

Marco Rubio Visits Saint Teresa's Mother House, Children's Home In Kolkata

►Marco Rubio's arrival in Kolkata ended a 14-year gap since a US secretary of state last visited the city.

New Delhi.(Agency)

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Mother House, the headquarters of Saint Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, here on Saturday. Rubio arrived in Kolkata this morning, the first stop of his maiden four-day visit to India, and was welcomed by US Ambassador Sergio Gor at the city airport. He visited the headquarters of the Missionaries of Charity and spoke with its officials. Accompanied by US Ambassador Gor and other officials, Rubio later visited Nirmala Shishu Bhavan - a children's home run by Missionaries of Charity - during his Kolkata stopover. The Missionaries of Charity, founded by

Mother Teresa in Kolkata, is a Catholic congregation dedicated to serving the poor, sick and destitute across the world. "Joined @SecRubio in Kolkata for a visit to the Missionaries of Charity,



Moments like these remind us the U.S.-India partnership rests not only on strong policies, but also on shared values and the spirit of selfless service that

transcends borders," the US Ambassador to India posted on X. Rubio's arrival in Kolkata ended a 14-year gap since a US secretary of state last visited the city. It also came only weeks after West Bengal witnessed a major political transition with a BJP-led government assuming office. In a post on X, the US Ambassador to India said, "Secretary Marco Rubio has landed in Kolkata. This is his first trip to India. Later today, we will call on Prime Minister @narendramodi in New Delhi. Trade, Technology, Defense, QUAD, and many other items to discuss and advance over the next few days!" Rubio became the first US secretary of state to visit Kolkata since Hillary Clinton travelled to the city in May 2012.

In Ankleshwar, Has the Fear of Khaki Vanished? Illegal Gambling Dens and Toxic Chemical-Laced Liquor Trade Flourishing Behind Sargam Shopping Center

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Makan

Ankleshwar. A shocking and potentially deadly case exposing the collapse of prohibition enforcement and law and order in Gujarat has surfaced from Ankleshwar in Bharuch district. Right under the nose of the Ankleshwar 'A' Division Police Station, illegal activities are allegedly flourishing openly behind Sargam Shopping Center under the cover of slum settlements. According to highly placed sources, two alleged female bootleggers identified as Bharti and Jyoti are reportedly operating illegal gambling dens without fear. Activities such as "Teen Patti," "Varli Matka," and "Chakli-Popati" gambling are allegedly being conducted openly in the area. Even more alarming, another alleged bootlegger, Ramesh Vasava, is accused of running illicit country liquor distillation units, creating what locals describe as a "death trade." Profit Over Human Lives? Fear of Major Liquor Tragedy Due to Chemical-Mixed Toxic Alcohol! The most disturbing allegation is that Ramesh Vasava is allegedly preparing country liquor himself in illegal brewing units. Investigative findings suggest that dangerous and potentially lethal chemicals are allegedly being mixed into the liquor to



increase intoxication levels and maximize profits. Sources claim the stronger the intoxication, the higher the illegal earnings from addicted consumers. This raises a serious public safety concern: if a major liquor tragedy occurs in Ankleshwar due to consumption of chemical-laced toxic liquor, who will be held accountable? Residents are questioning whether local authorities are waiting for a disaster involving multiple deaths before taking action. Alleged Kingpin

'Dattu' and the Massive Extortion Network Sources further claim that nearly 30 to 40 illegal operations are functioning freely in the area without interference. Locals allege that a middleman known as "Dattu" acts as a key facilitator, allegedly ensuring protection for these illegal businesses. Discussions in the area suggest that lakhs of rupees in illegal weekly protection money are being collected and distributed through this alleged network. Emboldened by this system, gambling op-

erators and bootleggers are reportedly challenging law enforcement openly. Why Are SP, LCB, and SMC Silent? Department Complaint Status Result Ankleshwar 'A' Division Police Multiple written and verbal complaints No visible action Local Crime Branch (LCB) Continuous information allegedly provided to officials No crackdown reported State Monitoring Cell (SMC) Matter reportedly escalated to Gandhinagar No major raid conducted Public anger is growing rapidly over the issue. Residents are demanding answers as to why authorities remain silent despite repeated complaints and widespread knowledge of the alleged illegal activities. Questions are also being raised regarding the role of the Local Crime Branch (LCB) and senior officials. Citizens want to know why the district police administration and Superintendent of Police (SP) have not initiated strong action despite the seriousness of the allegations. Attention is now focused on whether the State Monitoring Cell (SMC) from Gandhinagar or district authorities will conduct surprise raids against the alleged gambling dens and toxic liquor factories, and whether the larger protection-extortion nexus will finally be exposed.

Viksit Bharat not limited to economic indicators: TN governor

New Delhi.(Agency)

"Viksit Bharat 2047" must be understood as holistic and inclusive development, said Tamil Nadu and Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar on Saturday. Addressing a Youth Parliament programme in Panaji, Arlekar said the idea of a developed nation cannot be limited to economic indicators such as GDP growth, but must encompass progress in education, society, culture and governance. The event was inaugurated by Arlekar in the presence of Goa Governor P Ashok Gajapati Raju. "Viksit Bharat is not just an economic concern. It is about development in totality," Arlekar said, adding that progress in one sector alone cannot define a nation as developed. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of transforming India into a developed nation by 2047, the former Goa politician said the goal requires balanced growth across all domains, including industry, education, social development and cultural preservation. He said India's rich cultural and historical legacy must remain central to its development journey, stressing that advancement in arts, heritage and societal values is equally important. Arlekar urged youth to introspect on their role in achieving the vision, asking them to consider their individual contribution over the next two decades and calling upon young citizens to actively participate in nation-building. He also highlighted the need for more youths to enter public life, noting that trained and aware individuals can bring a fresh perspective and direction to governance.

Most-Wanted Terrorists Seen At Funeral Of Al Badr Commander In Pakistan

Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Sallahudin, a US-designated terrorist, and Al-Badr chief Bakht Zameen Khan were seen in visuals that have emerged from the gathering.

New Delhi.(Agency)

In yet another instance, Pakistan finds itself at the centre of a major convergence of the world's most-wanted terrorists, shattering lies by Islamabad that it is not a global terror export hub. Several high-profile and wanted terrorists based in Pakistan attended wanted terrorist Hamza Burhan's funeral in Islamabad on Friday. Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Sallahudin, a US-designated terrorist, and Al-Badr chief Bakht Zameen Khan were seen in visuals that have emerged from the gathering. Arjumand Gulzar Dar alias Hamza Burhan, a top commander of the banned Al-Badr terror outfit who went by the codename 'Doctor', was wanted in India for spearheading an elaborate terror network in Jammu and Kashmir. He was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) a day earlier and was buried in Islamabad. Photos and videos circulating on social media showed heavy security arrangements at the funeral gathering, with a massive deployment of armed terrorists, once again bringing to light how Pakistan had been sheltering the world's infamous terrorists in its territory. The security detail around Zameen Khan drew attention. Terrorists armed with AK-47s and other modern weaponry were seen in a tight cordon around him. It is believed that his security had been heightened after a spate of targeted killings of terrorists in Pakistan and PoK in recent times. Over the past few years, several wanted terrorists had been killed under mysterious circumstances, reportedly creating an atmosphere of fear within the terrorist ranks. That Pakistan shelters terrorists is a well-known fact. The country had often drawn backlash for its state backing to a thriving terror ecosystem. Over a month ago, a close aide of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was seen sharing a stage with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Hafiz Talha Saeed, son of 26/11 mastermind Hafiz Saeed.



PM Modi distributes 51,000 appointment letters to youths at virtual 'Rozgar Mela'

►Addressing the event, the prime minister said the recruited youths are becoming key partners in the country's journey of development

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday distributed over 51,000 appointment letters for central government jobs to youths at a 'Rozgar Mela' conducted virtually. Addressing the function, PM Modi said, "Today is a very important day for thousands of youths across the country. Today, more than 51,000 young people have received appointment letters for government jobs." Today, all the recruited youths are becoming key partners in the country's journey of development. In railways,



many other sectors, all the youths are about to take on new responsibilities, he said. "In the coming years, you all are going to

resolve for a developed India. For this achievement, I congratulate you, as well as your family members, very warmly," he said. The prime minister said India's youth are playing a vital role in accelerating the journey towards a 'Viksit Bharat'. "Rozgar Mela reflects our government's commitment to empowering the 'Yuva Shakti' with new opportunities," he said. Modi said the world is very excited about India's youth and technological progress. "Today, the world wants to be a part of India's development journey," he said.

around 12 lakh recruitment letters have been issued through 18 such events held across the country. In keeping with the prime minister's commitment to prioritising employment generation, the 'Rozgar Mela' is a major initiative aimed at translating this vision into reality, officials said. The 'Rozgar Mela' was held at 47 locations across the country on Saturday. The appointees, selected from all parts of India, will join various ministries and departments, including railways, home affairs, health and family welfare, and departments of financial services and higher education,

News box

City's power demand hits all-time high of 2,372MW

GURGAON.(Agency)

The city recorded its highest-ever power demand on Thursday as rising temperatures drove consumption to new levels. According to DHBVN, the city required 2,372 MW, surpassing all previous records — including the earlier highs of 2,332 MW in 2024 and 2,032 MW in 2025. On Thursday alone, electricity consumption touched 1.92 crore units.

