money trail linked to land acquisition and compensation.

The second FIR, registered in November 2022, related to Suntec City and associated CLU approvals in the Mohali-New Chandigarh belt, where investigators are examining how land earmarked for institutional or educational purposes was allegedly converted into

high-value residential and commercial property. The case focuses on the alleged manipulation of master plans, zoning



changes and CLU permissions that dramatically increased land prices and benefited select developers and landowners. The ED has summoned GMADA officials, sought planning and

registry records, and widened scrutiny into land transactions in the Majri block and New Chandigarh region.

Investigators believe the core of the alleged scam lies not in land acquisition itself, but in the conversion of land-use categories that generated massive private gains.

In the third FIR linked to Punjab Chief Town Planner Pankaj Bawa, it was alleged that Bajwa Developers Limited obtained approvals for a residential and commercial project spread over 179 acres in villages Sinhpur, Hasanpur and Jandpur in Mohali district. The company also secured approval for a residential layout plan in Mohali and a housing project for economically weaker sections (EWS) over 9.09 acres.

## The return of great power bargaining

President Donald Trump returned to China this week, over eight years after his last visit in November 2017. The symbolism is hard to miss. Between 1972 and 2017, every US President made the journey to Beijing with the conviction that strengthening ties with China was not incongruous with preserving American dominance. Joe Biden broke with that tradition. His administration called China out as the greatest challenge to American power because it was seeking to reshape the global order built by America, and framed the rivalry as between democracy and autocracy. Trump's return to Beijing closes that chapter. Statements from Washington, including the National Security Strategy released last November and during Trump's visit, suggest that the US has reverted to the path of managing the rise of a rival through accommodation. However, it might be a mistake to presume that Trump went to China with the weaker hand. Both parties came to the table with some leverage, but both are also in pain. The bruising tariff war in 2025 has damaged both economies. It is true that America's trade deficit with China stubbornly remains at \$350 billion, but China's access to American markets is also reducing. The last time Trump was in Beijing, the near-universal expectation was that China would overtake the US in GDP terms by the mid-2020s, but the Chinese economy (\$21 trillion) is still stuck at two-thirds the size of the US's GDP (\$32 trillion). Between the two visits by Trump, China's share of global manufacturing has increased from 20 percent to 29 percent, whereas the US's share has further declined to 16 percent. Yet, in technology, the Americans maintain the lead and still have the ability to impede China's scientific progress due to their dominance in high-end chip design and manufacturing. And, despite persistent Chinese efforts to conduct more trade, including in oil and gas, in the renminbi, the dollar is still king.

In terms of the war in the Persian Gulf, Trump's inability to end it on purely American terms may be satisfying, but a prolonged closure of the Hormuz Strait is not in China's interest. Its studied non-intervention at any level suggests that it is not yet a match for US global power. It would be more accurate to say that the two leaders met on terms more equal than when Trump last called on President Xi Jinping in 2017, but not as complete equals.

Notwithstanding this, during Trump's visit, Xi made every effort to put the relationship on par with that of two peers without equal. References to creating a 'new paradigm of major country relations', underscoring how this relationship was the most significant one globally, and even Xi's reference to the 'Thucydides Trap'—the Greek theory suggesting that a rising power threatens to displace an established dominant power—were intended to reinforce that point. China might not have explicitly mentioned a G-2, but given that Trump has used this definition earlier, its choice of phrases suggests it is not averse to the idea. The optics suggest that neither side wishes to return to the mutually damaging tit-for-tat downward spiral of the previous year. Each party had its bucket list. China was seeking tariff relief, the softening of US sanctions against

## India, UAE navigate shifting sands

PM Modi's visit to Abu Dhabi was largely aimed at boosting President Sheikh Mohamed's morale

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's May 15 stopover in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) coincided with the conclusion of US President Donald Trump's visit to China and the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi. These developments took place under the shadow of the war in West Asia.

Two questions arise: How did the UAE get embroiled in the ongoing conflict? What was the purpose of PM Modi's meeting with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (popularly known as MbZ)?

Ever since seven emirates formed the UAE in 1971, it has been stuck between Iran, covering the entire northern Gulf coast, and Saudi Arabia — a self-proclaimed regional and Islamic power — in the south. In the 1950s, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan — who later became Abu Dhabi's ruler and the UAE's first President — confronted the Saudis when they offered him a bribe to grab the Buraimi belt, which was believed to have huge oil deposits. He led Abu Dhabi's forces in ejecting them. Sheikh Zayed used native wisdom to steer the UAE towards prosperity by avoiding entanglement in regional disputes like the Iran-Iraq war and the occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. After Sheikh Zayed's death in 2004, his younger son Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan first became the Crown Prince and then the de facto ruler when the elder son, Sheikh Khalifa, suffered a stroke in 2014. Sheikh Mohamed formally assumed presidency in 2022. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had a parallel rise, assuming office in 2017. President Sheikh Mohamed took him under his wing, especially protecting him from US ire over journalist Jamal Khashoggi's 2018 killing in Turkey. However, their relationship soured when US President Trump came up with the 2020 Abraham Accords. They envisaged an Arab-Israeli alliance to contain Iran, with the Palestinian issue sidelined. While the UAE promptly signed alongside Bahrain, the Saudis demanded that Israel first specify the path to Palestinian statehood. Trump withdrew the US from the Joint Comprehensive Programme of Action (JCPOA), the Iran nuclear deal signed by P5+Germany. That allowed Iran to escalate its nuclear enrichment. Meanwhile, the UAE increased its commercial, technological and military engagement with Israel. After the October 7, 2023, attacks on Israel and the brutal Israeli retaliation against Gaza civilians, Arab countries' membership of the Abraham Accords became questionable. Neither the UAE nor Bahrain withdrew. Late Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei called the UAE a "traitor to Arab states and to Palestine", declaring that those hosting Zionists were living in "glasshouses".

The UAE and Bahrain ignored these warnings. Once the US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28, the Iranian Supreme Leader's "glasshouses" prediction came true. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has split into three groups, each aligned with the US. One group comprises Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan and Turkey. Qatar is attempting to be neutral. And then there is the UAE, stuck with the Israel-US axis. India favours the last two.

The Washington Institute for Near East's 2023 poll revealed that 96% of the Saudis supported severing ties with Israel. The Saudi ruling family, running a country with a population of over 35 million, is more responsive to popular sentiments. The UAE's nearly 11-million population has only one million locals. Economic and financial benefits are supposed to keep locals appeased. The 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, which ousted the rulers

Arabia.

Former US President Barack Obama claimed that he rejected the same plan to attack Iran which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu successfully sold to President Trump. Perhaps PM Modi, who visited Israel days before the attacks on Iran, and the UAE President were similarly misled. Israel's four-stage operation started with the Iranian Supreme Leader's assassination, followed by neutralisation of Iran's missile-launch capability. A popular uprising was then expected, leading eventually to a secular government. This regime change sequence failed miserably. Instead, the Strait of Hormuz became a new obstacle. Despite the UAE's discomfort over being geographically stuck between Iran and Saudi Arabia, it hosted about 8,000 Iranian companies. It also provided Iran a trade outlet, bypassing US sanctions, lifting trade to \$29.2 billion in 2025. But President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed wanted the UAE's strategic reach to match its wealth. The Emirati sovereign fund exceeds that of Saudi Arabia. Israel was seen as enabling this expanded influence to deter Iran and rival Saudi Arabia. Instead, Israel has dragged the UAE into the current impasse.

Even the US has abandoned talk of Iranian regime change. Trump, who is now insistent that Iran should not have nuclear weapons, is keen to restore navigational freedom in the Strait of Hormuz. If sanctions on Iran are lifted and its energy exports freed, will it normalise Iran-UAE relations? Without that deal, Dubai cannot revert to past success. Netanyahu complicated matters by revealing his secret meeting with the UAE President in Abu Dhabi in March. Does Netanyahu, by damaging the Emirati President's standing, hope to ensure that the UAE does not abandon the Abraham Accords or cut a deal with GCC neighbours or even Iran?

PM Modi's visit was aimed more at boosting the UAE President's morale than creating new strategic openings. The proposed \$5-billion investment in Indian infrastructure mostly goes to a private housing development company. The move to enhance Indian strategic petroleum reserves by 30 million barrels is welcome, but it merely implements old proposals. The LPG supply would depend on the Iran-US peace deal. Considering the fractured GCC and Pakistan's defence agreement with the Saudis, India is left with the Abraham Accords-compliant faction or "neutral" nations like Qatar. Notably, during his visit to Delhi last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi suggested that the Chabahar port awaited India.



of Libya, Algeria and Egypt, frightened the Gulf ruling families. When the Muslim Brotherhood assumed power in Egypt, the Gulf rulers, especially Emiratis, panicked. Subsequently, they became obsessed with countering the Brotherhood and Islamists in the Arab world. The UAE's interventions to support factions in South Yemen, Somaliland, Sudan and Libya were basically focused on containing perceived radical Islam. Saudis and Emiratis initially cooperated but eventually split. Saudis supported old regimes, while the UAE began backing factions. Israel also began using the cover of the UAE to launch intrusions, especially along the Red Sea. Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen opposed the often divided forces backed by the UAE and Saudi

## Halwara takes off: Aviation ambitions face test of sustainability

For Ludhiana, the Delhi-Halwara connection is a gateway to national and global markets

AFTER decades of waiting, missed deadlines and political promises, the sight of the first commercial flight landing at Halwara airport carries emotional and economic significance for Punjab. For Ludhiana, the Delhi-Halwara connection is a gateway to national and global markets. The launch has been greeted with excitement across central Punjab. Administrative authorities arranged transport for passengers, political leaders rushed to claim credit and tickets reportedly saw brisk demand even before operations formally began. That enthusiasm is understandable. Ludhiana's exporters, industrialists and entrepreneurs have long complained that dependence on Chandigarh and Amritsar slowed business mobility and increased logistics costs. Halwara also arrives at an important moment. The Centre recently expanded the UDAN regional connectivity scheme with an outlay of nearly Rs 28,840 crore, compared to the original Rs 4,500 crore allocation. The programme seeks to develop 100 new airports and airstrips. However, regional

connectivity remains uneven. North India accounts for nearly 30% of the country's passenger traffic, but many

granted. Many airports inaugurated with fanfare have become underutilised later. Infrastructure without sustained airline operations quickly turns into an expensive symbol rather than an economic asset.



smaller airports continue to struggle with weak demand and irregular flights. That is why Halwara's success cannot be taken for

determine whether Halwara truly transforms Punjab's economy. The state must ensure the runway remains busy.

## Faithline | Grace of Skanda

**Gods are in our very marrow, and we should accept that with gratitude and respect. And since the gods are some of the most beautiful intuitions of mankind, one could eternally welcome them in their hearts and carry them forward in the form of knowledge**

Adhika Skanda Sashti falls on May 21, and brings sweet thoughts of Murugan, meaning 'the beautiful one' in Tamil. The main Skanda Sashti occurs in October or November and is celebrated as a major festival in Tamil Nadu and across the Tamil diaspora. But there are also monthly remembrances of his feat of defeating the asura Surapadman and his brothers to restore cosmic balance and peace on Earth. Murugan's various lilas, or sacred games, have shaped the contours of Tamil culture since ancient times, and he remains an abiding source of spiritual strength, emotional security and courage in adversity for many. After all, whose son is he? Besides his own powerful shakti, he additionally combines the strength and blessings of his divine parents and elder brother in his radiant self. Even in Delhi, his abode, the Uttara Swami Malai or Malai Mandir, affords a heartening glimpse of 'gopura darshan' and typically southern red-and-white base stripes as one passes by. It elicits the instinctive murmur of the Shadakshari or six-syllable, Murugan mantra 'Om Saravana Bhava', with Om as the general mantra prefix.

Murugan's six-temple circuit in Tamil Nadu is like an energy grid holding the land together, and it has an old tradition of kavadiyas who wear green dhotis and walk in peaceful, orderly files from temple to temple. The six temples are Tiruppurankunram (kunram means hill, where Murugan temples are usually built), Tiruchendur by the sea, Palani, Swami Malai, Tiruttani and Pazhamudhirsolai. His consorts, the Tamil beauty Valli (possibly the oldest love story of the Tamil land) and Lord Indra's daughter Deivanai, represent his Ichha Shakti and Kriya Shakti, and also symbolically unite North and South into one force-field of energy.