Over the past week, demand had consistently hovered around 2,200 MW, which officials attributed to sustained maximum temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius. Peak demand typically arrives in June and July, but this May has already set an all-time high — with demand crossing 2,200 MW in mid-May and remaining above that level since. Last year, peak demand came on June 13. “Power demand is directly proportional to weather conditions. Summer peaks in July, and as humidity increases, so does power demand,” said DHBVN superintending engineer Shyambir Saini. Demand is expected to climb further in the coming weeks. Residents are already feeling the strain. “Every summer it is the same story. We hear there is no shortage in supply, but residents continue to face problems due to outages,” said Sameer Yadav, a resident of Sector 90. At the state level, HPPC has projected peak demand this year to reach 16,454 MW — the highest in Haryana's history. The agency anticipates a month-wise deficit of 1,278 MW in May, 2,870 MW in June, 2,943 MW in July, 1,766 MW in Aug, and 635 MW in Sept, even after accounting.

SC amicus proposes nodal agency, inter-state action plan to clean Yamuna

Noida.(Agency)

The Supreme Court-appointed amicus curiae on Yamuna pollution has recommended forming a nodal agency to plan and implement a multipronged strategy for cleaning the river, warning that fragmented state-level efforts have left the decades-long crisis without a unified response.

In a 41-page submission responding to the court's April 29 directive seeking a comprehensive plan for treating effluent and sewage discharge into the Yamuna, amicus curiae K Parmeshwar said additional secretary-level officers in the ministries of home, environment, forest and climate change, and Jal Shakti should urgently convene a stakeholder meeting with representatives from UP, Delhi and Haryana to deliberate on forming the agency.

“The proposed structure (of the nodal agency) must reflect the planning, budgetary, technical and coordination gaps and challenges involved in cleaning up the Yamuna with regard to treating effluents discharged and the drains that flow into it,” Parmeshwar said. He stressed that at least some members of the nodal agency must work full-time on coordination and implementation, and that the body must produce a full-fledged action plan — with timelines and actionable points — covering the river's entire stretch across the three states.

Man who arrested activists claimed ‘incited’ Noida workers held, police say he is not DCP's driver

Noida.(Agency)

Days after two arrested labour activists filed a submission in Supreme Court alleging posts to incite protesters during the April 13 industrial workers' protest that turned violent were actually made by a DCP's driver and a sub-inspector, the driver has been taken into custody. Police, however, said the accused, Anil Kumar (32), had no connection with any police officer in Noida, nor does he work in the city.

Additional DCP (Central Noida) Swatantra Singh, who is heading the SIT probing the April 13 violence, told TOI that Kumar is in the contractual employ of an official with a central govt agency in Delhi. On Thursday, he was arrested at his home in the Phase 2 area behind Mother's factory under BNS sections 109(1) (attempt to murder), 61(2) (criminal conspiracy) and 326(G) (mischief).

Police investigation revealed that two years ago, he was working with Richa Global Exports, a garment manufacturer operating out of Hosiery Complex in Phase 2, as a labourer. He was added to a WhatsApp group, Richa Global Noida, three to four days before the protest,” the additional DCP said.

In its FIR, police named ‘Richa Global Noida’ among the eight WhatsApp and Telegram groups that were allegedly used to circulate messages encouraging the labour agitation.

The Supreme Court submission filed earlier this week by counsels Manik Gupta and Puja Sharma, in response to the state affidavit detailing the investigation into the April 13 protest, arson and vandalism, had identified sub-inspector Beena, posted in Sector 142, and Anil Kumar as the two persons who “infiltrated” the ‘Richa Global Noida’ WhatsApp group to foment trouble.

The counsels had submitted that Kumar had shared a voice message to block a road and posted it on the WhatsApp group. The message said: “Modi aa raha hai bypass ka udghatan karne, kal pura road jam karna chahiye” (Modi is coming to inaugurate the bypass, we must jam the entire road). The submission contended that other members in ‘Richa Global Noida’ — which had 1,024 members, mostly workers — had immediately protested, with a request not to share any videos of vandalism in the group. SI Beena, the counsels submitted, had shared a screenshot of a burning car. “Gautam Budh Nagar police did not add Kumar to any WhatsApp group. It has been revealed that a person linked to these miscreant (WhatsApp) groups added Kumar to the group. We have found some evidence related to his instigating messages, and further investigation is under way,” police said in a statement.

A senior police officer said the counsels for the accused have claimed that Kumar is a driver of DCP Vijay Gupta, but there is no officer by that name in the force. The SIT probe found that on April 13, when the violence occurred, Anil was posting messages and videos on the WhatsApp group from Delhi.

Major Political Upheaval in West Bengal: Big Jolt to Mamata Banerjee as Several TMC MLAs and Councillors Sound the Bugle of Rebellion!

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Kolkata: The biggest and most shocking news from West Bengal politics is emerging right now. Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee has suffered a massive political setback. The resentment that had been simmering within the party at the local level for a long time has now come out in the open. According to information received, several sitting TMC MLAs and councillors have adopted a rebellious stance against the party leadership, causing a stir within the state government and the organization. According to reports from party insiders, the number of rebelling MLAs and councillors is said to be quite significant.

These leaders allege that they were being constantly ignored within the party, and their suggestions regarding local administration and development works were being completely sidelined. This internal rift and dissatisfaction have now snowballed into a major revolt. Speculation is also rife in political circles that these rebel leaders might join a major political party or announce their new strategy in the coming days. Political analysts believe that this rebellion within the TMC, just ahead of the upcoming local and general elections, could prove to be a monumental challenge for Mamata Banerjee. If this mutiny is not managed in time, the power equations in several municipal corporations and assembly con-



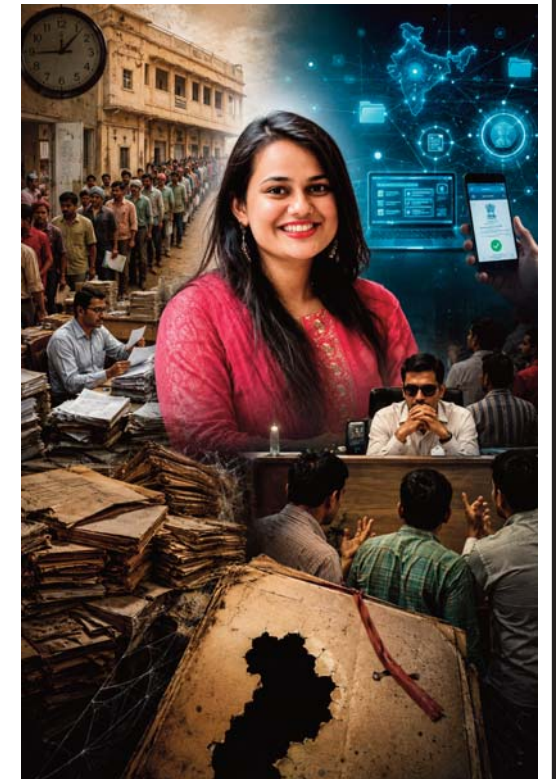
stituencies could shift entirely. For now, Mamata Banerjee and top TMC strategists have started calling emergency meetings for damage control. It now remains to be seen what steps 'Didi' takes to save her fortress from crumbling and what the next move of these rebel MLAs and councillors will be.

“Mini Collectors” Inside Collectorate? Public Angry Over Staff Behavior During Jan Sunwai

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Kolkata: Tonk: Is the monthly public hearing held every third Thursday at the Collectorate truly a platform for justice, or merely a government “PR exercise”? This question is becoming increasingly serious as complainants seeking justice allege that after standing in long queues for hours, they are ultimately pushed back into the same corrupt and inefficient system where their problems originally began. District Collector Tina Dabi's working style has often been praised across Rajasthan, but several employees inside the Tonk Collectorate are now being accused of damaging both her image and the credibility of the administration. According to complainants, discipline among staff appears absent, and there is little fear of accountability or senior authority within the office. 5 Hours in Line, 2 Hours Waiting... Only to Be Dismissed in One Minute. The ordeal faced by a farmer family from Chandli village in Deoli has exposed serious flaws in the public hearing system. The family arrived at the Collectorate seeking reconstruction of a 65-year-old government land allotment file (Allotment Case No. 475/1961), which they claim has disappeared from official records. According to the complainant: They stood in line for nearly five and a half hours, from 10 AM until around 3:30 PM, before even receiving a receipt. After receiving the receipt, they were allegedly forced to wait another two hours. When their turn finally came, instead of being allowed to fully present their case before the Collector, an employee sitting in between reportedly inter-

rupted and asked, “What is the matter?” The complainant clearly explained that the original government file was unavailable both at the Tehsil office and in the record room, and requested reconstruction of the missing official file. However, the family alleges that within just one or two minutes, they were again told: “Go to the Tehsildar.” This raises a major question: if the complainants have already spent years visiting the Tehsildar's office — the very place from where the records allegedly disappeared — then what is the purpose of sending them back there again? Has the Collectorate Become a Center for Bureaucratic Runaround? This is not merely the struggle of one farmer family. The case raises broader questions about the functioning of the entire revenue administration system. The family still possesses: The original 1961 allotment order, A 1962 verification report, Revenue records (Girdawari) from 1993–94, And a Section 91 notice issued in 1994. Despite this, the original government case file is reportedly missing from the official record room. Even more alarming: In 2013, the administration itself reportedly admitted in writing that the allotment file was unavailable. In 2022, a complaint on the Rajasthan Sampark Portal was allegedly closed with the remark: “Prakaran Drop Farmawe” (Close the Matter). This raises a serious concern: if 65-year-old government land records can disappear from official record rooms, how secure is the common citizen's land ownership? Who Are the Employees Acting Like “Mini Collectors”? Several complainants expressed



anger over the behavior of staff present during the public hearing. According to locals, some employees begin acting like “small collectors” even before citizens are allowed to reach the actual Collector. Key questions being raised include: Why are complainants not allowed to fully present their cases even while sitting before the Collector? Will employees now decide whose grievance is serious and whose is not? If staff members themselves dismiss cases within one minute and send citizens away, then what remains the purpose of public hearings? Why Long Queues Even in the Era of Digital India?

Land handed 2 years ago, cemetery still lack an approach road

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Nearly two years after land was allotted for a Catholic burial ground in Sector 58 near Ghata village, the cemetery still lacks a proper approach road. A 75-metre stretch leading to the site remains unpaved, forcing ambulances and mourners to navigate a dusty, uneven track to reach the facility.

The same stretch also serves Anjuman Bagiya, a Muslim graveyard established in 2004 near the cemetery site. People visiting the kabristan, managed by Haryana Anjuman Charitable Trust, also rely on the partially unpaved road for access. Residents and church representatives said the situation worsens during the monsoon, when the stretch becomes waterlogged and nearly inaccessible. They added that repeated representations to authorities have failed to yield a solution. Access is further hindered by congestion around Banjara Market, where roadside parking and heavy crowds create bottlenecks for ambulances carrying bodies to the cemetery.

“The stretch leading to the burial ground

remains unpaved, dusty and uneven, making it challenging for ambulances and mourners to reach the site, especially during funerals. We have raised the issue with civic authorities multiple times, but no permanent solution has been provided so far,” said Fr Thomas Blessin.

The land for the burial ground was allotted by HSVP in 2016 after Delhi Catholic Archdiocese requested a separate burial facility for Catholic Christians in the city in 2012. Although possession of the land was handed over to the church in June 2016, the site remained inaccessible for years due to encroachments and resistance from locals, which also delayed construction of a boundary wall. In Nov 2023, the church approached Punjab and Haryana high court seeking directions for removal of encroachments and possession of the allocated land. HSVP subsequently carried out an eviction drive in 2024 and cleared the

site before handing it over for the establishment of the burial ground.

Church representatives said that while the land has now been secured and the burial ground is operational, the absence of



basic infrastructure such as a paved approach road continues to create difficulties for the community. “Every time a vehicle passes through the stretch, thick dust rises because the road is still unpaved. People attending funerals, especially elderly family members, have to walk on uneven ground to reach the cemetery. Even

ambulances struggle to move smoothly on the kaccha patch. It is difficult to understand why such a basic approach road has still not been constructed despite the burial ground being operational,” said a member of the Catholic community.

An HSVP official said an 18-metre-wide road with a planned length of around 175 metres was proposed to provide access to the cemetery. “Of this, nearly 100 metres has already been paved, while work on the remaining 75 metres is stalled due to pending litigation in the high court. The estate officer-II has been directed to actively pursue the matter for an early resolution.

At present, we are unable to construct the remaining stretch and any attempt to do so also faces resistance from locals. More than 100 land-related cases in the city have already been resolved, and efforts are underway to address this issue as well at the earliest,” the official said.

Good news, bad news for Indians eyeing Canada: Work permits faster, PR and citizenship stuck

Work permits and Super Visas for parents bring relief for Indians, but citizenship, PR and visitor extension queues are turning into a nightmare.

Mumbai. (Agency)

For thousands of Indians planning a move to Canada, the latest immigration processing data has delivered both hope and anxiety. Fresh figures released by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) between May 20 and 22 show a sharp divide in how quickly different applications are being processed. While some categories such as work permits and parents' Super Visas have become significantly faster, others including citizenship applications and visitor record extensions are getting buried under mounting backlogs.

The latest numbers are based on the time IRCC took to process 80 per cent of complete applications and experts say the

fluctuations are among the sharpest seen this year.

Relief for workers and families

There is encouraging news for Indians seeking temporary entry into Canada. Processing time for inland work permits, including extensions filed within Canada, has dropped sharply over the past few months. Compared to late March, applicants are now waiting roughly 47 days less, with average timelines currently hovering around 206 to 212 days.

For Indians applying for work permits from outside Canada, the wait remains relatively stable at about nine weeks, offering some comfort to professionals



looking for opportunities in sectors facing labour shortages. One of the biggest improvements has come in Super Visas, the long-term multiple-entry visas issued to parents and grandparents of Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

For Indian applicants, processing timelines

have fallen by nearly 97 days since January. In some recent updates, the wait has come down to around 138 days, much lower than earlier peaks that had crossed 200 days. The improvement is significant for Indian families as the Super Visa allows parents to stay in Canada for up to two years at a stretch, provided medical insurance and financial support requirements are met.

Citizenship and PR pathways slowing down

However, the picture is far from rosy across all immigration streams. Citizenship certificate applications are facing severe delays, with more than 14,000 additional applicants reportedly added to the queue within a month. Processing timelines are

now stretching to nearly a year in several categories.

Visitor record extensions, used by people already in Canada who want to extend their stay, are also approaching the one-year mark. The delays are affecting tourists, students and temporary workers whose plans often depend on timely approvals.

The Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP), one of the most sought-after permanent residency pathways under Express Entry, is also witnessing growing backlogs. Immigration observers say the swelling inventory could spell longer waits for skilled Indian professionals in sectors such as IT, healthcare and engineering.

Short news

Mumbai Metro 3 to finally get mobile network after months-long deadlock

Mumbai. (Agency)

After months of commuter complaints over lack of mobile connectivity on Mumbai Metro Line 3, the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC) has finally awarded rights to install telecom infrastructure on the underground corridor to Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea jointly, ending a prolonged deadlock between telecom service providers and the metro authority.

The three telecom companies will jointly invest in the underground telecom infrastructure, also known as in-building solutions, that will provide mobile network coverage inside stations and tunnels along the underground metro route. Officials said the agreement will remain in place for 25 years and provisions are also being made to eventually accommodate BSNL on the network.

The move comes after the MMRC in March reissued tenders to provide mobile connectivity infrastructure on the corridor. At the time, Reliance Jio had offered to install the telecom infrastructure at no cost to the metro authority — a proposal later backed by Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

The connectivity issue had stemmed from a dispute over charges demanded by the company initially contracted to provide telecom infrastructure on the line. Telecom service providers had objected to the fee structure, arguing that the charges were too high.

Surat lawyer moves Bar Council over stand-up comedian's 'derogatory' remarks on advocates

Surat. (Agency)

A SURAT lawyer on Friday submitted an application to the Bar Council of India, the Bar Council of Gujarat and the Surat District Bar Association against stand-up comedian Badal Sharma over the latter's "derogatory" remarks on lawyers during one of his shows.

In his application, Surat-based Kamlesh Raval sought to raise an objection to "hurtful, defamatory and derogatory comments against lawyers/legal profession".

Badal Sharma was unavailable for comment on the matter. Raval alleged that Badal Sharma, during his live performance in a show, subjected lawyers to "insulting generalisations". Raval's application adds that "comedy and artistic expression undoubtedly enjoy freedom in a democratic nation; however, such freedom also carries responsibility. Public remarks that demean an entire profession can create social prejudice, erode public trust, and cause emotional harm to members of the legal fraternity."

It seeks strict action against the stand-up comedian, and that he (Sharma) should apologise and ensure that he does not repeat such statements in future. Raval told The Indian Express on Friday, "While surfing through social media, I heard him (Sharma) saying such statements in one of the shows.

Navapur poultry farmers await compensation as culling crosses 4 lakh birds

Mumbai. (Agency)

More than 20 days after bird flu-triggered culling operations began in Maharashtra's Navapur, poultry farmers say they are yet to receive compensation, worsening the financial crisis in one of western India's largest egg-producing hubs.

Navapur in Nandurbar district supplies nearly 10 lakh eggs daily to Mumbai, Nashik, Jalgaon and Surat. From May 1 to May 17, a total of 4,06,682 chickens have been culled, 24,91,723 eggs and 5,48,958 kg of feed have been destroyed in Navapur. Poultry farmers alleged that unlike previous outbreaks, compensation has not been released despite mandatory post-culling sanitisation protocols requiring repeated disinfection, litter removal and a fallow



period before farms can resume operations. "During the last two outbreaks, compensation was provided within 48 hours of culling. This time, we are being told there are no funds available. Farmers are struggling to arrange money for sanitisation and labour," said Arief Balesaria, head of the Navapur Poultry Association and owner of Wasim B

Poultry Farm.

In a representation to the Animal Husbandry Department, the association sought urgent intervention on compensation, insurance, biosecurity measures, vaccination and reopening of farms. Farmers have also demanded quicker inspections and a time-bound roadmap for restarting operations after sanitisation.

The association said the existing compensation structure under the Union government's 2024 avian influenza guidelines is "severely outdated" and does not reflect current production costs. Under existing norms, compensation for adult layer chickens is fixed at Rs 140 per bird, while poultry feed compensation is capped at Rs 25 per kg.

Hot spell triggers sharp rise in beer sales across Andhra

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

As Andhra Pradesh continues to reel under intense summer heat, beer consumption has surged sharply across the State, indicating a major rise in demand during the ongoing hot spell.

Official sales data show that beer sales in April 2026 increased by 31.44 per cent compared to the corresponding period last year. Sales rose from 22.73 lakh cases in April 2025 to 29.88 lakh cases in April 2026. Similarly, during the first 22 days of May 2026, beer sales surged by 35.27 percent. Sales touched 22.21 lakh cases against 16.42 lakh cases recorded during the same period last year.

Officials and market observers attribute the spike largely to soaring temperatures and prolonged heatwave conditions.

Across several parts of India, rising temperatures have also led to increased demand for chilled beverages and beer during the summer season.

Industry analysts say consumers are



increasingly preferring beer over hard liquor during extreme summer conditions, especially among urban youth and weekend consumers. Retail outlets and bars are also witnessing higher footfall during evenings as

temperatures remain unusually high even after sunset.

Excise department sources expect the demand trend to continue if the current weather conditions persist through the remaining summer weeks.

Videos show women in Valsad village entering dry wells to seek water, govt steps in: 'Pipeline leak repaired, supply now normal'

The videos show one woman purportedly climbing into a dry well and filling water pots for other women who lower their pot into the well by ropes, or men with ropes with one end anchored to rocks and another tied to their waist lowering themselves into deep pits to fetch water.