My father's ancestral temple is Tiruttani, and I was taken there as a child for mottai or mundan, the ritual shaving of the head. Going back as an adult merely out of cultural curiosity at the height of my 'Left-liberal Khan Market gang' phase, I nevertheless felt such a strong tug of attachment and such an overwhelming sense of having come home that I was taken aback. I see it now as Murugan's grace. It dawned on me that some earthly songs go deep, that the gods are in our very marrow, and we should accept that with gratitude and respect, and not be led unnecessarily astray. Perhaps it's also because the things we hear that 'speak to us' can subconsciously form deep layers of identity. I was exposed to world music from childhood because my parents had very eclectic tastes and bought all kinds of records that they played all the time. There was Carnatic, Hindustani and Western classical, old Tamil and Hindi film songs, Bengali geet and Urdu ghazals, Western pop and musicals, you name it.

But in this garden of sound, Murugan bhakti songs bloomed like sudden, sweet grace notes of malli (jasmine). So, along with all that other music, I listened to various melodic compositions on Murugan. They were in Tamil, and I found them very powerful and

energising, renewing your spirit each time with their good vibrations. They are all available online today, rendered by various gifted singers. They range from the immortal 14th-century Tiruppugazh by the reformed rake Arunagirinathar, the 19th-century Kanda Sashti



Kavacham, composed by Devaraya Swamigal, which is a hypnotic power chant in mellifluous Tamil with built-in bijaksharas ('seed syllables' valued as distilled mantras), to the thrilling 20th-century devotional songs by T N Soundararajan. I was also taken to Bombay's Aurora theatre on Sunday mornings to see the then-

powerful genre of Tamil devotional films, which featured unforgettable songs with moving lyrics. So, along with English films like The Sound of Music, The Singing Nun and The Man Who Knew Too Much with its evergreen song 'Que sera, sera', I was lucky enough to get a regular dose of bhakti films in my childhood. The biggest take-home from all this was the electrifying realisation that 'being Indian' was like being given a giant box of chocolates, an akshayapatram of many wonderful and delicious things. That you were not forced to eat only one kind, that it was possible to have it all. All.

And since the gods are some of the most beautiful intuitions of mankind, you could rightfully, honourably and openly have the gods, for they are not going anywhere. This is their home, as much and even more than it is yours and mine, for you and I will pass away, but they have been here for millennia. The only gods still around from ancient times are those that live eternally in our hearts and in our land, testimony to the master craftsmen and artisans who wrought their images and temples, and to the poets who sang of them, whereas the gods of other ancient civilisations have mostly vanished into museums. Saying which, I realise that I echo an ancient promise. That of Sivaperuman (Lord Shiva) at Chidambaram, where he promised to dance eternally "there and in the hearts of mankind" as Nataraja.



# How to get that Perfect Smile

A smile can really change your face value in an instant and that is the reason why when you change your smile, your entire personality undergoes a tremendous overhaul. Cosmetic dentist Dr Rajesh Shetty says, "As far as the smile goes, even a small change can make a favourable impact. The way you look can be altered by making subtle to drastic changes just to your teeth."

### Smile improvement procedures

Out of the variety of procedures available today, there are different treatment options that can treat discolouration, chipped teeth, misshapen or even missing teeth, such as bleaching, reshaping, contouring, bonding, crowns and veneers.

### Contouring for tooth makeover

Sometimes small defects on your tooth can



be prominent when you smile and attract unwanted attention. This is where cosmetic contouring comes in. Contouring is one of the instant cosmetic dental treatments that is

about re-shaping and styling a tooth. Cosmetic dentist Dr Sagar Shah says, "Cosmetic contouring is a technique that removes small amounts of tooth enamel in order to change the shape, length or surface of one or more teeth. A few millimetres of

reduction in the right places can really improve the appearance of teeth. The process is often combined with bonding, a cosmetic dentistry treatment that uses tooth-coloured composite material to sculpt and shape the teeth and dental whitening."

### Who can get this done

When your tooth has a tiny chip, if your canine is too pointy or when your tooth sizes do not match — these are the problems that can be addressed with the help of this minimally invasive procedure. Dr Shetty says, "In order to evaluate if cosmetic contouring is ideal for the person, we conduct X-rays. This helps evaluate the size of the tooth and location of the nerve



present. Sufficient amount of enamel, which is the outer layer of the tooth should be present, so that the tooth does not become weak after the procedure, thereby providing a long-term solution for the client.

In order to get the best out of all this, it is advisable to combine some procedures like teeth whitening along with contouring to get a younger looking smile.

## Rainbow Eyelashes are the latest beauty trend



With the popularity of the rainbow hairstyle that caught on in a big way last year, it has now extended to other areas as well. The latest offshoot of this trend is the eyelash make-up trend. The trend went viral after a neon-eyelash look, created by make-up artist Karin Westerlund for model Ginta Lapina, was shared on social media. You can use coloured mascara, eyelash extensions or even create your own using coloured eyeshadow pigment and clear mascara.

## How to have a detox bath

While most of us can't go through week-long detox rituals, it's quite possible to have a quick relaxing detox bath at the end of a tiring day. Here's how you can rejuvenate your body and your mind by taking a simple but healthy bath.

**Ginger bath**  
Sprinkle some fresh ginger shavings in your bath water. Ginger



tends to make the body sweat more, thereby helping it release toxins. Baking soda bath  
Baking soda has the property of neutralizing chlorine in tap water, which aids the body in

the detoxing process.  
**Apple cider vinegar bath**  
Not only will water mixed with apple cider vinegar help you sweat out toxins, it also helps with any inflammation of the skin. essential oil bath There are a number of great essential oils out there like lavender, peppermint and sandalwood, which are great for a detox bath. For best results, you can first add baking soda to your bath and then a few drops of an essential oil to get the full effects of the latter.

A lot depends on the kind of make-up that you purchase. Before you begin to shop, make sure you follow these rules...

Consider your skin type and complexion: When you go out shopping for a particular product, always remember to buy according to your skin type and tone. Otherwise, you may end up with skin rashes and allergies. You can try out the product at the back of your palm to see if it blends well with your skin. Stick to one particular brand: Often, a brand which you have been using for a period of time will suit you more than the ones that you haven't tried out before. This is because your skin is already accustomed to that brand and the ingredients that have been used.

Mineral make-up for warmer times: During the hotter months, it is best recommended to use mineral make-up. This doesn't clog your pores like some of the liquid varieties.

Invest in a compact: While you would like to be a few shades lighter, make



sure not to use foundations that clog your pores. Beautician Nidhi Mirchandani says, "Some foundations are heavy on your skin and can make your face age much faster. So, consider using a compact powder instead of a foundation to make your face look youthful and blemish-free."

Toner is a must: Applying toner before putting on make-up will make your face look brighter. This can help prevent allergies as well. Buy water-based toners that contain ingredients like aloe vera or cucumber. You can also spritz the toner after taking off the make-up.

## Holidaying abroad? Here's destination nail art to soak in the spirit?

When in Rome, do as the Romans do may be a popular idiom, but Bengalureans are taking it literally. Fashionistas in the city are opting for destination nail art, keeping in sync with their vacation destinations. "I've been getting many requests for destination-themed nail art since April, the start of summer vacations. So we have done London-, Maldives and Paris-themed art. This trend is good for people who are bold and love to experiment. They like it because it takes their fashion statement to the next level and shows off their love for travel," says nail art

expert Shikha Sridhar. Makeup artist Manjusha Bajaj thought it would be cool to sport nail art that matched her travel plans to the UK. "I was going to London for a makeup course, and got London icons done on my nails. It was quirky and fun, and got a lot of attention there. This particular form of nail art has a novelty factor, because it is not something you can do regularly," she says.

While many opt for flags and monuments of the countries they are visiting, others settle for generic landscapes like a tropical sunrise, palm trees, oceans and starfish nail art, among others.



## Choose the right make-up to avoid skin Allergies

Check for expiry date: Make-up professional Nanda Ghai says, "Every product comes with an expiry date. Check them before buying. As a rule, don't use products that are more than six months old. For example, compact powder and foundation should be changed every three months to avoid skin damages. If you have been applying a product for over a year, chances of developing acne or rashes are high." Do a patch test before application: Always run a trial test before you start using a product. It is always best to check for any kind of rashes by first applying the product to the crook of your elbow.



"Nails should signify personal style and life events. These days, folks going on summer vacations are getting colours and nail art to depict their travel destination and complete their holiday look. Holiday nail art is best achieved with gel polish, as the colour and designs remain through the holiday period and long after, giving your hands a dressed-up look, and making holiday memories last longer. Girls who are unable to travel this summer are also getting landscape nail art done to join in on the fun," says nail expert Neela Bopaiah.  
**GET YOUR OWN DESTINATION NAIL ART**  
As this kind of art is complicated, you may want to visit a nail studio. But if

you are a staunch believer in DIY, Neela shares a simple technique to get a palm tree on your nails.  
Give your hands and nails a basic scrub  
File your nails  
Apply two coats of your favourite nail colour on all fingers and a contrasting colour on the ring finger.  
Once the polish is dry, create curved lines for the trunk of the palm tree using a nail art brush and a dark polish.  
Broaden the bottom of the trunk. Once done, draw a few curved lines on the top part of the trunk for the branches and leaves.  
Define the leaves.  
After the art is completely dry, apply a top coat to seal the design.

# Skin and hair care guide for Monsoon

Aesthetic physician and author Dr Jamuna Pai shares essential skin care tips in her recently launched skin and hair care guide, No One Has To Know.

Dr Pai provides a few beauty guidelines for a youthful and radiant skin this monsoon season:

**Shield your skin:** Since it's cloudy does not mean the skin is protected from the sun. It is extremely important to guard your skin from the sun's harmful UV rays, so always use a good sunscreen lotion. During the rainy season, do not use oil-based products on your face as they tend to block the pores and can lead to acne; especially if your skin type is prone to oiliness. Keep away from water-based makeup as it can get smudged if you get caught in rains unawares.

**SKINCARE**

**Follow the right diet:** Incorporate Vitamin A and Vitamin C rich foods in your diet. This will bring a natural glow to your skin.

**Cleanse the skin:** The skin should be cleaned minimum three times a day, with a non-soapy face wash. This helps to clean excessive oil and dirt from the skin pores and helps it breathe. Rain water left on the skin for long periods of time can act as an irritant making the skin

itchy and easily prone to bacterial and fungal infections. Wash your face with a gentle face wash at least twice a day and anytime when you may have gotten caught in the rains.

**Intake fluids:** Drink at least 2.5 to 3 litres water to maintain hydration.

Since the mercury isn't at an all-time high during this season, we tend to forget the importance of adequate and regular water intake.

**Facials:** Facials, peels and other advanced beauty treatments like microdermabrasion are fantastic ways to freshen up a dull skin. Avoid toners with alcohol, as it can further dry your skin.

- With the advent of rains, the added moisture in the atmosphere gives rise to oily scalp, frizzy hair and dry locks.

- Make it a routine to wash your hair at least thrice in a week.

- Do not skip the conditioner as using a good conditioner will help in moisturising your hair and minimising the frizz.



## Let your hair flourish with these tips



Are you always concerned about why your hair is growing at such a slow pace? Don't overlook this factor if you feel that your hair is not reaching its full length potential. Keep these things in mind when you want your hair to look the best.

**Healthy diet and Nutrition**

A healthy diet helps hair grows best since eating natural, whole foods makes a huge difference not only to your body but also in the appearance and the health of your hair. Include nutritious foods like iron-rich dark green leafy veggies, omega-3-rich salmon,

colourful fruits, lean meat, nuts or beans, foods rich in B vitamins, whole grains and eggs in your diet.

**Take vitamins and supplements**

Vitamins and supplements feed the follicle, which helps to encourage healthy growth. Take supplements like Biotin, a B vitamin, which promotes growth in thinning hair. Consult a dermatologist for supplements which contain amino acids and marine extracts which have shown to help with hair thickness and re-growth.

**Use a chemical free shampoo**

Shampoos which contain chemicals strip the hair of natural oils. Opt for suds-free cleansers which are free of sulphates. Shampoos which have natural ingredients are not harsh on dry, textured hair.

**Ban alcohol**

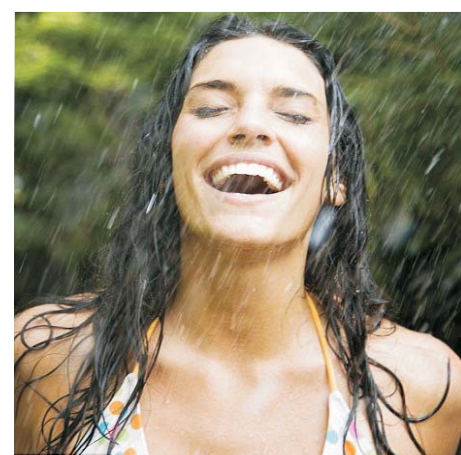
These days there are hair products that contain too much alcohol and not enough conditioning agents. Avoid such products altogether since alcohol dries out the hair and, in turn, leads to breakage.



## Don't let rain ruin your

# Beauty

Saying goodbye to summer time doesn't just involve a change in your wardrobe, it's also time to renew your beauty regime.



Spas and salons are stress-busters, and act as our go-to destination to rejuvenate giving a refreshed look. Although home remedies are convenient, a visit to a salon has a lasting effect. From basic clean-ups to advanced skin therapeutic facials, salons offer a wider

range of solutions for every type of skin. Particularly for the monsoon season, one can indulge in facials to refresh their mind, body and soul.

As the rain pours in, here's what you can do:

1. Get funky with your hair color this monsoon season, get the ombre look or highlight outstanding features of your hair with full head highlights or colour stripping treatments.
2. Gone are the days of manicure and pedicure, brighten up your gloomy day with vibrant nail art.
3. During monsoons the hair becomes limp and loses its sheen, a trip to the salon for a protein restore treatment will never leave you disappointed! Tame your tresses with nature's gift of essential oils, and oil massages.
4. Keep your make-up to a minimum; we all know the monsoon season welcomes a very damp and humid atmosphere and frequent downpours accelerate oil-secretion, using non-greasy and light, make-up provides a clean matte finish, always opt for waterproof brands.

- You can also, catch up on some home remedies to get the last minute salon look!

**Match the matte:** Papaya works as a great de-tanner; curd clears blemishes; aloe vera soothes the skin; and lavender boosts rejuvenation.

**Eliminate the roughness:** Take some almond paste, mix this with some milk to make a smooth and thick paste. You can also mix almond oil with milk cream (malai) to make a winter face pack. Apply the pack to get a smooth and flawless skin.

## Tricks to get rid of dark circles

Dark circles are eye sores and are a result of anaemia, allergies, hyper-pigmentation, dehydration, smoking or sleep deprivation. Whatever might be the cause, treating under eye darkness is not just skin deep. Makeup can save you but is a temporary fix. Try these home remedies for a more long-term



solution

**Almond Oil**

Rich in vitamin E, Almond Oil moisturizes the thin skin under the eyes, and reduces the appearance of fine lines and crow's feet. Before going to bed, apply almond oil under your eyes, and wash it off in the morning. Make it daily ritual.

**Mint Leaves**

Mint leaves have a cooling effect on the skin, reducing inflammation and puffiness. They also refresh the blood vessels and ease circulation. Make a paste of the Mint Leaves and apply to the under eye area, and then gently wipe it off after 10-15 minutes.

**Tomatoes**

Tomatoes contain lycopene, vitamin C, retinol which help open up blood vessels and improve cell growth. This in turn helps lighten the skin and de-tans too. Make a paste of 1 tsp tomato juice, ½ tsp of lemon juice, a pinch of turmeric and gram flour. Apply it under the eyes for 10 to 15 minutes,



CMYK



# Bail under UAPA: Government to seek larger bench review amid conflicting judgments

**Delhi Police sought consideration of bail under the UAPA by a larger bench, citing conflicting judicial rulings on the legal standards governing the grant of bail under the anti-terror law.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Delhi Police has urged the Supreme Court to refer the issue of granting bail in terror cases under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) to a larger bench, citing apparently conflicting rulings by coordinating benches on the legal standard in allowing the relief. Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Delhi Police in the larger conspiracy case linked to the 2020 Delhi riots, made the submission before a bench of Justice Aravind Kumar and Justice PB Varale, which was hearing bail pleas filed by Delhi riots accused Tasleem Ahmed and United Against Hate member Khalid Saifi against the Delhi High Court's refusal to grant them bail.

The development comes as the Supreme Court on Monday, while hearing a separate case, raised questions over the top court's earlier order denying bail to activist Umar Khalid, reiterating that "bail is the rule and jail is the exception" even in cases under the UAPA.

The court observed that a binding precedent relating to prolonged incarceration appeared to have been overlooked in Khalid's case. He has been in jail since 2020 in connection with the alleged larger conspiracy behind the Delhi riots.

ASG Raju requested that the matter be taken up on Wednesday to consider whether it



should be referred to a larger bench. He said he required time to examine the Supreme Court's judgment delivered on Monday in Syed Iftikhar Andrabi vs National Investigation Agency concerning bail

under the UAPA. On Monday, a bench of Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan held that bail remains the rule even in UAPA cases and expressed reservations about earlier rulings that had adopted a narrower approach to granting bail under the law. Justice Bhuyan on Monday specifically questioned the correctness of the rulings in the Khalid case and another UAPA case involving Gurwinder Singh in Punjab. The judgment observed that the denial of bail to Khalid and Imam appeared to have overlooked the three-judge bench ruling in Union of India vs KA Najeem, which held that prolonged incarceration and the improbability of an

early conclusion of trial could justify the grant of bail even in UAPA cases. Justice Bhuyan said, "A judgment rendered by a bench of lesser strength is bound by the law declared by the bench of greater strength. Judicial discipline mandates that such a binding precedent must either be followed or, in case of doubt, be referred to a larger bench. A smaller bench cannot dilute, circumvent or disregard the ratio of a larger bench."

In January, the Supreme Court granted bail to five accused in the Delhi riots larger conspiracy case while denying relief to Khalid and Sharjeel Imam. The remaining accused, including Ahmed and Saifi, subsequently approached the apex court seeking similar relief.

## City's chief poll officer meets parties to discuss SIR

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Delhi Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Ashok Kumar on Tuesday held the first meeting with representatives of political parties after the announcement of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, ahead of the exercise's roll-out on June 30.

The party representatives were given a brief on the whole exercise, and their questions were answered. They assured full cooperation for successfully completing the exercise in the city, said an officer of the CEO's office. The emphasis was on ensuring coordination between booth level officers (BLOs) of the poll body and the booth level agents (BLAs) of the parties for smooth conduct of the SIR, said the Delhi BJP's state coordinator for EC-related affairs.

He said the party had already appointed around 12,600 BLAs for participation in the SIR.

The BLOs will conduct door-to-door surveys from June 30 for verification of Delhi's electoral rolls. They will provide enumeration forms to the voters to be filled and provided to the BLOs for submission.

The CEO office will provide the facility of online submission of completed enumeration forms. BLAs of parties can submit a maximum of 50 filled-up enumeration forms daily, officials said.

Political parties in Delhi have intensified preparations for the SIR by focusing on training their BLAs across nearly 13,000 polling booths in the city. The CEO's office said that the main objective of the SIR is to ensure that "no eligible citizen is left out while no ineligible person is included in the electoral roll". The exercise will cover all voters aged 18 years and above by the qualifying date, which is October 1.

Door-to-door visits will start from June 30 and conclude on July 29, after which the draft electoral roll will be published on August 5. The final electoral roll after the SIR will be published on October 7. Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav said that the party was well prepared with the deployment of BLAs at each booth to fight any kind of "disturbance" in the SIR.

## Pharmacists, commercial vehicle operators to go on strike on financial concern

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The capital is set to witness back-to-back protests this week as chemists and commercial vehicle operators have announced separate strikes over regulatory and financial concerns. The All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists has announced a nationwide pharmacy strike on May 20 opposing the rapid and unregulated expansion of e-pharmacies and online medicine delivery services.

Meanwhile, commercial vehicle unions in Delhi-NCR have also announced a three-day strike from May 21 to May 23. Drivers are demanding an immediate hike in auto and taxi fares to cope with rising petrol, diesel and CNG prices.

A member of Indira Pharmacy said the nationwide pharmacy strike is mainly driven by the growing shift of customers towards online medicine platforms offering heavy discounts.

"People are choosing online apps because medicines are available at cheaper rates than at physical stores. Small pharmacies are struggling to compete with these discounts," the member said, highlighting concerns over the survival of traditional chemist shops.

Rai Medios from Mahavir Enclave in Dwarka said, "Online platforms offer heavy discounts that local pharmacies cannot match, making it difficult for small chemist shops to survive. We support the strike and our store will remain closed on the strike day."

Echoing a similar concern, Ali Haider, a pharmacist who has been working in the sector for the past eight years, said, "If small chemist shops shut down, people may realise their importance only during emergencies, when nearby pharmacies are the quickest source of medicines. The government should recognise this."

## Capital records season's highest power demand, touches 7,776 MW mark

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The capital's peak power demand has witnessed a sharp rise in May 2026 as compared to previous years, reflecting the impact of an intense and early summer.

According to SLDC data, Delhi's peak power demand on Tuesday touched 7,776 MW at 3:30 pm, which marks the highest recorded so far in 2026. On Monday, the city's peak power demand had reached 7,542 MW in the afternoon and further increased to 7,600 MW during the night.

The BSES discoms met the peak power demand of 3,492 MW and 1,683 MW in their respective areas. Earlier, on April 27, 2026, Delhi's peak power demand had surpassed the 7,000 MW mark for the first time ever in April, touching 7,078

MW at 3:30 pm. However, in comparison, the 7,000 MW level was reached only in May during 2024 and 2025.

Delhi is expected to witness another



significant rise in electricity demand this summer. As per the SLDC projections, as against the all-time high peak demand of 8,656 MW recorded in 2025, Delhi's peak power demand is expected to cross 9,000 MW this year.

BSES has claimed that their discoms are fully geared up to ensure a reliable power supply to more than 53 lakh consumers and nearly 2.25 crore residents across South, West, East and Central Delhi. These arrangements include long-term PPAs, bilateral tie-ups, banking arrangements with other states and deployment of advanced technologies such as AI and ML-based demand forecasting to accurately estimate load and maintain uninterrupted supply. Additionally, around 2,670 MW of green power will play a key role in ensuring reliable electricity supply during the summer months in BSES areas. On the other hand, Tata Power-DDL also supplied the season's peak demand of 2220 MW to date seamlessly.

## Technical issues disrupt Class XII re-evaluation process, date extended

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Frustrated students spent hours refreshing web pages, waiting for OTPs and repeatedly logging into the CBSE portal on Tuesday as the Board opened its Class 12 re-evaluation and answer-sheet verification process for 2026. What many expected to be a quick application process turned into a stressful experience because of slow-loading pages and frequent portal glitches.

Following technical issues faced by several students, the Central Board of Secondary Education on Tuesday evening issued a circular extending the dates for re-evaluation.

"It is hereby informed to all stakeholders that due to a technical

problem encountered on the CBSE website for post-verification facilities, and to ensure sufficient time for students, the last date for

already creating pressure among students, the technical glitches added to their anxiety. Several students complained that the portal kept freezing midway, while others said even basic steps such as captcha verification and page loading were taking unusually long.

"Today's re-evaluation portal opening was honestly quite frustrating. The website kept hanging and even the captcha took forever to load, which made the whole process unnecessarily time-consuming," said Ishanvi Bagga, a Class 12 student of Mount Carmel School. Many students said they spent nearly their entire morning trying to access the portal properly.



obtaining scanned copies of evaluated answer books has been extended from May 22 to May 23, 2026," the CBSE statement read.

With college admissions and cut-offs

## Delhi's three landfill sites await processing of 44 LMT legacy waste

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

With a little over six months left before the deadline to flatten two of Delhi's three landfill mountains, the city still has nearly 44 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of legacy waste waiting to be processed at the Bhalswa and Okhla landfill sites.

A few days ago, Delhi Mayor Praveesh Wahi said that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi aims to clear the Bhalswa and Okhla landfill sites by the end of this year, while the complete remediation of the Ghazipur landfill will be completed by the end of 2027. Wahi said that the civic body is continuously carrying out biomining and remediation work at the three legacy waste sites.

Official progress figures accessed by the newspaper show that the Bhalswa landfill, targeted to be flattened by December 2026, still has 26 lakh metric

tonnes of waste remaining.

So far, authorities have reclaimed 35 acres of land, but the site continues to carry one of the city's largest waste burdens despite the deployment of 24 trommel machines for processing old garbage.