Surat. (Agency)

A VILLAGE in Valsad district that has been facing water scarcity was badly affected when eight of its wells went dry and the group water supply scheme also faced a disruption following pipeline damage. Videos of women and men purportedly climbing into dry wells seeking water from the bottom went viral on Friday. However government officials told The Indian Express the problem had been resolved on Thursday.

The videos show one woman purportedly climbing into a dry well and filling water pots for other women who lower their pot into the well by ropes, or men with ropes with one end anchored to rocks and another tied to their waist lowering themselves into deep pits to fetch water. Sources told The Indian Express these

were from Moti Palsan village of Kaprada taluka in Valsad district which has been facing a water shortage since the beginning of this week.

Kaprada Taluka Development Officer Anand Patel told IE, "The village has eight wells and during the summer season, they get dried up. The villagers were receiving tap water through the State government's Astol group water supply scheme, in which water is pumped from the Madhuban dam and supplied via a pipeline network to various villages on the hilly terrain, including Moti Palsan in Kaprada. There was a leak in the water supply pipeline network, resulting in a disruption to the water supply. The network was repaired last (Thursday) evening, and from Friday

onwards, the villagers started getting water supply. The villagers are now happy."

A resident of Moti Palsan village, who did



not wish to be named, said, "Kaprada taluka receives heavy rainfall every year in the monsoon. There are eight wells that fill during the monsoon season, but

they dry up during summer. The village lies in hilly terrain and its population is around 1,000 to 1,200 people. The main occupation is farming and animal husbandry. The villagers get water through taps from the Astol Group Water supply scheme. The main water supply line had been damaged for a long time and despite regular representations, no action was taken. The villagers made a video of a woman entering a deep well to fetch water and uploaded it on social media, noting down the details of the location of the area. The villagers had been fetching water in the same way for a long time. After the video went viral on social media, the authorities took action and the leak was repaired on war footing on Thursday evening.

Mental health priorities for the new Kerala government

In an interview, newly elected MLA Ramesh Pisharody called for a dedicated ministry for mental health. Currently, most activities fall under the Ministry of Health, while others are scattered across departments.

The mental health of school students is managed by the education department and the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Then there are the police-run student well-being and digital de-addiction initiatives. The excise department handles de-addiction programmes, the Ministry of Youth Welfare pilots youth mental health projects, and women's well-being initiatives are under the Women's Welfare Ministry.

Despite numerous programmes, there is little focus, coordination, or impact auditing. With several psychosocial issues signalling declining mental health in Kerala, the MLA's vision for a unified ministry is timely and relevant.

The burden of mental illness in Kerala

The 2016 National Mental Health Survey found that 11.36% of people in Kerala had a mental disorder at the time of the survey, with a lifetime prevalence of 14.14%. Roughly one in eight people in the state need mental health intervention — higher than national averages. Common conditions include anxiety and stress-related disorders at 5.43%, depression at 2.49%, and substance use disorders at 4.82%. Are they all getting the help they need?

Access versus stigma

Kerala has relatively better mental health care in both the government and private sectors. However, gaps exist in Wayanad and Idukki districts. Yet stigma and shame prevent many from seeking scientific treatment.

Quacks exploit this reluctance, diverting people from professional care. The government must regulate unqualified practitioners in mental health services. This includes mandatory licensing of counselling centres with clear qualification standards. Stigma-reduction campaigns are essential to convey that mental disorders are health conditions like any other, and that there is no health without mental health.Modernising services

The three mental health centres in Thrissur, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram, functioning well amidst constraints, should be modernised and made patient-friendly, possibly using corporate social responsibility funds.A Centre of Excellence for addiction treatment could be integrated with one of them. Such a centre is urgently needed as addiction-related problems rise in the state. It should develop evidence-based protocols and monitor other de-addiction centres across the state. Although the Mental Healthcare Act mandates registration, many de-addiction centres still operate outside such controls. Psychiatric services at district and taluk levels can be upgraded qualitatively without overwhelming financial burden. What is needed is vision and innovation.The District Mental Health Programme requires revision with broader objectives and a stronger focus on community-based treatment and rehabilitation. Residential rehabilitation centres should be audited regularly by DMHP teams, which might require additional manpower.

Separating business of war from economics of oil

The US's extension of relief for Russian oil and hint of easing pressure on Iranian supplies may presage a new sanctions regime. It will take months to achieve pre-war supplies

With the US-Iran conflict moving into its third month, an ominous suspense pervades global energy markets. The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has halted the flow of a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supplies, and triggered the largest energy disruption in history. With more than a billion barrels of oil already lost, the soaring benchmark crude prices are maintaining an extreme upward pressure on refined products like diesel and jet fuel, with a cross-sectoral effect. The shortage of sulphur (a by-product of crude oil and gas processing critical for fertiliser production) and loss of fertiliser shipments from the Persian Gulf could affect global food security. Stalled projects and job losses are inevitable as cost cutting becomes unavoidable. The economic pain is sure to prevail at all income levels.Efforts to artificially stabilise markets and curtail inflation shocks prompted major oil consumers and the International Energy Agency—comprising 32 member, 13 association and six 'accession' countries—to initiate a historic release of strategic reserves. One of the criteria for the agency's membership is the "capability of contributing its share of an IEA collective action which would be initiated in response to a significant global oil supply disruption and would involve IEA member countries making additional volumes of crude and/or product available to the global market (either through increasing supply or reducing demand)". Out of the pledged release of 400 million barrels, 164 million barrels have already entered the global markets, according to the latest IEA report.

Saudi Aramco and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company bypassed the choked maritime route and partially mitigated the loss of supply through alternative overland pipelines. However, these supply measures proved insufficient in addressing price volatility. On the other hand, demand curtailment is only a temporary panacea as stockpiles are fast depleting and parleys between the combatants are failing to make headway.Most developed and emerging economies hold strategic petroleum reserves (SPRs) to enhance energy security in periods of exigency. Japan and South Korea follow a public-private partnership for their SPRs, leasing underground storage facilities to domestic private refineries under mandate and foreign oil producers like ADNOC that maintain huge stocks with a right to export

a portion of it with the host country having the first right of refusal. India partnered with ADNOC to store crude at two State-owned strategic underground facilities in India, with a third site under development with a total capacity of 30 million barrels when fully operational. At current demand, it translates to seven days of stocks, far below the 90-day benchmark set by the IEA. Yet, it lays a roadmap for future expansion and a PPP model.

The UAE's exit from Opec on May 1, in the midst of the Iran war, added complexity to an uncertain market. Though the fourth largest member's walkout initially fuelled a fear of group politics, a more sanguine picture has emerged since. Relieved of quota restrictions, as it aims to enhance production to 5 million barrels per day,



Abu Dhabi has accelerated construction of a West-East Pipeline to Fujairah, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz. Slated to be operational by 2027, it shall double the Emirati oil export capacity and substantially slake Asia's thirst.Meanwhile, Brazil has reported much larger volumes of crude exports to Asia during the present disruption. As mentioned in this column last November, with rising production volumes at the Tupi and Buzios offshore assets of Petrobras, the low-sulphur Brazilian-grade crude has captured a larger portion of the Asian markets. Despite freight constraints, its share in China's imports rose to 18 percent in April from less than 10 percent in January. On the back of well-negotiated prices, the Latin American medium-sweet crude has expanded its presence in the Indian energy mix, too. Besides State-owned refineries, Reliance remains a key

buyer in the spot market for Brazilian crude and accounts for a major portion of Petrobras's oil shipments to Asia.However, African sources such as Nigeria, Angola and Libya have provided limited succour to Europe and Asia. Despite holding the 11th largest reserves in the world, Nigeria's oil industry, with many small refineries, is vulnerable to several operational and security hurdles. The sector, which has historically battled under-investment, pipeline vandalism and poor turnaround maintenance, is prone to outages. However, the Lagos-based Dangote refinery, Africa's largest with a capacity to process 650,000 barrels a day, has significantly increased shipments of jet fuel and diesel to Europe to partially fill the supply gaps caused by the West Asian tensions.

Donald Trump's recent visit to Beijing emerged as Washington's diplomatic overture, suggestive of a meeting between two equals rather than a competition for global supremacy. With the grim energy situation in the background, and in a bid to pursue the G2 framework, Trump followed up on the discussions with Xi Jinping with a hint of easing sanctions on Chinese independent 'teapot' refineries that process Iranian crude. Hengli Petrochemical, China's second-largest teapot refinery, is considered to be one of Tehran's largest customers for crude, as per a US Treasury report.

Coming amid an escalating geopolitical showdown, the development is viewed as an effort to manage global oil dynamics as much as heralding a new phase in US sanctions policy. Could the move legitimise Iranian oil's continued presence in Asian markets and the 'shadow fleets' that facilitate such transits, as Washington woos Beijing to broker peace? It

seems America is keen to segregate its business of war from the economics of oil by any means.Given the current global shortage and China's continued oil trade with Russia, the US Treasury extended the Russian oil waiver a second time. The continued flow of Urals is expected to temporarily stabilise the crude market and provide renewed energy security to the two largest consumers, China and India. The move shall augment supply of sulphur and other oil derivatives, enabling a surge in fertiliser production.Few analysts predict the war to end by early June. Markets absorb this with cautious optimism as it may take months of normalisation to touch pre-war volumes. While new sources of oil emerge and their durability remains restricted, a collective initiative of nouveau rentiers might just bail out the situation.

Simultaneous polls: Potential benefits not enough to build consensus

The JPC must take diverse factors and perspectives into account before submitting its findings on One Nation, One Election issue

A Joint Parliamentary Committee is holding nationwide consultations on two Bills related to the politically divisive issue of 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE). PP Chaudhary, the BJP MP who is heading the multi-party panel, has stated that India can save Rs 7 lakh crore if Lok Sabha and Assembly elections are held simultaneously. According to him, this exercise would raise the country's GDP by 1.6 per cent and the money saved can be used for development works and welfare schemes. There is no quarrel with the argument that ONOE would lead to considerable savings in terms of money, time and manpower. However, there is much more to electoral democracy than convenience and cost-benefit calculations.The Congress and many other Opposition parties are calling simultaneous polls an attempt by the BJP-led Union government to centralise power and undermine the federal structure. These concerns have only grown

after the saffron party added West Bengal to its burgeoning kitty of states. The Centre, however, is



insistent that ONOE will benefit the nation. The lack of consensus makes it vital for the parliamentary

committee to engage with a wide range of stakeholders — political parties, constitutional authorities, legal experts, administrative bodies, financial and educational institutions, industry and civil society.One of the biggest challenges is to synchronise elections — different states go to the polls in different years. Also, there has to be a concrete plan for the worst-case scenario — when a government falls mid-term due to defections or a no-confidence motion. Moreover, Lok Sabha elections focus on national issues, while Assembly battles primarily revolve around state/regional matters. Clubbing the two contests may give an unfair advantage to the ruling party at the Centre, especially in states where it is not in power. The panel must take diverse factors and perspectives into account before submitting its findings. After all, the proposal, if implemented, will have far-reaching implications for India's democratic and federal framework.

DNA science and the quest beyond ageing

The near-future of genomics lies in its convergence with AI and spatial omics

FRONTIER technologies are fascinating. In these columns, I have tried to provide a glimpse into the worlds of artificial intelligence, quantum computing, internet of things and renewable energy. Today, we delve into the enigmas of genomics.On September 3, 2025, a hot mic caught Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un musing about organ transplants, biotechnology and the possibility of living to 'a' young 150. Three of the world's most powerful totalitarians are not any different from other world leaders and business tycoons when it comes to battling age. The twin enigmas of ageing and death, however, remain, arguably, the final unconquered bastions of biological science. While we have dismantled the atom, decoded the cosmic microwave background and engineered pathogens to deliver therapeutic payloads, the programmed obsolescence of our own cellular machinery eludes a definitive, mechanistic solution. This pursuit, the deep interrogation of our biological operating system, is unfathomable without genomics.At its foundational level, genomics is the study of the genome, an organism's complete set of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) — the chemical repository of the instructions needed to develop, operate and perpetuate virtually every living organism. Its double helix comprises two anti-parallel strands, each a string of four nucleotide bases: adenine (A), thymine (T), guanine (G) and cytosine (C). The strands are complementary; A always pairs with T and C with G. The linear sequence of these billions of letters encodes the instructions for building and operating a human body.A gene, a specific locus on DNA, carries the code for a functional product, typically a protein. Information flows from DNA to a transient messenger molecule, messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA), through the process of transcription. This

mRNA transcript then exits the nucleus and engages the ribosome, a molecular machine that translates the nucleic acid code into a specific sequence of amino acids, which fold into a 3D protein. Proteins form organs, catalyse biochemical reactions, and relay signals.When a somatic mutation alters this sequence, an aberrant protein can be produced, disrupting homeostatic networks and potentially initiating a pathological cascade, such as neoplasia. Genomics, therefore, is the science of reading, interpreting, and now, editing this fundamental text. The impact of this ability is already transformative and pervasive across multiple sectors. In clinical medicine, genomics has catalysed the shift from empirical, population-based protocols to personalised and predictive paradigms. Pharmacogenomics, the study of how genetic variation affects drug response, allows clinicians to pre-empt adverse reactions and choose the right drug at the right dose from the outset.Genomic sequencing is now the definitive tool for tracking disease outbreaks. When a new pathogen emerges, decoding its genome allows scientists to understand its origins, monitor its mutations in real time and develop targeted diagnostics and vaccines with unprecedented speed.The same logic applies to rare diseases: India bears a significant burden of rare diseases. Around one in every 20 Indians is affected by 7,000 to 8,000 diseases classified as rare. Genomic sequencing is increasingly the first-line diagnostic tool, ending diagnostic odysseys that previously lasted years.This capability is inseparable from food security, which is inextricably linked to national security. Genomics is revolutionising agriculture by enabling the development of crops with higher yields, enhanced resistance to pests and drought and improved nutritional content, all critical factors for a

stable and secure food supply in the face of climate change. Similarly, genomic analysis of soil microbes can inform more sustainable farming practices and the monitoring of biodiversity loss.In the realm of biosecurity, genomics provides the sentinel system,



allowing for the rapid characterisation of engineered pathogens in a bio-attack scenario and the subsequent design of gene-specific medical countermeasures, such as mRNA vaccines or monoclonal antibodies.Even in the domain of criminal justice, DNA analysis through forensic genomics not only helps identify suspects with high precision but also resolves cold cases by tracing distant familial connections through public ancestry databases, a technique that led to the apprehension of the 'Golden State Killer' of the US.Concurrently, the commercial translation of genomics is accelerating globally. The worldwide genomics market, estimated to be valued around \$30-40 billion, is on a steep growth trajectory, and India's market is projected to mirror this with a CAGR of 16.6%, reaching an estimated \$1.86 billion by 2033.However, this scientific and commercial momentum generates a series of profound

policy and legal frictions. The most immediate challenge is the governance of the direct-to-consumer testing market, which operates in a near-regulatory vacuum. Companies can directly market single-gene, multi-gene and even exome-sequencing services to consumers without a mandated framework for analytical validity, clinical validity, or, most critically, the post-test return of results. The interpretation of a polygenic risk score for a complex disorder like type 2 diabetes or the discovery of a variant of uncertain significance requires nuanced clinical translation alongside non-directive genetic counselling.The very nature of genomic data places it in a category distinct from other medical information, demanding a rethinking of the data protection framework. A genome is a permanent, personally identifiable blueprint that contains predictive information not only about the individual but also about their kin. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, fails to recognise "genetic data" as a specially protected category with heightened safeguards. The Act's "consent" framework for scientific research is philosophically mismatched with the highly sensitive, re-identifiable nature of genomic data. This creates an incongruous scenario where the country is generating vast population-scale genomic datasets through initiatives like the Genome India Project, which are managed under the normative Framework for Exchange of Data (FeED) protocols of the Biotech-PRIDE Guidelines, while the statutory law governing the privacy of this data remains generic. The near-future of genomics lies in its convergence with AI and spatial omics. The sheer volume of data produced by a single human genome is staggering, and making sense of it is a computational grand challenge.

Here's how you can get more out of each day.

Have a laugh

While all of us have work and family responsibilities, stressing out too much about them will simply cause you more grief — both mentally as well as physically. There are several ways you can unwind — watch your favourite comedy, catch up with close friends and talk about funny memories. Research says that every time you laugh out loud, increased oxygen flows to your organs, blood flow increases, and stress automatically reduces.

Spend time with your pet

Pets are known not only to give you unconditional love, but spending time with them is actually good for your health. Studies say that when you pet your dog/ cat even for just a few minutes, your body releases feel-good hormones like serotonin, prolactin, and oxytocin, and also decreases the amount of the damaging stress hormones. This results in lower blood pressure, less anxiety and even better immunity.

Get rid of the clutter

Are you surrounded by too many things in a not-so-very big space? Having too much stuff can leave you feeling overwhelmed and bog you down, eventually leading to stress. Living in constantly messy surroundings brings on unwanted anxiety. Therefore, experts say you need to de-clutter to de-stress. Don't start by wanting to clear up everything at once. That will only stress you out further. Begin with a small space and gradually move to bigger things. A space that is uncluttered can feel satisfying and soothing.

Do the housework

While this might seem like a mundane, everyday chore, try to do things a bit differently. Put on your favourite music or TV show in the background, make a list of all that needs to be done, and get down working. Not only will you burn calories and get your work



9 simple ways to Reduce Stress

How cancer becomes drug-resistant

A team of researchers, including an Indian-American scientist, has found that the major reason cancer drugs fail is that they cannot penetrate the high-pressure environment of solid tumours.

The findings revealed that hyaluronic acid -- a large, naturally occurring molecule -- is primarily responsible for generating elevated gel-fluid pressures in tumours.

"We show that the gel-fluid phase generates a primary mechanism of drug resistance in pancreatic cancer," said lead researcher Sunil Hingorani from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in the US.

A hyaluronidase treatment -- family of enzymes that degrade hyaluronic acid -- holds promise for improving patient outcomes for drug-resistant cancers.

In the study, published in Biophysical Journal, the team conducted hyaluronidase treatment in a mouse model of pancreatic cancer and found that it broke down hyaluronic acid as well as normalised the fluid pressure in tumours, allowing vessels to re-expand and thereby overcoming a major barrier to drug delivery.



Have some sex

If you're using stress as an excuse to abstain from sex, think again. Having sex is actually a great way to ease stress because it lowers blood pressure, boosts self-esteem as well as increases feelings of intimacy with your partner. It also helps you sleep better.

Breathe deeply

Invest in some lavender or rosemary scents and take a deep whiff — it will instantly put you in a more relaxed state and lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol. If you prefer not to use scents, practice the act of deep breathing regularly. This sends oxygen surging through your bloodstream, helping to calm down and beat stress.

down, you won't be tired and stressed out at the end of it.

Drink juices

Researchers say that the vitamin C present in orange juice can actually help you manage stress better because it

s levels of stress hormones like cortisol. Remember that vitamin C-rich foods such as orange juice, grapefruit juice, strawberries, or

sweet red peppers boost your immune system.

Sing out loud

When was the last time you sang loudly to your heart's content? Turn up the radio and start singing. No matter how bad you think you are, studies show that singing can actually make you feel happier and feel less stressed. Singing also benefits your breathing, heart and immune system.