Meanwhile, the situation at the Okhla landfill, for which the earlier July 2026 completion target has now been extended, appears comparatively better but still remains far from completion. Around 18 LMT of waste is yet to be cleared from the site. Official figures show that nearly 25 acres have already been cleared through biomining operations, with 18 trommels currently deployed on the ground.

Taken together, the two landfill sites still hold 44 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste—equivalent to millions of tonnes



of decades-old mixed garbage that must be excavated, segregated and processed before the deadlines can be met.

The figures also indicate contrasting trajectories at the two sites. Bhalswa landfill has reclaimed more land than Okhla but still carries a significantly larger waste burden. Okhla landfill, however, has less waste remaining and more land recovered relative to the waste still left to be processed.

The landfill-flattening exercise forms part of Delhi's broader push to eliminate the city's infamous garbage mountains through biomining. In this process, old waste is excavated and passed through trommels—large rotating screening machines that separate soil-like material, recyclable components and fuel.

However, the remaining volume continues to raise questions about the pace at which the work can be completed. The third landfill, Ghazipur, has a later deadline of December 2027, with 67 LMT of waste still remaining, making it Delhi's biggest unfinished waste-remediation challenge. For now, however, the focus is likely to remain on whether Bhalswa and Okhla can clear the tens of lakh tonnes of waste still standing between them and their promised flattening targets.

## DGCA officers to inspect Boeing fuel control switch at US facility in June

**Flight AIC 132, operating from London Heathrow to Bengaluru on February 2, 2026, was grounded after a malfunction was reported in the switch.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has directed the inspection of the Fuel Control Switch (FCS) of an Air India Boeing 787-8 aircraft that operated from London Heathrow to Bengaluru by its officers in June at the Boeing facility in the US.

Flight AIC 132, operating from London Heathrow to Bengaluru on February 2, 2026, was grounded after a malfunction was reported in the switch. The Fuel Control Switch in Boeing aircraft came under international scrutiny following the Air India Ahmedabad plane crash on June 12, 2025, in which 260 people were killed. According to investigators, the switch had moved to the 'OFF' position after take-off, cutting off fuel supply to the aircraft.

An official release from the Aviation Ministry said the aircraft was grounded after an entry in the Pilot Defect Report stated that the left FCS "slips from RUN to CUT OFF when pushed slightly and does not lock positively in its selected position".

Based on recommendations from the Original Equipment Manufacturer, Air India conducted a preliminary inspection and functional testing of the switch in Bengaluru in the presence of Directorate General of Civil Aviation officers. "Upon review of the inspection results and evidence provided, OEM concluded that the Fuel Control Switch was mechanically functioning as designed and considered the unit serviceable," the release said.

The DGCA India, as part of continued airworthiness of the involved Fuel Control Switch, has directed for their inspection at OEM facility in presence of its officers, it added.

**International scrutiny after Ahmedabad crash**

The Fuel Control Switch in Boeing aircraft came under global scrutiny following the Air India Ahmedabad plane crash on June 12, 2025, in which 260 people were killed. According to investigators, the switch had moved to 'OFF' position after take-off, cutting off fuel supply.

## ICICI Bank hikes debit card DCC fee from 1% to 3.5%: What it means

New Delhi.(Agency)

If you often use your debit card for international spending or online purchases linked to foreign merchants, your transactions could soon become more expensive. ICICI Bank has informed customers that it will revise the Dynamic Currency Conversion (DCC) fee on debit cards from June 21, 2026. The charge will rise sharply from the current 1% of the transaction amount to 3.5%.

### WHAT IS CHANGING?

The revised DCC fee will apply to certain debit card transactions carried out in Indian rupees under specific situations. This includes purchases made in Indian currency at international locations or payments made in India where the merchant is registered in a foreign country.

In simple terms, even if you are paying in rupees, the extra charge may apply if the transaction is processed through a foreign merchant network.

The bank informed customers about the revision through an official communication, stating that the updated fee structure will come into effect from June 21.

### WHAT IS DYNAMIC CURRENCY CONVERSION?

Dynamic Currency Conversion, commonly called DCC, allows customers to pay in their home currency instead of the local currency while making international transactions.

For example, if you are shopping abroad or paying a foreign website, you may sometimes see an option to pay directly in Indian rupees instead of dollars or another foreign currency.

## Parle Industries shares jump 5% after PM Modi gifts Melody to Italy PM Giorgia Meloni

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

Parle Industries shares rose sharply on Tuesday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted a pack of Melody toffees to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni during his visit to Italy, triggering a fresh social media frenzy around the popular "Melodi" trend. Shares of Parle Industries jumped 5% intraday to Rs 5.25. The stock was also up nearly 7% over the past one week.

However, despite today's rise, the stock remains under pressure over the longer term. Parle

Industries shares are still down around 41% in three months, 46% in six months and over 68% in the past one year.

The rally came after a light-hearted video featuring PM

Modi and Italy PM Meloni went viral online.

In the clip shared on social media, PM Modi was seen gifting a packet of Melody candies to Meloni, seemingly playing on the viral "#Melodi" phrase that internet users often use while referring to the two leaders together.

Meloni later shared the video on X and wrote, "Thank you for the gift." In the video, she was also heard saying, "He gifted... a very, very good toffee," after which both leaders laughed. The moment quickly caught attention online, with the clip gathering close to a million views within a short span along with thousands of reactions and comments.

## Banks may soon have to share more details on risks and financial health, says RBI

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) wants banks to become more transparent about their financial health. In a move aimed at giving customers, investors and market participants a clearer picture of how banks manage risks, the central bank has proposed new disclosure rules under Basel III norms. If implemented, banks may soon have to publish more detailed information about their capital strength, liquidity position and risk exposure every quarter in a standard format.

### WHAT HAS RBI PROPOSED?

On Tuesday, the RBI released a draft circular proposing a revised disclosure framework for banks under Basel Pillar 3 norms.

Under the proposal, banks will be required to publish more detailed information on important financial measures such as capital adequacy, leverage, liquidity and risks. The idea is to improve transparency and strengthen market discipline.

The central bank said lenders would need to make quarterly disclosures in a common format so that information becomes easier to compare across banks.

### WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION WILL BANKS HAVE TO SHARE?

If the proposal comes into force, banks will have to disclose key financial indicators, including Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) capital, total capital, risk-weighted assets (RWAs), leverage ratio, liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) and net stable funding ratio (NSFR). In simple terms, these numbers help explain whether a bank has enough financial strength to absorb shocks, manage risks and meet its funding needs. Banks will also need to explain major changes in these figures from one quarter to another and the reasons behind such movements.

# Falling rupee isn't trousers, doesn't need pulling up. But is it revealing too much?

The falling rupee needs no support at the moment, and foreign exchange reserves shouldn't be burnt. However, the falling rupee might be pointing to a deeper investment problem. Everything explained here in layman's terms.

New Delhi.(Agency)

It's trousers that have levels—the retro high-rise, the classic mid-waist or the bold low-waist. For currencies, there's no fundamentally virtuous level. On a downhill roll, the Indian rupee touched a lifetime low of 96.81 against the US dollar on Wednesday, and experts believe it could slide further. While it might be a tempting thought, a falling rupee, unlike a pair of trousers, doesn't need pulling up. Not at least now. However, the rupee's weakening often becomes an emotive and political issue.

The world is reeling due to the war in the Middle East that began on February 28 with Israeli and American airstrikes on Iran. India, which depends on energy imports, has been particularly hit. India

consumes around 5.5 barrels of crude daily, and every barrel of crude is extracting additional dollars.

At such times, politics takes precedence over policy. The Congress and other Opposition parties are out with a bazooka, attacking the BJP-led NDA government over the rupee that seems to be on Ozempic. It is the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) which intervenes during currency volatility, using the country's foreign exchange (forex) reserve. India's war chest is adequately stocked as of now with \$697 billion.

"Presently the market perception is that the RBI would let the rupee find its own level because there is an advantage for exports and also a natural barrier to imports," Madan Sabnavis, Bank of

Baroda Chief Economist and author, told India Today Digital. Global trade is done in US dollars, and countries keep adequate

market forces to determine its value.

"India's close to \$700 billion in foreign exchange reserves will not run out because of higher imports. The only way reserves get depleted is if RBI decides to sell foreign exchange reserves to support the rupee," wrote Gita Gopinath, Harvard University economist and former deputy managing director of the IMF, in an op-ed in The Times of India. The piece was titled 'Let The Rupee Do Its Work'. A weaker rupee makes Indian exports competitive in the international market. But for India, which imports more than it exports, a weak rupee leads to domestic price rise. That's when the RBI steps in to control inflation.



reserves of greenbacks for any contingency. Experts are suggesting that it is best that the RBI doesn't burn valuable forex to shore up the rupee, allowing

## Rupee hits record low, inches closer to 97 against US dollar

New Delhi.(Agency)

The rupee weakened to a record low of 96.88 against the US dollar on Wednesday, pressured by surging US bond yields, elevated crude oil prices and persistent strength in the dollar, as investors turned cautious on emerging-market assets.

The sharp fall in the domestic currency comes amid mounting concerns that global interest rates could remain elevated for longer, tightening liquidity conditions and triggering fresh capital outflows from riskier markets.

The yield on the US 30-year Treasury climbed to 5.18%, approaching levels last seen before the 2008 global financial crisis, after investors reassessed expectations around US monetary policy in the face of sticky inflation and geopolitical tensions linked to the Iran conflict. The spike in Treasury yields strengthened the dollar

further, putting renewed pressure on emerging-market currencies, including the rupee.

### Why is the rupee falling?

Analysts said the rupee is currently facing pressure from multiple global



triggers, including a stronger dollar, rising US yields, expensive crude oil and persistent demand for dollars from importers.

Brent crude continued to trade above \$110 per barrel, raising concerns over

India's import bill, inflation trajectory and current account deficit. Since India imports a majority of its crude oil requirements, sustained high oil prices tend to increase dollar outflows and weaken the domestic currency.

The rupee had weakened to an intraday low of 96.61 in the previous session before settling at 96.54, weighed down by importer dollar demand and weakness across regional currencies. Rajesh Palviya, Head of Research at Axis Direct, said rising US bond yields have kept the dollar firm, pushing the rupee to fresh record lows and adding pressure on broader emerging-market sentiment. "Rising US bond yields also kept the dollar firm, pushing the Indian rupee to fresh record lows against the greenback and adding pressure on emerging-market sentiment," Palviya said.

## Sensex opens 600 points lower, Nifty below 23,500; Tata Steel falls 2%



New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened lower on Wednesday, triggered by uncertainty in the West Asia war and the falling rupee. The BSE Sensex fell 389.19 points, or 0.52%, to 74,811.66 in early trade, while the NSE Nifty50 dropped 107.90 points, or 0.46%, to 23,510.10 as of 9:39 am.

Dr VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said that globally stock markets are facing a headwind from rising bond yields.

"In US, the 10-year is yield is at 4.66% and the 30-year yield has spiked to 5.19% — the highest level in the last 22 years. This is a red flag to equity markets. With the risk-free return at such high levels, the appetite for risky equity should decline. This is more valid in the case of highly valued AI stocks. But then markets have an ability to surprise and, therefore, the correction need not happen at a time when everyone expects," he added.

After the opening bell, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd led the Sensex gainers, rising 0.20%. It was followed by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd, which gained 0.09%. Bharat Electronics Ltd saw the sharpest fall, dropping 3.04%. Tata Steel Ltd declined 2.65%, Eternal Ltd slipped 1.58%, UltraTech Cement Ltd was down 1.22%, and State Bank of India Ltd fell 1.04% in early trade. "In India the market headwind comes from macro concerns. In FY 27 GDP growth will be lower at around 6% and inflation can be higher at about 5.5%. It appears that the market has already discounted this," said Vijayakumar. "Even during market weakness, there will be good appetite for promising growth stocks. As a measure of abundant caution investors should give priority to value stocks which are available at fair valuations now. These are testing times. Patience is the key to success," he added.

## Wait 5 years for gratuity or take the pay hike? Here's what Indian workers said

New Delhi.(Agency)

"Risk toh Spider-Man ko bhi lena pada hai" ("Even Spider-Man has to take risks"), says Ranbir Kapoor in Rocket Singh: Salesman of the Year. But what if the 'risk' is not about chasing dreams, but resigning from a job just months before gratuity lands in your account?