Go for a walk

One of the best ways to beat stress is to exercise. It helps your body produce endorphins that make you feel good. Exercising in warm weather can boost your mood while a daily brisk walk of about 30 minutes can greatly reduce stress levels.



Exercise can counter effects of Air pollution

The merits of exercise outweigh the negatives of air pollution, even in highly polluted cities like Delhi, a new international study led by Cambridge University claimed today. The new study, published in the journal Preventive Medicine, found that evidence suggests that the benefits of exercise, even in an environment filled with noxious gases, outweighs the problems brought on by no exercise at all.

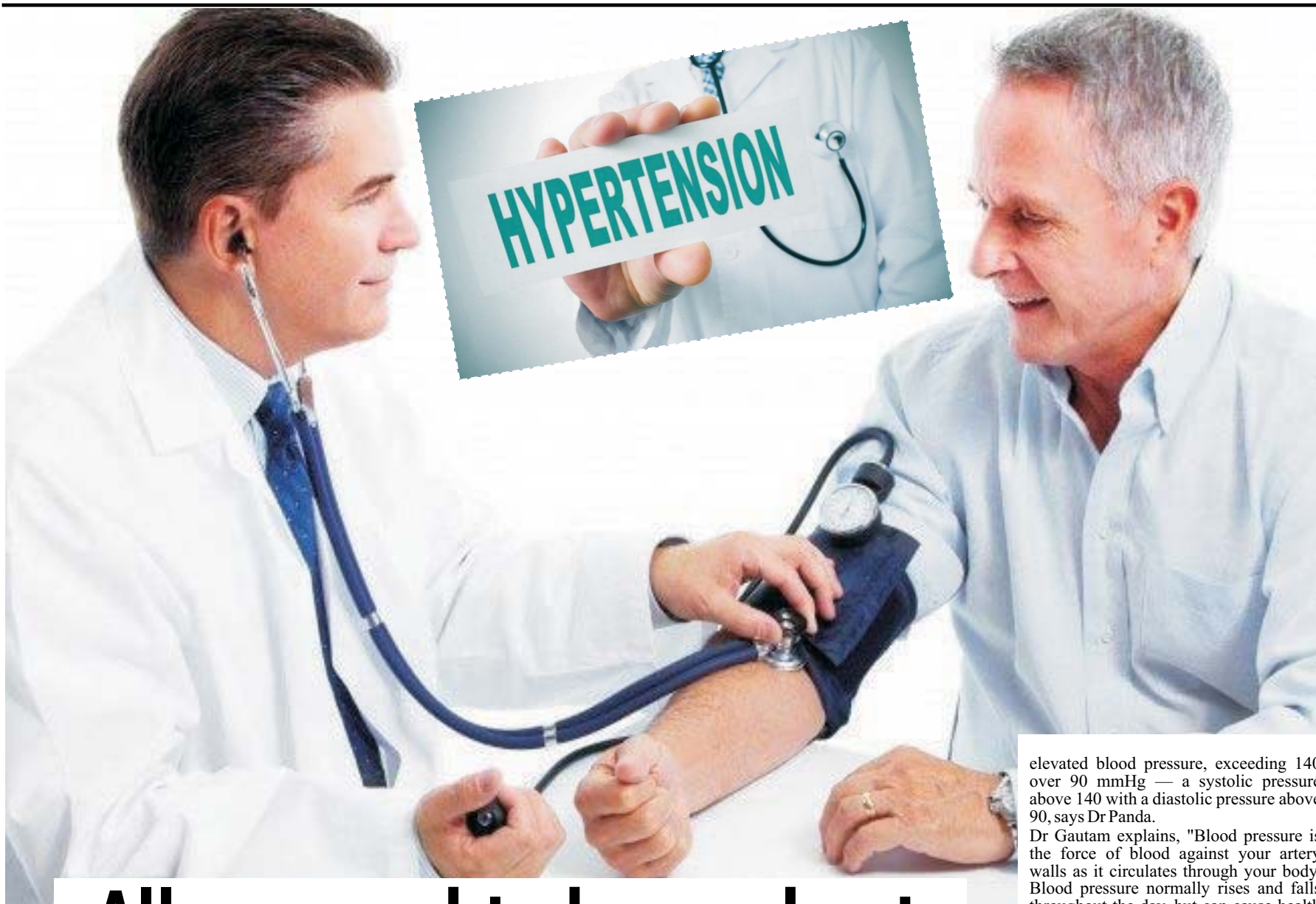
"Even in Delhi, one of the

most polluted cities in the world -with pollution levels 10 times those in London people would need to cycle over five hours per week before the pollution risks outweigh the health benefits," said Dr Marko, Tainio from the Cambridge University's MRC epidemiology unit, who led the study.

"We should remember, though, that a small minority of workers in the most polluted cities, such as bike messengers, may be exposed to levels of air pollution high enough to cancel out the health benefits of physical activity," he added. The researchers studied

the concentration of fine particulates, measured in micrograms per cubic metre, to gauge the levels of pollution in the air of several major world cities. They then used data from previous studies to estimate how harmful those levels of pollution would be. The researchers modelled the effects of cycling and walking at different levels of air pollution and established a tipping point -the length of time after which there was no further health benefit, and a break-even point, when the harm from air pollution began to outweigh the health benefit.





All you need to know about Hypertension

Hypertension is one of the most common lifestyle diseases today, with every third person we meet, having suffered from it. And experts say that even kids can be victims of high blood pressure. Read on to find out more...

Hypertension is one of the most common lifestyle diseases today, with every third person we meet, having suffered from it. And experts say that even kids can be victims of high blood pressure. The fact is that in 90% patients there is no known cause for hypertension and this makes it even more important to be alert. Most are not even aware that they have hypertension, which makes the

scenario rather grim.

Cause for worry?

Hypertension is likely to end up being an epidemic in the near future, and approximately one-third of our population will suffer from it by 2020, states senior surgeon Dr Ramakanta Panda. He adds, "It has been increasing consistently since 1980. Currently, estimates put the incidence of hypertension to 20 to 40% in urban areas and 12 to 17% in rural areas of India."

Grim statistics

"One in three Indian adults has high blood pressure. Anyone, including children, can develop it," says interventional cardiologist Dr

Nilesh Gautam. According to the World Health Statistics 2012 report, India has low rates of hypertension compared to world figures. Here, 23.10% men and 22.60% women above 25 years suffer from hypertension. India also fares better than the global average of 29.20 in men and 24.80 in women respectively.

Dr Panda explains, "However, in absolute numbers, this is a huge population. A bigger problem is that people are normally not aware that they have hypertension. This could potentially be a gray area affecting the numerical estimation."

What is hypertension

Hypertension is defined as a repeatedly

elevated blood pressure, exceeding 140 over 90 mmHg — a systolic pressure above 140 with a diastolic pressure above 90, says Dr Panda.

Dr Gautam explains, "Blood pressure is the force of blood against your artery walls as it circulates through your body. Blood pressure normally rises and falls throughout the day, but can cause health problems if it stays high for a long time. High BP can lead to heart disease and stroke — leading causes of death in India."

Killer disease

"High blood pressure or hypertension kills nearly 1.5 million people every year in South-East Asia," says Dr Panda.

Factors that are responsible

Late eating, excessive time spent on smartphones by youngsters who seem to be living in a virtual world instead of physically walking around and getting to know people personally, sedentary lifestyles etc contribute majorly to the rise in hypertension, says Dr Panda.

Adds Dr Gautam, "Several factors beyond your control increase the risk for high BP. These include your age, sex, race or ethnicity."

Causes for hypertension

In a majority of the patients (almost 90 per cent) there is no known cause for the high blood pressure, states Dr Vijay D'silva, critical care specialist of a heart institute. He says, "The basic reason for high blood pressure is atherosclerosis. There are multiple factors responsible which lead to atherosclerosis resulting in hypertension which include stress, sedentary lifestyle,

faulty food habits, lack of exercise etc. A small group of patients with high blood pressure have what is called secondary hypertension, in which the high blood pressure is the result of another condition or illness, such as kidney diseases, disorders of the thyroid, pituitary or adrenal glands, pregnancy, obesity and sleep disorders and adverse effects of medicines."

Preventing hypertension

"People should follow an active lifestyle which will help in weight loss. Even small amounts of weight loss can make a big difference in helping to prevent high blood pressure," says Dr D'silva.

He adds that regular physical exercise is crucial, as people who are physically active have a lower risk of suffering from blood pressure than those who lead a sedentary lifestyle.

Dr Gautam says, "You can work to reduce your risk for hypertension by following a healthy diet, maintaining healthy weight, not smoking, and being physically active."

In today's scenario, where everyone is working towards achieving a target to climb up the corporate ladder, strict lifestyle modifications can go a long way in reducing the menacing effects of hypertension.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to...

Heart attack or stroke

High blood pressure can cause hardening and thickening of the arteries (atherosclerosis), which can lead to a heart attack, stroke or other complications.

Aneurysm

Increased blood pressure can cause your blood vessels to weaken and bulge, forming an aneurysm. If an aneurysm ruptures, it can be life-threatening.

Heart failure

To pump blood against the higher pressure in your vessels, your heart muscle thickens. Eventually, the thickened muscle may have a hard time pumping enough blood to meet your body's needs, which can lead to heart failure.

Organ malfunction

Weakened and narrowed blood vessels in your kidneys. This can prevent these organs from functioning normally.

Vision loss

Thickened, narrowed or torn blood vessels in the eyes. This can result in vision loss.

Metabolic syndrome

This syndrome is a cluster of disorders of your body's metabolism, including increased waist circumference, high triglycerides, low high-density lipoprotein (HDL) or 'good' cholesterol, high blood pressure and high insulin levels. If you have high blood pressure, you're more likely to have other components of metabolic syndrome. The more components you have, the greater your risk of developing diabetes, heart disease or stroke.