Imagine this: you are four months away from completing five years at your company when a recruiter calls with a tempting offer, i.e., better pay, bigger role, shinier title. Exciting? Of course. But there is a catch. Leave too soon, and you could miss out on gratuity — a lump-sum benefit paid when employment ends, which employees can generally claim only after completing five years of continuous service in most cases. For lakhs of salaried Indians, this is more than a

workplace dilemma. It is a quiet calculation made somewhere between disappointing appraisals, rising EMIs and tempting LinkedIn messages: stay for guaranteed money or leave for a



bigger opportunity? Curious about what people actually choose, I spoke to professionals across industries, and their answers turned out to be far more emotional, practical and divided than I expected.

'I MISSED GRATUITY ONCE — AND

### HONESTLY, IT HURT'

The first person I spoke to was Kush Sharma, a working professional from Delhi. His response felt instantly familiar — the kind many mid-career professionals quietly wrestle with. Kush admitted he had already faced this crossroads once. He left a job before completing five years because a better opportunity came along, but the decision came with regret.

"I did feel bad about missing out on gratuity. At the end of the day, everyone works for financial growth and stability. Many employees spend 3-4 years in one organisation, gain experience and skills, and then get a better opportunity. It becomes difficult because gratuity is linked to completing five years."

# Need PF money fast? EPFO may soon let you withdraw funds through UPI

## Labour Minister Mansukh

### Mandaviya said on Tuesday that

### the Employees' Provident Fund

### Organisation (EPFO) has completed

### testing for a facility that would

### allow members to withdraw their

### Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)

### using the UPI payment gateway.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Waiting for your PF money could soon become much faster and easier. Instead of filing claims and waiting days for processing, EPFO subscribers may soon be able to transfer their provident fund money directly to their bank accounts using UPI.

The government says testing for this new feature has already been completed, and if all goes as planned, lakhs of

employees could soon access their EPF savings with just a few taps on their phones.

### EPFO TESTING UPI-BASED PF WITHDRAWALS

Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Tuesday that the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has completed testing for a facility that would allow members to withdraw their Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) using the UPI payment gateway.

Speaking to reporters, the minister said the withdrawn amount will be transferred directly into a subscriber's bank account. The move is part of EPFO's efforts to improve service delivery and make access to funds simpler for members.

At present, EPFO subscribers usually need to file withdrawal claims to access their PF money, a process many find

slow and paperwork-heavy.

### HOW THE NEW UPI FACILITY MAY WORK

Under the proposed system, a certain portion of an EPF account is expected to

complete the transfer, members may simply use their linked UPI PIN, adding an extra layer of security to the transaction.

Once the money reaches the bank account, members can use it freely, whether for digital payments, transfers, or cash withdrawals through ATMs.

### A BIG RELIEF FOR OVER SEVEN CRORE EPFO MEMBERS

The new system could benefit more than seven crore EPFO members across India. EPFO has reportedly been working to fix software-related issues to

ensure the smooth rollout of the facility. For many salaried employees, quicker access to PF money could prove useful during emergencies or major life events, especially when immediate funds are needed.



remain frozen, while a large part of the balance could be made available for withdrawal through UPI-linked bank accounts.

Subscribers will reportedly be able to view the amount eligible for withdrawal in their seeded bank accounts. To

## Short news

## Hundreds of fish float dead in TN's Vilathikulam

THOOTHUKUDI.(Agency)

Hundreds of fish died in the Ambal Nagar kanmani (waterbody) in Vilathikulam town. The public sought immediate clearance of the dead fish as an unbearable stench pervaded the area. Sources say the Ambal Nagar tank of the Public Works Department (PWD) is the source of water for nearly 18 villages. The tank receives water from rains and from jungle streams of Sithavanayakkanpatti, Mettupatti, Aatrangari, Kandasampuram and other villages. Pointing to pollution, the public alleged that wastewater from the streets of Ambal Nagar are drained directly into the waterbody spread over 60 acres due to the absence of a proper wastewater disposal system. Also, the water of the tank remains unusable as it was not desilted for more than 20 years. Also, the severity of the pollution is high as water level has reduced due to summer.

This had resulted in the death of fish, said an official of the Vilathikulam town panchayat, adding similar deaths of fish had occurred here especially before summer seasons.

Vilathikulam residents urged the Vilathikulam town panchayat to prevent the draining of wastewater into the tank. A study should be conducted to find the reason for the recurring incident of fish mortality, they appealed. The tank should be desilted to nearly 10 feet deep to ensure a clean environment, farmers said. The officials of the Public Works Department are yet to visit the tank, said sources.

## 'Simultaneous polls are in national interest': JPC begins 3-day Gujarat visit

Gandhinagar.(Agency)

A joint parliamentary committee (JPC) examining the proposal for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies began its three-day visit to Gujarat on Tuesday to hold discussions with stakeholders and gather views on the issue. On its first day, the panel met a team of top Gujarat government officials that was led by Chief Secretary MK Das, who apprised the JPC on the difficulties and costs involved in holding separate elections. Following the chief secretary's presentation, the JPC asked him to compile a department-wise report on the subject so that it could be shared with other states as a model to prepare similar state-specific reports.

The 41-member JPC is headed by BJP MP PP Chaudhary and has been touring states for consultation with stakeholders on two Bills—The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill 2024 and The Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024—that propose "One Nation, One Election". Gujarat is the seventh state that the Committee is visiting. Around 20 members of the committee are visiting Gujarat.

The Chief Secretary was accompanied by secretaries of several departments of the state government. Interacting with media persons from Gift City Club in the state capital, Chaudhary said that the panel held a meeting with the state's bureaucrats, and would now be meeting the chief minister, assembly speaker, deputy chief minister, civil societies, members of the bar council, etc., over the next two days. Top sources in the government said the chief secretary made a 45-minute-long presentation.

## Moon's upper surface has two distinct layers within centimetres, reveals Chandrayaan-3 'hop' experiment

Bengaluru.(Agency)

THE FAMOUS 'hop' experiment performed by the Chandrayaan-3 lander on the Moon was not just about demonstrating Indian space agency ISRO's ability to launch from the lunar surface. Scientists have now revealed new details about the upper surface of the Moon at the landing site using data collected during that 'hop' manoeuvre performed towards the end of planned active mission life of Chandrayaan-3.

In new findings published in the Astrophysical Journal, scientists from the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad have reported that the Moon's upper surface, the regolith as it is called, is not uniform, and its physical and thermal properties show sharp changes at just a few centimetres of depth. The loose porous layer at the top very quickly gives way to a denser compact layer just 2 to 6 cm below. More importantly, the paper, which is based on analysis of data produced by the ChASTE (Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment), suggests that the 'hop' experiment disturbed the upper loose layer enough to expose the subsequent layers to the instruments onboard the lander.

On September 4, 2023, just before it went into hibernation to survive the lunar night, the Chandrayaan-3 lander, which had made a historic soft-landing 10 days earlier, was made to perform a small jump.

## Over 26K pharmacies in Karnataka to shut for 24 hours over online medicine sales row

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Over 26,000 retail medical outlets across Karnataka are expected to shut down for 24 hours starting at 12 am on Wednesday, as part of a nationwide bandh protesting against online medicine sales and steep discounts offered by e-pharmacy platforms. However, pharmacies operating within hospitals and nursing homes across the state will remain open for emergency and public use. Raghunath Reddy, president of Karnataka Chemists & Druggists Association, said most chemists across the state are expected to participate in the protest organised by the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD).

Pharmacy association representatives said consumers have been advised to purchase essential medicines in advance to avoid inconvenience during the bandh. They said arrangements have been made to help patients access medicines if they face difficulties during the shutdown. Associations flay huge discounts

given by online pharmacies

Raghunath Reddy stressed that the agitation is against online medicine sales, deep discounting practices and the continuation of



COVID-era provisions such as GSR 220(E) and GSR 817, which pharmacy associations claimed were affecting traditional medical stores.

The association said the rules introduced during the COVID-19 lockdown allowed

medicines to be delivered to homes when public movement was restricted. They alleged that online platforms later expanded operations by stocking medicines in warehouses and supplying them through quick-commerce and grocery delivery platforms.

Online medicine sales violate provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and affect traditional retail pharmacies, they said, raising concerns over the storage and transportation of temperature-sensitive medicines. C V Ramesh Babu, secretary, Bengaluru Pharma Retailer and Distributors Forum, said medicines such as insulin and certain antibiotics require strict cold-chain maintenance and controlled temperatures below 25 degrees Celsius. He claimed medicines transported through quick-commerce delivery services may not always maintain proper storage conditions. The associations objected to heavy discounts offered by online pharmacies.

## Toilets at CMCH nephrology ward repaired after repeated complaints

COIMBATORE.(Agency)

After repeated complaints regarding poor sanitation at toilets attached to the wards in the nephrology department at Coimbatore Medical College Hospital, authorities have resolved the issue, and District Collector Pavankumar G Giriappanavar held an inspection at the hospital on Tuesday.

Recently, a patient had written to the dean, pointing out that the fitting in the toilets were broken in the inpatient wards, while some restrooms were in nearby wards were being used as dumping grounds. She also shot a video that showed the unhygienic condition of the toilets in the ward, with no water supply and garbage accumulation, and the video had gone viral on social media platforms.

It was also alleged that just one toilet was functional, and since the women's toilet had been blocked for long, women had been



forced to use the men's toilet.

Following this, the hospital authorities rectified the issue through the Public Works Department, said Dr Saravana Priya, Resident Medical Officer of CMCH. "Even if there is a minor issue, the PWD officials have been asked to fix it immediately. Meanwhile, people visiting the hospital should cooperate to keep the hospital

premises clean," she said. A sanitary staff working at CMCH said, "Patients dump waste materials like food waste, cloth, plastic wastes and even liquor bottles in the toilets. They raise a complaint if the toilet is not working, but they do not realise the reason for the situation. The nephrology department is one of the departments with a high number of patients visiting every day. If people cooperate, we can deal with the sanitation issues." CPI(M) Coimbatore district committee has urged the administration to fix the sanitation issues on a war footing across the campus. The party's district secretary C Padmanaban submitted a petition to Dean Dr Geethanjali, stating that thousands of outpatients and inpatients visit the century-old hospital daily, but the toilets and other facilities in many wards remain in a poor state. According to the officials, the number of inpatients.

## Maharashtra: Uncertainty grips students ahead of re-test as RCC shut after founder's arrest

Latur.(Agency)

RCC Classes in Latur remained shut on Tuesday as police personnel stood guard outside the institute and CBI teams continued searches inside following the arrest of founder Shivraj Motegaonkar in the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case. When The Indian Express visited RCC's headquarters in Latur, the institute remained closed while CBI teams questioned staff members inside the premises.

Even as the investigation continued, RCC circulated a schedule for a "Bounce Back Test Series" for the NEET re-examination on its social media handles, informing students about an upcoming preparation plan after the Centre announced a fresh examination. The schedule included revision tests and

preparation sessions ahead of the re-NEET examination ordered after the alleged paper leak controversy. The developments have left many students and parents uncertain about whether regular classes at the institute will

has been arrested, and nobody knows what will happen before the re-examination," said the father of a student from Beed district.

"A lot of students here are worried about losing preparation time again. The exam was already cancelled once, and now there is uncertainty about classes, tests and teachers," said a NEET aspirant associated with RCC Classes.

Several coaching institutes across Maharashtra have, meanwhile, announced free crash courses, test series and doubt-solving sessions for students affected by the controversy. The situation briefly turned tense on

Tuesday after Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) workers staged a protest outside RCC's office in Latur's Udyog Bhavan area, hurled eggs at the building and raised slogans demanding strict action in the case.



resume and how preparations for the re-examination will continue following Motegaonkar's arrest.

"We came to Latur because everyone said RCC was among the best institutes for NEET preparation. Now suddenly classes are shut, the owner

## Chhattisgarh: The gruelling 5-hour trek to bring a school to a remote village deep inside former Maoist HQ

Raipur.(Agency)

One February morning, a group of government officials, accompanied by several local residents, set out on a gruelling five-hour trek, navigating narrow paths through hilly terrain and crossing streams without a bridge or a boat. Their destination was a remote village in Chhattisgarh's Abujmahad — a region that had been under Maoist control for years and acted as the de facto headquarters for the banned Maoist party's leadership.

The officials, Block Education Officer, Block Resource Coordinator and Cluster Coordinator, were being taken by the village sarpanch and some residents to Karkebeda village, under Ghamandi Gram Panchayat, to set up a school there.