Memory problems

Trouble with memory or understanding. Uncontrolled high blood pressure may affect your ability to think, remember and learn. Trouble with memory or understanding concepts is more common in people with high blood pressure.

Cycling vs Gymming: Why cycling is better?

With its multiple health benefits, regular cycling could more than take care of your daily required exercise, both physical and mental.

Protects Heart: Persons prone to Heart diseases were observed riding a cycle for 30 minutes, thrice weekly. After a year's time, their tests showed a decline in level of bad cholesterol.

Look Younger: Cycling increases circulation to deliver oxygen and nutrients to skin cells more effectively while flushing harmful toxins out. It also optimises collagen production, helping reduce the



appearance of wrinkles and speeding up the healing process.

Strengthens Lungs: Lungs work harder while cycling which strengthens the cardiovascular system and makes heart and lungs work more efficiently.

Tones Muscles: Cycling strengthens leg muscles gradually, and is good for mobility of hip and knee joints. Regular bike riding can improve muscle tone of legs, thighs, rear and hips.

Improves Coordination Skills: Moving both feet around in circles while steering with both hands and balancing body's weight is good practise for

coordination skills.

Builds Immunity: Riding a bicycle activates and boosts immune cells which helps in keeping infections away. A research at University of North Carolina noted that people who cycle for 30 minutes for five days a week take half the sick days as couch potatoes.

Burns Fat: Steady cycling can burn approximately 300 calories per hour. Cycling for 30 minutes every day can burn five kilos of fat in a year.

Brain Power: Illinois University researchers found that cycling regularly could improve mental ability by building new brain cells in hippocampus, the region responsible for mental analysis and memory that starts deteriorating from 30.

Maintains Joints: Maintains joints without causing any pressure or stress on the ankles, knees or spine which happens in case of walking or running.

Aids Better Sleep: Cycling restores circadian rhythm that aids better quality sleep and lowers release of stress hormone (cortisol). Stanford University researchers noted that even insomniacs benefited from

cycling.

Aids Digestion: It decreases time taken by food to move through large Intestine. This absorbs less water from the body and leads to formation of softer stool that is easier to pass. In addition, it prevents bloating which protect you against bowel cancer.

Prevents Arthritis: Outdoor cycling and indoor static cycling are both beneficial in reducing and preventing arthritis. Muscles in thighs and lower legs are used while cycling and their flexing is beneficial in controlling arthritis.

Vaccination during pregnancy cuts baby's flu risk



Mothers who take flu vaccinations during pregnancy can significantly reduce the risk of their babies acquiring influenza during their first six months of life, finds a new study.

The findings showed that infants six months and younger whose mothers were vaccinated when pregnant had a 70 percent reduction in flu cases and an 80 percent reduction in flu-related hospitalisations compared with babies whose moms weren't immunised.

Health records showed that 97 percent of flu cases occurred in infants whose mothers were not immunised against the disease while pregnant.

"Babies cannot be immunised during their first six months, so they must rely on others for protection from the flu during that time," said

more than 249,000 infant records for nine flu seasons from December 2005 through March 2014.

Approximately 10 percent of the women -- 23,383 -- reported being vaccinated while pregnant compared with 222,003 who said they were not vaccinated.

The researchers found stark difference between the two groups in the number of influenza cases and influenza hospitalisations within six months of birth.

Among the 658 infants identified with influenza, 638 cases -- 97 percent -- occurred in babies whose mothers were not immunised.

A total of 151 of the 658 infants were hospitalised, with 148 being born to non-immunised pregnant women.

lead author Julie H. Shakib, assistant professor at University of Utah in the US.

"When pregnant women get the flu vaccine there are clear benefits for their infants," she added.

Influenza, or the flu is a common viral infection that can be deadly, especially in high-risk groups and can cause a variety of symptoms including aches, chills, fevers, nausea and diarrhea.

Pregnant women are not at greater risk for getting the flu, but because of changes that occur to their bodies during pregnancy, are more likely to be severely affected, explained one of the researchers Michael W. Varner, professor.

The study, published online in the journal Pediatrics, emphasises the need for getting more pregnant women immunised as a public health priority.

The team examined more than 245,000 health records of pregnant women and more than 249,000 infant records for nine flu seasons from December 2005 through March 2014.

Approximately 10 percent of the women -- 23,383 -- reported being vaccinated while pregnant compared with 222,003 who said they were not vaccinated.

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More than 20 heatstroke cases reach hospitals as capital simmers at 43°C

New Delhi.(Agency)

As temperatures continued to soar under an orange alert, the capital witnessed a worrying rise in heat-related illnesses, with at least 15 to 25 cases reported across city hospitals on Friday, doctors said.

A day after two heatstroke patients were admitted, medical professionals noted that cases are now emerging from different parts of the capital, signalling the early impact of the ongoing heatwave.

Dr Sanjay Sood, senior medical officer at Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung Hospital, said, "Heat wave cases have started reaching hospitals... around 15 to 25 cases have already started coming



in."He added that the confirmed cases of heatstroke, one of the most severe forms of heat-related illness, have already been reported, raising

concerns among the healthcare providers. The gravity of the situation is evident at RML Hospital, where two patients admitted on May 21 highlight the dangers of prolonged exposure to extreme heat.

Dr Ajay Chauhan, director and professor of medicine at RML, detailed their condition.

"A 24-year-old man, arrived unconscious with a body temperature of 105°F and remains critical on ventilator support despite immediate cooling treatment," he said. "Another patient, brought in later, responded well and is now stable," he added.

Doctors warned that heatstroke can escalate rapidly and may prove fatal if not treated promptly. With

neighbouring regions such as Noida and Ghaziabad already under red alert, indicating severe conditions, health experts caution that number of cases could rise sharply in the coming days.

Heatwave till May 28: IMD

IMD retained its alert for heatwave conditions in the capital till May 28. Safdarjung, the city's base weather station, recorded a maximum of 43.3 degrees Celsius on Friday. Delhi government and the IMD have been urging the residents to take precautions, including staying hydrated, avoiding direct sun exposure during peak hours, and seeking immediate medical attention if symptoms of heat exhaustion or heatstroke appear.

Delhi HC issues notices to AAP leader Gopal Rai, journalist Saurav Das in judge contempt case

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Friday appointed senior advocate Rajdipa Behura as amicus curiae for assistance in contempt proceedings initiated against AAP leaders Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and others. Behura previously served as the Delhi government's additional standing counsel and the CBI's special public prosecutor. She was designated a 'senior advocate' in 2024.

The bench—comprising Justices Navin Chawla and



Ravinder Dubeja—also issued notices to AAP leader Gopal Rai and journalist Saurav Das on a plea seeking contempt proceedings against them over an alleged "orchestrated social media campaign" against Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma.

The bench had earlier issued notice to Kejriwal and others on a contempt case initiated suo motu by Justice Sharma. The court has listed the matter for hearing on August 4.

The petition, which has been filed by advocate Ashok Chaitanya, alleges that Rai and Das had attempted to exert "extra-judicial pressure" on Justice Sharma through social media posts while Kejriwal's recusal plea in the excise policy case was pending.

Viral 'Donald Trump' buffalo to be slaughtered on Eid-al-Adha in Bangladesh

New Delhi.(Agency)

An albino buffalo that went viral for its resemblance to United States President Donald Trump is set to be sacrificed in Bangladesh during Eid al-Adha after drawing huge crowds and becoming a social media attraction ahead of the festival. The nearly 700-kg buffalo, raised at a farm in Narayanganj near Dhaka, earned the nickname "Donald Trump" because of the blond tuft of hair falling across its forehead, which many compared to the US President's signature hairstyle.

Farm owner Ziauddin Mridha said the animal had already been sold to a customer for sacrifice during Eid al-Adha, one of the most significant Islamic festivals marked by the ritual sacrifice of livestock.

"I am going to miss Donald Trump, but that is the core spirit of Eid al-Adha -- making a sacrifice," Mridha told news agency AFP. The four-year-old albino buffalo became an internet sensation over the past few weeks, with visitors arriving daily to take selfies and videos with the unusually coloured animal. Many travelled from distant districts to see the buffalo, while children crowded outside the farm gates hoping for a glimpse.

Mridha said his younger brother came up with the nickname after noticing the buffalo's flowing blond hair. He described the animal as gentle and calm by nature, adding that albino buffaloes are generally non-aggressive unless provoked.

The buffalo required special care, including four baths a day and multiple meals to maintain its health before Eid, according to the owner. However, he said the constant crowds and attention had also caused stress to the animal, leading to weight loss and restrictions on public viewing.

Livestock officials said albino buffaloes are extremely rare in Bangladesh because of a lack of melanin, giving them their pale skin, pinkish nose and light-coloured hair.

Delhi court raps police over 'concocted' investigation while granting relief to 12 accused in 2007 'rioting' case

New Delhi.(Agency)

A Delhi court on Friday discharged 12 surviving accused in the 2007 Jamia Nagar rioting case, rapping the prosecution for "concocted investigation" having "stock involvement of police witnesses" for identification, while terming several arrests as "contrived."

In a 95-page order, Special Judge Vishal Gogne, who also ordered framing of charges against 13 accused, further slammed Delhi Police for serious lapses, particularly the failure to conduct a test identification parade, which he termed a "requirement of essence and not just prudence".

According to the prosecution, on September 22, 2007, a riotous mob

of around 1,500 people attacked the Jamia Nagar police post personnel. It said the local police had taken steps to remove a market which was allegedly creating a hindrance to



people going for offering Namaz during the month of Ramzan.

The prosecution claimed that 12 local leaders instigated the mob to kill the policeman and burn down the police station, following which the post was set ablaze, several vehicles

were torched, a service pistol, 10 live cartridges, valuables and a wireless set were looted, and multiple police officials were injured, of whom five suffered grievous injuries.