The village, 70 km from Narayanpur district headquarters, does not have road connectivity, doesn't appear on Google Maps, and until February, was not linked to the state's education system. The officials set up a primary school in a temporary shed equipped with a blackboard, and gave 20 children textbooks, slates and pencils. A local teacher, Runita Pawe, was appointed to run the school.

Three months later, the government has now sanctioned the construction of a proper building for the school as well as a subroad leading up to the building. Until 2012, the people of Karkabeda had the option of sending their children to a primary school in Kongali village, four kilometres away. However, like many schools in the Bastar division, this one was also shut down.

## BMC set to revive Seven Hill's hospital after being shut for 8 years

Mumbai.(Agency)

After staying out of operation for more than eight years, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to revive the Seven Hills Hospital under a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

The BMC has selected Capri Global Holdings Private Limited as the front runner for running the hospital, which has been defunct since 2018. It is set to table a proposal in the civic improvements committee on May 20 (Wednesday), where the appointment of the contractor is set to be finalized.

According to the proposal, the BMC will be leasing out the 66,000 square meter Seven Hills hospital to the bidder at an annual rent of Rs 10 crore for a 30-year period,

with a uniform increment of 1 percent applicable after every 10 years. The contract also states that once the hospital becomes operational, 20 percent of the total 1,500 beds available in the hospital will be reserved for the patients that will be referred from several civic hospitals. The patients admitted to these beds will be charged at civic body rates, and that the 20 per cent quota will be applicable for patients taking OPD services as well.

Speaking to The Indian Express, a senior civic official said, "The hospital is currently in a very poor state since it hasn't received any upkeep and maintenance for more than five years. Therefore, the



appointed bidder will be investing at least Rs 400 crore to upgrade the existing infrastructure that will involve not only retrofitting of the building but also procurement of all modern day equipment."

During the pandemic, Seven Hills served as one of the primary COVID care facilities in western Mumbai, catering to the residents of the city's western suburbs.

The Seven Hills hospital first initiated operation back in 2004, when the civic body had awarded the project to another private player—Soma International—under a similar 30-year lease arrangement. However, civic officials maintained that the operator failed to abide by the contractual obligations, and only 306 or 20 percent of the total beds remained operational. Furthermore, the proposal also stated that with time, property tax dues on the hospital mounted to a whopping.

## NEWS BOX

## Ravindra Jadeja 2.0? Harsh Dubey could be India's next all-format weapon

New Delhi. (Agency)

For more than a decade and a half, Ravindra Jadeja has been the ultimate security blanket for Indian cricket. At 37, he remains a multi-format monster, the kind of foundational player who single-handedly balances an entire starting XI. But logic dictates that the clock is ticking, and India's team management is staring down a massive, existential headache: who actually replaces him?

For years, the blueprint for life after Jadeja seemed simple: Axar Patel. A like-for-like clone down to electric fielding and sharp left-arm orthodox angles. Axar was the natural heir, yet, succession plans rarely survive the reality of form and time. Axar himself is now 32, and a largely forgettable Indian Premier League campaign has exposed the fragility of relying on a single contingency plan.

The future, it turns out, needs to be built now. Enter Harsh Dubey.

In a decisive move to test the true depth of the domestic circuit, selectors have called up the 23-year-old talent from Nagpur for both the



one-off Test and the three-match ODI series against Afghanistan.

"I am very confident he can fill Ravindra Jadeja's boots," Usman Ghani, head coach of the Vidarbha senior men's cricket team, told India Today. "He has done it for Vidarbha, and he could surely do it for India. What sets him apart isn't just his skill set, but his mentality. He is incredibly strong mentally, and he has been proving that across multiple formats in the domestic circuit."

### THE BREAKOUT

Ghani's unwavering faith is rooted in hard data. When Vidarbha lost veteran spinner Aditya Sarwate to Kerala in 2024, a massive vacuum opened at the heart of their bowling attack. A young Dubey was thrust into the role of spearhead. "He was required to step into giant shoes, and he did a splendid job," Ghani says.

## Another Banglawash: Pakistan sink to new low despite Rizwan fight in Sylhet Test



NEW DELHI. (Agency)

History has a cruel habit of repeating itself, but for Pakistan cricket, it has begun to feel like an endless loop of humiliation. Two years after being subjected to an unprecedented home whitewash at the hands of Bangladesh, the humiliation was complete on foreign soil. On a humid Wednesday morning at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, the final wickets crumbled to seal a comprehensive 78-run victory for the hosts, confirming another historic "Banglawash" with a 2-0 series sweep.

Chasing a mammoth, record-breaking target of 437, Pakistan's fourth-innings resistance ended at 358. On paper, scoring over 350 in the final innings of a subcontinental Test is a commendable feat—a point captain Shan Masood futilely clung to in the post-match ceremony. But in reality, it was a veneer of respectability masking a familiar, structural collapse. The final morning began with an agonising, rain-delayed wait, but once the wet patches dried and play commenced, Bangladesh required less than an hour to dismantle the remaining resistance.

All Pakistani hopes rested squarely on the shoulders of Mohammad Rizwan. Resuming on his overnight score of 75 with Pakistan at 316 for seven, the wicketkeeper-batter played with the grit of a man fully aware that he was standing on a burning deck. He navigated a probing, hostile short-ball spell from Taskin Ahmed early on, surviving an awkward inside edge that narrowly missed his stumps.

Rizwan and Sajid Khan began to score freely, adding 46 runs to the overnight score and bringing the equation down to less than 100 runs. However, left-arm spinner Taijul Islam got the breakthrough, removing Sajid in the 96th over and completing a five-wicket haul. The definitive, heartbreaking moment for the visitors came when Rizwan, orchestrating a lonely crusade after Sajid's exit, fell just six runs short of a well-deserved century. He poked at a delivery angled across him by Shoriful Islam and was caught at slip cordon.

# India's squad vs Afghanistan: Decoding the big snubs, what it means for the future

**The squad announcement for the Afghanistan series marks the official blueprint for India's future. While senior pillars remain, the selectors have actively initiated a transition phase, bleeding a younger core ahead of the 2027 World Cup cycle.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's squad announcement for the Afghanistan ODI and Test series was supposed to mark the beginning of two massive journeys.

In ODI cricket, it officially starts India's final year of combinations, experiments and selection calls before the 2027 World Cup in

South Africa, while in Tests, it opens what the Shubman Gill-led side will hope becomes a redemption season after a deeply disappointing 2025-26 red-ball cycle. But once the squads dropped, the real conversation quickly shifted towards the names missing rather than the names included.

Rishabh Pant lost both his ODI spot and Test vice-captaincy. Mohammed Shami was not even in the selectors' longer-format thinking any more. Jadeja and Axar were rested together, while even recent ODI centurions Yashasvi Jaiswal and Rituraj Gaikwad could not force their way into the 50-over squad.

At the same time, India pushed several younger names into the spotlight.

Harsh Dubey earned selection in both formats. Manav Suthar entered the Test setup. Gurmoor Brar received a maiden call-up across formats. Prince Yadav was brought into the ODI squad as another younger fast-bowling option India want to assess ahead of the 2027 World Cup. It was difficult to ignore the larger pattern unfolding underneath the

selection meeting. India are not exactly shutting the door on the older core yet. But they are very clearly preparing for what comes next.

"With regard to one-day cricket, we have 15-16 months left to that World Cup. We



want to assess what our options are, particularly keeping in mind the conditions in South Africa, and give exposure to some of the newer guys," India chief selector Ajit Agarkar said.

India ODI squad vs Afghanistan: Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Shreyas

Iyer, KL Rahul, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Nitish Reddy, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, Prasidh Krishna, Gurmoor Brar, Harsh Dubey.

India Test squad vs Afghanistan: Shubman Gill (capt), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul (vc), Sai Sudharsan, Rishabh Pant, Devdutt Padikkal, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Manav Suthar, Gurmoor Brar, Harsh Dubey, Dhruv Jurel.

PANT'S WHITE-BALL SPOT IS NO LONGER SAFE

Pant's omission felt harsh because it arrived from two directions at once. He was removed as India's Test vice-captain, with KL Rahul stepping into the role under Gill's leadership setup. Then came the bigger surprise, Pant missing entirely from the ODI squad.

But the selectors very carefully separated those two decisions. Agarkar repeatedly stressed that Pant remains one of India's most valuable Test cricketers.

## Arsenal crowned Premier League champions: The 22-year wait is finally over

**Arsenal are Premier League champions, ending a 22-year drought. Mikel Arteta's side clinched the title after Manchester City's 1-1 draw at Bournemouth, sparking wild celebrations ahead of Sunday's coronation clash at Crystal Palace.**

London. (Agency)

The agonising 22-year drought is officially over. Arsenal are the champions of England once again. Mikel Arteta's side secured the club's 14th top-flight league title on Tuesday night after second-placed Manchester City stumbled to a dramatic 1-1 draw away at Bournemouth.

The arithmetic is locked. The Gunners sit an unassailable four points clear at the summit with just one match remaining. What was supposed to be a high-stakes final weekend has transformed into a glorious coronation this Sunday when Arsenal travel to Selhurst Park to face Crystal Palace.

### How the Title Was Won: A Tuesday Night Drama

The tension in North London had been building since Monday evening, when Arsenal ground out a gritty 1-0 victory over Burnley at the Emirates Stadium. Kai

Havertz proved to be the hero on the night, latching onto a pinpoint assist from Bukayo Saka in the 36th minute to secure the vital three points. The result threw the ultimate



gauntlet down to Manchester City. Pep Guardiola's side travelled to the Vitality Stadium knowing that only a victory on the south coast would suffice to take the title race down to the final day of the campaign. Instead, they ran into a Bournemouth brick

wall. The hosts took a stunning first-half lead in the 38th minute through Eli Junior Kroupi, sending shockwaves through the footballing world. City piled on the pressure in the second half, throwing everything forward. A stoppage-time equaliser from Erling Haaland in the 90th minute offered a brief glimmer of hope for the visitors, but the final whistle blew mere moments later, mathematically handing Arsenal the silverware.

In a poetic twist of fate, the title was delivered to Arsenal with a massive tactical assist from Bournemouth manager Andoni Iraola, a close childhood friend of Mikel Arteta. Arteta, who had jokingly admitted the previous day that he would be Bournemouth's "biggest fan" for a couple of hours on Tuesday, saw his wishes answered in spectacular fashion.

## Vaibhav Sooryavanshi not buying into the hype, its just the start of a long journey

Jaipur. (Agency)

The Indian Premier League (IPL) has long been a launchpad for instant stardom, but few players have seen their stock rise as rapidly as 15-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. On Tuesday night, the teenage opener left the cricket world awestruck at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, smashing a breathtaking 38-ball 93 to lead Rajasthan Royals to a crucial seven-wicket victory over Lucknow Super Giants (LSG).

Chasing a massive target of 221, Sooryavanshi demolished the LSG bowling attack with 10 towering sixes and seven boundaries. It was an extraordinary exhibition of raw power and hand-eye coordination that even earned him the highest praise from legendary commentator Ian Bishop on air: "He is ready." Yet, despite reclaiming the

tournament's Orange Cap with 579 runs and securing an India-A call-up, he remains completely unmoved by the hype

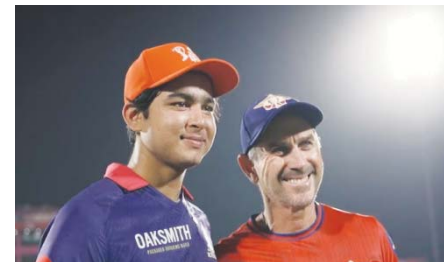


surrounding his name. CALCULATED CHASE, NOT IMPULSE What makes Sooryavanshi's knock stand out is how deeply calculated it was. Faced with a steep 221-run mountain, a teenager might

normally look to hit his way out of trouble immediately. Instead, the young southpaw showed a level of tactical maturity that completely belies his age, taking his time early on to assess the conditions before launching an all-out assault.

"Nothing much. I was just thinking because I was sitting outside during the bowling innings and the wicket looked good," Sooryavanshi revealed in his post-match interview. "I was thinking that today I shouldn't rush too much at the start, I should take some time and if I bat for a longer period, it's going to help the batter at the other end as well." Even after a quieter start, he reached his half-century in the blink of an eye, eventually going on to plunder 29 runs in a single over against India's fastest bowling asset, Mayank Yadav.

## Can I get a photo? Australia great turns Sooryavanshi fanboy after Jaipur storm



New Delhi. (Agency)

For three and a half decades, Justin Langer has lived his life inside cricket's most unforgiving cauldrons. He has ducked under Shoaib Akhtar bouncers, traded verbal volleys with standard-issue fast-bowling greats, and coached Australia with the kind of intense, unblinking grit that defines the baggy green myths. He is not a man easily moved to awe.

Yet, on a humid Jaipur evening, the 55-year-old Australian legend found himself reduced to the ultimate modern cricketing condition: becoming a fanboy for a 15-year-old.

As Vaibhav Sooryavanshi stood on the outfield of the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, dutifully churning out platitudes for a standard post-match IPL digital video, a shadow fell over the frame. It was Langer. The Lucknow Super Giants head coach hadn't just stayed back to offer a polite, perfunctory handshake. He wanted a memento.

"Can I get a photo, please?" Langer asked, almost gently, interrupting the recording. The teenager paused, momentarily shedding his status as the tournament's premier destroyer to offer the respectful compliance of a schoolboy. Langer beamed, tucked into the frame, and delivered a parting line that belonged in a time capsule: "I am going to treasure that photo. Good luck for your career. Go well."

It was a vignette that perfectly captured the surreal nature of the Sooryavanshi phenomenon. The Rajasthan Royals prodigy hadn't just beaten LSG with his breathtaking 38-ball 93; he had entirely disarmed them.

PRIVILEGE TO WATCH HIM OUT: LANGER Hours later, the sheer disbelief had not worn off. Sitting in the press room, Langer's mind was still reeling, trying to contextualise what the IPL was witnessing.

"We've seen it all season, he's the leading run scorer," Langer remarked, shook. "In all my time, I've seen some amazing players in 35 years of cricket. To see a young man bat like that, not just tonight, but throughout the series, is breathtaking."

# KKR vs MI: Playoff hopes on the line for Kolkata as Mumbai look to crash party

**KKR vs MI Preview: Three-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders find themselves in a do-or-die situation as they take on an already-eliminated Mumbai Indians at Eden Gardens on Wednesday, with their IPL 2026 playoff hopes hanging in the balance.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Kolkata Knight Riders have no margin for error left in IPL 2026. With their play-off hopes hanging by a thread, Ajinkya Rahane's side will need a win against an already-eliminated Mumbai Indians at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday to remain alive in the race for the final play-off berth.

A defeat would officially end KKR's campaign for the second successive season under Rahane after their eighth-place finish in 2025, a year after winning the title under

Shreyas Iyer. Even a win may not guarantee qualification, with KKR also relying on Punjab Kings slipping up against Lucknow Super Giants later this week.

Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers Hyderabad have already sealed playoff spots, while LSG and MI are out of contention. Punjab Kings, Rajasthan Royals, Chennai Super Kings, Delhi Capitals and KKR remain in the fight for the lone remaining place.

### KKR IN MUST-WIN SPACE

KKR's qualification equation is simple on paper but complicated in reality. They must win both their remaining matches and hope Punjab Kings lose to LSG. Rajasthan Royals currently hold the clearest path among the chasing teams, and their big win over LSG, powered by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi on Tuesday, has put them ahead.

A defeat on Wednesday will bring the curtains

down on KKR's chances. KKR will regret the way their season began. The Shah Rukh Khan-owned franchise has won five of its last six matches, but the late



surge came after a poor start that left them playing catch-up through most of the campaign. Captain Rahane and coach

Abhishek Nayar took time to settle on a stable combination, something marquee overseas signing Cameron Green admitted after KKR's win over Gujarat Titans.

"I think it just took us a while, maybe a bit too long, to figure out the right roles and get the right people in the right positions," Green had said.

Since their first win against Rajasthan Royals, KKR have looked a more settled side. Finn Allen has rediscovered his touch at the top, including a century and a 35-ball 93 in his last three innings. Angkrish Raghavanshi has continued to impress, while Green has started delivering with both bat and ball after arriving for Rs 25.20 crore at the auction.

Vice-captain Rinku Singh has played his finisher's role consistently, while Sunil Narine remains KKR's biggest weapon with the ball.



# Rashmika Mandanna

**Calls Cocktail 2 Gang 'Beautiful Mess' As She Shares Photos, Fans Say 'Waiting'**

Rashmika Mandanna, Shahid Kapoor and Kriti Sanon's Cocktail 2 is all set to release in theatres on June 19. The makers have recently confirmed that the trailer will be out on May 29. Recently, the musical event was held and actors were seen attending it. Rashmika Mandanna shared photos and called the gang beautiful mess. Taking to her Instagram handle, Rashmika Mandanna shared a series of photos and wrote, "I think this gang with Diya, Kunzee and Ally are just one big beautiful mess together." Fans immediately reacted with heart emojis. One of the fans wrote, "Waiting for this trio." Another wrote, "Waiting for Cocktail 2, All the best Guysss!!" As per an update shared with the media, the trailer of Shahid Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, and Kriti Sanon starrer will be released on May 29. The film is scheduled to release in cinemas on June 19, and ahead of it, fans have been waiting quite some time for the trailer of the r o m - c o m .

Mashooka features Shahid Kapoor romancing Kriti Sanon in Sicily, Italy, and other picturesque locations. Meanwhile, sung by Arijit Singh, Tujhko is a slow romantic track that focuses on Shahid Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna's story.

Rashmika Mandanna and Kriti Sanon, in a light-hearted banter, were seen clashing over who was the producer's favourite at 'Cocktail 2'. The fun incident took place during the music launch of 'Cocktail 2', held at a popular hotspot in Mumbai on Sunday night, which was followed by a special media meet and greet session.

The light hearted moment began when Kriti Sanon jokingly welcomed everyone to "my song launch," instantly sparking mock protests from Rashmika Mandanna. During the playful banter, Kriti jokingly said, "First of all, all of you, welcome to my song launch, guys."

Cocktail 2, directed by Homi Adajania, is set to release on June 19, 2026, featuring a fresh cast led by Shahid Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, and Kriti Sanon. Cocktail 2 is positioned as a spiritual sequel to the 2012 hit Cocktail, which starred Saif Ali Khan, Deepika Padukone, and Diana Penty. The film has been shot across multiple locations, including Sicily in Italy and several places in Delhi and North India such as Chhatrapur, Gurugram, and South Delhi. The film is produced by Maddock Films and written by Luv Ranjan.



**Four-Month Pregnant Madhuri Dixit Felt 'Dizzy' Shooting Dola Re Dola For Devdas, Reveals Crew Member**



Madhuri Dixit was reportedly four months pregnant while shooting the iconic song Dola Re Dola from Devdas. The revelation was recently made by Rubina Khan, a former crew member of legendary choreographer Saroj Khan, who worked closely on the film's dance sequences. The behind-the-scenes detail has grabbed attention because Dola Re Dola, featuring Madhuri and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, remains one of Bollywood's most celebrated dance numbers even more than two decades later.

**'Dola Re Dola' took 17 days to shoot**

Speaking to Bollywood Thikana, Rubina Khan recalled the intense rehearsals and physically demanding shoot behind the famous song from filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's period drama. "It took 17 days to shoot that song. Rehearsals happened for at least a month. We rehearsed separately, and the lead actors rehearsed separately," Rubina said.

She then revealed that Madhuri was pregnant during filming and struggled while performing one particular dance step. "There's a step in which Madhuri ma'am turns and sits down. That shot kept happening from 9 am to 10 pm because she was four months pregnant. So, she couldn't turn properly and was feeling dizzy," she added. Rubina also shared that the actress was unwell during the shoot but continued performing without asking for changes. "She also had fever at that time. She struggled a lot," recalled Rubina.

**Madhuri refused to change difficult dance steps**  
Rubina praised Madhuri's discipline and dedication towards Saroj Khan's choreography. According to her, the actress never complained even when the steps became physically exhausting. "She'd never ask for a step to be changed. Whatever Master ji said is set in stone." Rubina further compared Madhuri's attitude to younger actors who sometimes request easier choreography. "Newer artists would still tell Master ji a step is tough and if it can be changed. But Master ji would seldom change a step she suggested."

**Who Was Inder Kaur? Know About Punjabi Singer Found Dead In Ludhiana Canal After Alleged Abduction**



The body of 29-year-old Punjabi singer and make-up artist Inder Kaur, popularly known as Yashinder Kaur, was recovered from the Neelo canal in Punjab several days after she was reportedly abducted in Ludhiana. She had been missing since May 13, according to PTC Punjab. Her family identified the body after it was found on Tuesday morning, May 19, at around 11 am. Authorities have since sent the body to the Civil Hospital in Samrala for a postmortem examination and completion of legal procedures.

The investigation had intensified earlier this week after the singer's brother, Jotinder Singh, filed a police complaint regarding her disappearance. Acting on his statement, authorities registered an FIR on May 15 against Moga-based Sukhwinder Singh, alias Sukha, and his associate Karamjit Singh. As per the complaint, Inder Kaur had stepped out on the evening of May 13 to purchase groceries in her Ford Figo car, but did not return home. When repeated calls to her went unanswered, her family launched a search before eventually reporting the matter to the police. During the course of the investigation, the family allegedly learned that the singer was acquainted with Sukhwinder Singh, a resident of Bhalur village in Moga district. According to Jotinder Singh, the accused had expressed a desire to marry his sister, but she had reportedly turned down the proposal. The family has alleged that the accused kidnapped the singer at gunpoint before allegedly murdering her over personal animosity stemming from a rejected marriage proposal. As per an ABP report, the complainant also claimed that the prime accused had escaped to Canada following the incident and had only recently returned to Punjab prior to the alleged crime.

Police officials have confirmed that the investigation remains underway, adding that further legal action will be taken based on the outcome of the probe. Born in 1997, Inder Kaur was a Punjab-based singer and make-up artist who had built a growing presence in the Punjabi music industry through her songs, live performances, and social media activity.



# Sonakshi Sinha

**Says She's Now Focused On Doing Roles She Truly Wants: 'I'm Very Grateful'**

Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming streaming movie 'System', is looking back at her journey in cinema. The actress spoke with IANS during the promotions of 'System' in Mumbai, and opened up about doing masala films like 'R... Rajkumar' and 'Rowdy Rathore' during the initial phase of her career. Talking about how her choices have changed over the years, Sonakshi told IANS, "I really thoroughly enjoyed myself working on those films. I think at that time, I was also in a time where I was doing a lot of these very colourful and very, so to speak, spicy films. And I enjoyed that too. And I think the work that I'm doing now I enjoyed that too. I think at that point of time, that was what was required from me as an artiste".

She further mentioned, "And now this is what is required from me as an artiste. I want to be that actor that you can put in any film. And I will try to be that. But of course, I've reached a point also where I'm doing only the kind of work that I want to do now. So, it was a good journey for me. I think I had to do those films to kind of land up doing the films that I'm doing today. So, that brought me the audience, that brought me the love and support of so many people. Which is why I'm able to do roles like this today. So, I'm very grateful". Meanwhile, 'System' is a courtroom drama, and sees Sonakshi as a lawyer, and Jyothika as a stenographer. It marks Sonakshi's 1st performance as a lawyer. She essays the role of Neha, a determined young lawyer played by Sonakshi Sinha, taking on a tough challenge from her father (played by Ashutosh Gowariker) to be worthy of a partnership in his firm. Produced by Pammi Baweja, Harman Baweja, and Smitha Baliga, 'System' will drop on May 22 on Prime Video.



NEWS BOX

5.9-magnitude earthquake hits Japan's Kagoshima, no tsunami warning for now

World. (Agency)

A powerful 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck Kagoshima region of southern Japan on Wednesday, shaking buildings and triggering panic among residents. The tremors were felt across several parts of the area, though authorities were still assessing the situation. No tsunami warning had



been issued immediately after the quake, and there were no initial reports of casualties or major damage. According to Japanese media, the Japan Meteorological Agency said "the magnitude 5.9 quake struck near Okinawa Main Island, and had an intensity of upper 5 on the Japanese scale of 0 to 7 in the hardest-hit areas," adding, "There is no risk of tsunami".

Japan, one of the world's most earthquake-prone countries, frequently experiences seismic activity due to its location along the Pacific Ring of Fire. The latest seismic activity comes just four days after another strong earthquake struck off the eastern coast of Japan's main island of Honshu, briefly disrupting train services and prompting emergency alerts across parts of the Tohoku region. That quake also caused no tsunami threat or immediate reports of casualties or significant damage.

Mosque security guard hailed as hero for saving 140 children in San Diego attack

World. (Agency)

A security guard killed in the shooting at the Islamic Centre of San Diego has been hailed as a hero for helping save about 140 schoolchildren by confronting two teenage gunmen during the attack, authorities said on Tuesday. San Diego police identified the guard as Amin Abdullah, also known as Brian Climax. According to Police Chief Scott Wahl, Abdullah exchanged gunfire with the suspects in the mosque parking lot on Monday, delaying and distracting them as they attempted to move deeper into the complex.

Abdullah was fatally shot during the confrontation, along with two other men who authorities said helped draw the attackers away from crowded areas of the mosque while officers rushed to the scene. Police said Abdullah also transmitted the emergency radio call that triggered lockdown procedures inside the mosque complex, allowing worshippers and children attending classes at the adjacent Bright Horizon Academy to shelter behind locked doors. "His actions, without a doubt, delayed, distracted and ultimately deterred those two individuals from gaining access to the greater areas of the mosque where as many as 140 kids were within 15 feet of these suspects," Wahl told reporters, according to Reuters. The two suspects, identified by officials as Caleb Vasquez, 18, and Cain Clark, 17, fled the mosque complex by car shortly after the shooting. Police later found both teenagers dead inside the vehicle several blocks away from what investigators believe were self-inflicted gunshot wounds. Taha Hassane, imam and director of the mosque, described the three victims as "our martyrs and our heroes."

Authorities said the attack is being investigated as a hate crime. FBI officials confirmed that one of the suspects left behind a manifesto, while investigators also discovered anti-Islamic writings inside a vehicle connected to the pair.

India's Nuclear Sector Opens to the World: How the SHANTI Act Is Rewriting History

World. (Agency)

A 20-member U.S. nuclear industry delegation met Union Minister of State for Science and Technology Dr Jitendra Singh on Monday to explore investment opportunities in India's nuclear sector, months after the SHANTI Act overhauled the country's six-decade-old nuclear laws.

The delegation, comprising representatives from the Nuclear Energy Institute and the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum, discussed manufacturing partnerships, supply chain integration and technology cooperation under India's Nuclear Energy Mission.

Singh said India aims to scale nuclear power capacity from 8.8 gigawatts to 100 gigawatts by 2047 through a phased expansion strategy, adding that the programme was creating major opportunities for global partnerships in manufacturing, technology cooperation, supply chain integration and advanced research. The estimated market value stands at nearly 300 billion dollars. The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Act, 2025, repeals the Atomic Energy Act of 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act of 2010, replacing both with a single comprehensive law.

US set up a chessboard with Munir as a pawn years ago. It's playing out now

**A chessboard had been laid much earlier. A game had begun even before former Pakistan PM Imran Khan realised it, and Asim Munir took over as the army chief. The US moved the pieces for a regime change in Pakistan. It now has a strategically placed player as the Middle East burns.**

DAKAR. (Agency)

Pakistan is where anything can happen. It's also a place where everything happens for a reason. Nothing happens in isolation. Governments fall, generals rise, prime ministers turn into prisoners and prisoners into symbols of resistance. Former Pakistan PM Imran Khan's rise to power, his anti-American posturing, his "absolutely not" doctrine, his Moscow visit

on the very day Russia invaded Ukraine, the all-out war between him and the military establishment, his fall from grace, imprisonment, and now the rise of Field Marshal Asim Munir as arguably the most powerful man Pakistan has seen are all connected. The chain of events in Pakistan since the early 2020s led to the outcome which was planned. It all seemed orchestrated by a king and his pawn, according to a report by American outlet Drop Site News on May 18. The Drop Site News report now appears to fit all the events mentioned above together like a jigsaw puzzle.

The chessboard had been laid much earlier. The game had already begun long before Imran Khan realised it. And in the game reminiscent of the "Great" one from the Cold War-era, Asim Munir was not the king, but the pawn being moved across the

board. Washington watched, nudged and orchestrated events in Pakistan from a distance. While headlines on the report's



revelations focused largely on Imran Khan's removal from the prime minister's post through an internationally-backed plot. But another angle, perhaps even more intriguing, is that the man who today sits at the pinnacle of Pakistan's power structure,

Asim Munir, was central to the bigger, more geopolitical rearrangement. The report also noted that Pakistan, in pursuit of its "strategic depth," continues to oscillate between dependence and bargaining at high tables in Washington, Beijing, Riyadh and Rawalpindi, while behaving like a sovereign nation.

At the heart of it all is the cipher case. It is a classified diplomatic cable sent in March 2022, by Pakistan's then ambassador to Washington, Assad Majeed Khan, to Islamabad's Foreign Ministry. The cable quoted senior US official Donald Lu as allegedly saying that "all will be forgiven in Washington" if the no-confidence vote against Imran Khan succeeded. That single line would go on to become the political nuclear weapon around which Imran Khan would base his anti-American narrative, much to the displeasure of the establishment in Rawalpindi.

Moment US cargo plane lost engine before fiery crash that killed 15

World. (Agency)

New surveillance footage released by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) shows the precise moment UPS Airlines Flight 2976 lost its left engine and pylon during takeoff from Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, offering investigators their clearest visual evidence yet of the catastrophic November 2025 crash that killed 15 people, New York Post reported. The newly released CCTV video captures the cargo aircraft accelerating down the runway before lifting off.

Seconds later, the left engine and its pylon — the structure attaching the engine to the wing — can be seen tearing away from the aircraft.

In the footage, the detached engine falls toward the ground as the jet continues



climbing briefly, trailing debris, before losing control. Moments later, the aircraft disappears from view and a fireball erupts, sending thick black smoke into the sky over Louisville's industrial outskirts.

The aircraft, a 34-year-old McDonnell Douglas MD-11F freighter, had departed for Hawaii on November 4, 2025. The crash happened moments after takeoff, scattering debris over

nearly half a mile and igniting a large blaze near the airport.

All three crew members on board died, along with 12 people on the ground. More than 20 others were injured. UPS identified the deceased crew as Captain Richard Wartenberg (57), First Officer Lee Truitt (45), and International Relief Officer Captain Dana Diamond (62). One of the injured on the ground, Alain Rodriguez Colina, later died from his injuries on Christmas Day, raising the death toll to 15.

NTSB PROBES UPS FLIGHT 2976 CRASH

The footage was released as the NTSB opened a two-day hearing in Washington this week to examine why the aircraft lost an engine shortly after departure, a CNN report said.

Trump says US could strike Iran again within days as Tehran warns of 'new fronts'

World. (Agency)

Tensions between the United States and Iran escalated sharply on Tuesday after US President Donald Trump said Washington could launch fresh military strikes against Iran within days if ongoing negotiations fail, while Tehran warned it would retaliate by opening "new fronts" against the US.

Speaking at the White House, Trump claimed he had been close to authorising military action before pausing the decision following requests from American allies in the Gulf region. "I was about an hour away from making a decision," Trump told reporters, adding that Gulf partners had informed him that negotiations brokered by Pakistan were making progress and requested additional time for diplomacy.

The US President said he agreed to allow

"a limited period of time — two or three days, at least" for talks to continue. However, he warned that military action remained on the table.



"It could be Friday, it could be the weekend, it could be early next week," Trump said while discussing the possibility of renewed strikes. "We can't let them have a new nuclear weapon."

Trump also claimed that Iranian leaders were "begging" for a deal, though he

did not provide further details. Referring to previous failed negotiations, Trump said the current round of diplomacy appeared different from earlier attempts. "We've had periods of time where we had, we thought, pretty much getting close to making a deal, and it didn't work out. But this is a little bit different," he said. Meanwhile, Israeli broadcaster Kan TV reported that the United States and Israel had completed joint preparations for a possible resumption of military operations against Iran.

Citing a US security official, the report said, "The United States and Israel are fully coordinated. Neither side will be surprised if a decision is made to resume the war." According to the report, the Israeli military has also strengthened defensive preparations amid fears that growing speculation about renewed conflict could trigger a preemptive Iranian response.

Small price to pay: Norwegian journalist says Insta, Facebook accounts suspended

World. (Agency)

Norwegian journalist Helle Lyng, who drew attention after attempting to question Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a joint media briefing in Norway, has claimed that her Instagram and Facebook accounts were suspended amid a wave of online backlash. Posting on X, Lyng said she had been unable to access her Instagram account throughout the day before it was suspended. "It is a small prize to pay for press freedom, but I've never experienced it before," she wrote while sharing a screenshot of the alleged suspension notice.

In another post, Lyng informed users trying to contact her through Meta-owned platforms that both her Instagram and Facebook accounts had been suspended. "I have wanted to respond to as many Indians as possible, but my responses will now be delayed. I hope I will get my accounts back," she wrote while tagging Meta.

The controversy began after Lyng attempted to question PM Modi during a joint media interaction with Norway's prime minister. "Why don't you take some questions from the freest press in the world?" she shouted as the Indian prime minister left the room. While it was unclear whether Modi heard the remark, the moment quickly went viral on social media.

Later, Lyng defended her actions on X, saying she did not expect Modi to answer her question. Referring to global press freedom rankings, she wrote that Norway occupies the top spot on the World Press Freedom Index while India ranks 157th. Lyng works for Oslo-based newspaper Dagsavisen.

As the exchange triggered political reactions online, the Indian embassy in Norway invited Lyng to a separate press briefing later in the day. During that interaction, she again raised questions related to India's credibility and human rights record. MEA Secretary (West) Sibi George responded by highlighting India's civilisational history, contributions such as chess and yoga, and the country's Covid vaccine outreach.

The episode also sparked a fierce social media backlash against Lyng, with several users accusing her of being a "foreign plant", "spy" and even a "Chinese proxy", citing some of her earlier articles on China and President Xi Jinping. Others argued that the event was a joint media briefing rather than a formal press conference. As criticism intensified, Lyng issued another clarification on X. "I never thought I would have to write this, but I am not a foreign spy of any sort, sent out by any foreign government. My work is journalism," she said.

Despite the controversy, the incident dramatically boosted Lyng's visibility online. Her X following reportedly surged from fewer than 800 followers before Monday to more than 45,000 within days.

Russian troops secretly trained by China return to fight against Ukraine: Report

World. (Agency)

China's armed forces secretly trained about 200 Russian military personnel in China late last year and some have since returned to fight in Ukraine, according to three European intelligence agencies and documents seen by Reuters. While China and Russia have held a number of joint military exercises since Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Beijing has repeatedly stated that it is neutral in the conflict and presents itself as a peace mediator.

The covert training sessions, which predominantly focused on the use of drones, were outlined in a dual-language Russian-Chinese agreement signed by senior Russian and Chinese officers in Beijing on July 2, 2025. The agreement, reviewed by Reuters, said about 200 Russian troops would be trained at military facilities in locations including Beijing and the eastern city of Nanjing. The sources said around this number subsequently trained in China.

The agreement also said hundreds of Chinese troops would undergo training at military facilities in Russia.

By training Russian military personnel at an operational and tactical level who then participate in Ukraine, China is far more directly involved in the war on the European continent than previously known, one intelligence official said.

The Russian and Chinese defence ministries did not respond to requests for comment on the details outlined in this article.

On the Ukraine crisis, China has consistently maintained an objective and impartial stance and worked to promote peace talks, this is consistent and clear and is witnessed by the international community," China's foreign ministry said in a statement to Reuters. "Relevant parties should not deliberately stoke confrontation or shift blame." The intelligence agencies spoke on condition they not be identified in

order to discuss sensitive information. European powers, which see Russia as a major security threat, have watched warily at increasingly close relations between Russia and China, the



world's second largest economy and an important European Union trade partner. The two nations announced a "no limits" strategic partnership days before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and pledged to conduct military exercises to

rehearse coordination between their armed forces. As the West tried to isolate Russia, China provided a lifeline by buying its oil, gas and coal.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping is due to host Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday and Wednesday, less than a week after U.S. President Donald Trump's high-profile visit.

China and Russia have cast Putin's trip - his 25th visit to China - as further evidence of their "all-weather" partnership, even as the West urges Beijing to pressure Moscow into ending its war in Ukraine.

DRONE WARFARE

Drones have proved to be a vital weapon in Ukraine. Both sides use long-range models to attack targets hundreds of miles away, while on the battlefield, smaller drones remote controlled by pilots using first person view equipment (FPV) and armed with explosives dominate the sky, making it hazardous for armoured.