The judge rapped the prosecution while discharging the accused persons.

He said, "In the present investigation, it does weigh with the court that not only did the police officials avoid conducting a test identification parade (TIP) of the 11 persons who were arrested at the identification of at least two police persons each; the investigating officer (IO) even failed to consider the possibility of seeking arrest upon identification by one police witness while enabling TIP through the second police witness."

Transport Union strike affects supply chains, daily commute

New Delhi.(Agency)

A three-day transport strike called by over 68 transport unions under the All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) severely disrupted transportation and supply chains across Delhi-NCR as it entered its second day on Friday.

The protest, involving trucks, taxis, autos, and other commercial vehicles, was launched against the Delhi government's hike in the Environmental Compensation (Green) Cess and the growing operational burden caused by the rising fuel prices.

The strike affected the movement of goods and commuters across the capital, with disruptions visible at major transport hubs and wholesale markets. Among the worst-hit areas was Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar. Normally, around 4,000 to 5,000

trucks operate daily from this area, but during the strike, several loaded trucks remained parked along roads as drivers waited for transport operations to resume. The impact also



extended to Azadpur Mandi, Asia's largest fruit and vegetable wholesale market. Traders reported delays in the arrival of essential goods due to the blockade. According to vendors, the

supply has been disrupted heavily.

"Trucks are unable to reach the mandi because of the strike. Even the supply of available stock is getting affected since smaller goods vehicles are not operating normally. This is the reason some vegetable prices are overpriced," one of the vendors said. Meanwhile, a distributor affected by the strike said the disruption has created serious challenges in maintaining supply timelines and fulfilling customer commitments.

"The ongoing transport strike has created major disruptions in our day-to-day operations. Deliveries are getting delayed, dispatch schedules have been affected, and several orders are pending. This is impacting business operations and causing financial strain," the distributor said.

Delhi records peak power demand at 8,231 MW; a three-time jump from 2021

New Delhi.(Agency)

On May 21 this year, Delhi recorded a peak power demand of 8,231 MW, its highest ever for the date, marking a drastic rise from just 2,783 MW on May 21, 2021, according to official data. In six years, the city's electricity demand on the corresponding day has nearly tripled, underlining the sharp heat-driven power consumption. According to the official data of the Ministry of Power, the power demand never touched the 8,000 mark in the month of May in the past six years.

The data shows a steady climb each year, from around 7,726 MW in 2024 and 7,748 MW in 2025 to over 8,200 MW in 2026. The rise has been sharp and relentless. While 2023 and 2024 saw demand largely hover between 4,000 and 6,500 MW, 2025 pushed the ceiling further to over 7,700 MW. This year,

however, has broken all previous records within weeks, with demand crossing 8,000 MW almost daily.

An official from the BSES said, "The surge is being driven by intensifying heatwaves, with longer and hotter days and increasingly warmer nights forcing residents to depend heavily on air-conditioners, coolers and fans. What was once a peak seen occasionally in late June is now becoming routine as early as mid-May."

Between May 1 and May 21, Delhi's peak power demand in 2026 was higher than the corresponding day of 2025 on 16 out of 21 days, around 76 per cent of the days. Compared to 2024, Delhi's peak demand in 2026 was higher on 14 out of 21 days, around 67 per cent of the days. As the country's daytime peak power

demand also touched an all-time high of 270.82 gigawatts (GW) on May 21, the Ministry of Power on Friday stated that electricity consumption has broken

are prepared to supply electricity as required, due to the intense summer, let us all try to use electricity wisely and judiciously."

Even when the demand is expected to go up further in the coming days, the BSES officials stated that they are fully geared up to ensure reliable power supply to more than 53 lakh consumers and nearly 2.25 crore residents across the city. The power demand in the city is expected to witness further rise this summer.

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, said officials. On the other hand, Tata Power-DDL also supplied the season's peak demand of 2220 MW to date seamlessly across its network.



previous records for four consecutive days due to intense summer conditions. In a post on X, the ministry has urged the citizens to use the electricity wisely. The ministry said in the post, "Although we

Rupee rallies 63 paise to close below 96 level

New Delhi, (Agency)

Rupee strengthened for a second straight session on Friday, rising 63 paise to close at 95.73 on the back of easing crude prices, positive equity markets, and softer US yields coupled with the intervention from central bank. Rupee opened at 96.30 in the interbank foreign exchange market on Friday and continued to remain in the green territory and touched an intraday high of 95.30 and a low of 96.68 before settling at 95.73. The latest rise comes after the currency had rebounded 50 paise on Thursday from its record closing low to end at 96.86 against the greenback on Wednesday after falling to 96.96 intraday.

Forex traders said the Reserve Bank was active in the market throughout the day. The \$5 billion swap announced for May 26 also kept the punters at bay. Another enabler is the falling bond yields and easing geopolitical tension that have softened crude prices. Benchmark stock indices ended the session in positive territory, with the Sensex rising 231.99 points and the Nifty advancing 64.60 points.

Radhika Rao, senior economist at DBS Bank, said the rally in rupee is due to the Reserve Bank reviving monetary operations to slow rupee's fall, after the currency came within touching distance of a record low of 97 earlier this week. She said a closer scrutiny of outbound FDI and encouraging exporters to channel proceeds to the onshore markets might be pursued. In the run-up to the monetary policy review in early June, markets are likely to increasingly price in the likelihood of a hike, especially if the rupee remains under pressure and a resolution on the Iran war proves to be elusive, she added. The rupee maintained its upward momentum for the second straight day, effectively reversing the losses sustained at the start of the week. Dilip Parmar senior analyst at HDFC securities said and attributed the rally largely to the Reserve Bank's active market intervention post the announcement of its dollar swap, alongside a reprieve in crude prices as geopolitical risks eases.

IPO market loses steam: Only Rs 56,000 raised so far; when can it revive?

Kolkata, (Agency)

The current calendar year has witnessed a sharp deceleration in the IPO market while expert agencies predicted a sharp acceleration. Some agencies even predicted that 2026 will go down in history as a bumper year when the number of primary issues will be the highest in a year ever and also raise a very high amount of money that could even reach close to the fantastic number of Rs 4 lakh crore. Against that estimate, the current year has witnessed only 20 mainboard listings and 62 SME IPOs. The mood among investors has been so low that about 150 companies are waiting in the sidelines to float their IPOs even after getting the final nod from market regulator Sebi. As the US-Iran war rages on without no solution to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, the only hope of the IPO market reviving somewhat is pinned on a few mega IPOs such as NSE, Jio Platforms and Zepto. This might happen only in the second half of the year.

Amount collected in 2026 so far

According to published data, about Rs 56,322 crore has been raised through IPOs this year. In the same period in 2025, as much as Rs 82,678 crore was mobilised from the market. The amount mopped up this year appears optimistic only when compared with that in 2023, when only Rs 12,281 crore was raised during the same period. Significantly, 2023 was year when the primary market faced obstacles in the form of too high corporate valuations and weak stock performance after listing which injected circumspection among investors.

World stares at 2008 like recession, crude oil prices may reach \$200 if Hormuz remains closed: Reports

New Delhi, (Agency)

With US-Iran war tension shows no signs of abating, the global energy market remains in throes indicating a downturn in massive world economies. The shock US attack on Iran on February 28 is about to complete three months on May 28 and with this the Strait Of Hormuz, the global chokepoint from where one-fifth of the global energy passes, is also shut. Meanwhile, a report from the global research firm, Wood Mackenzie, has warned of dire economic consequences if the Strait of Hormuz remains shut for longer period.

Crude price may reach \$200 per barrel

The prices of crude oil may reach as high as \$200 if blockade remains in place, a report in Economic Times said citing Wood Mackenzie report.

Since the US-Israel attack on Iran, the global energy market is on the edge with growing fears of inflation prompted by high crude oil price.

The prices of Brent crude reached its peak of \$120 per barrel since the attack. Before the war, prices hovered around \$72.

Global supply chain at risk

As per the Wood Mackenzie report, the war in West Asia and the subsequent closure of Hormuz has drastically disrupted the global supply chain and is likely to hit the economies hard. The report also maintained that 20 percent of the world's LNG supply, which amounts to 80 million tonnes per annum has also been affected by Hormuz closure.

Rapidan Energy group predicts 2008 like recession

In yet concerning report, the Rapidan Energy Group has predicted 2008 like global recession if the Hormuz remains affected by the US-Iran war.

The energy research group also assesses that if the oil shock continues beyond July, then there is a possibility of drop in oil demand to balance the demand for August and September.

FIIs remain net seller this week, domestic investors provide cushion

In the month of May, FIIs have sold a cumulative Rs 32,230 crore, while DIIs have bought Rs 56,870 crore, based on provisional exchange data.

New Delhi, (Agency)

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) remained net sellers this week, offloading Rs 7,570 crore based on provisional exchange data as domestic institutional investors (DIIs) were net buyers, purchasing Rs 16,950 crore, providing enough cushion. In the month of May, FIIs have sold a cumulative Rs 32,230 crore, while DIIs have bought Rs 56,870 crore, based on provisional exchange data. "However, they turned net seller in the remaining four sessions of the week



with outflow of Rs 10,380 crore. DIIs remained net buyer in all the five-trading session during last week with net inflow of Rs 16,950 crore," said Pabitra Mukherjee, Associate Vice President-Research, Bajaj Broking. Benchmark indices traded choppy with high volatility swinging between gains and losses as investors navigated heightened market uncertainty and mixed cues across

sectors. Nifty during last week traded in the broad range of 23,300-23,850, with the index testing the upper and lower band on multiple occasion and finally close the week at 23,719 levels, up by 0.3 percent.

According to analysts, the currency backdrop continues to remain a structural concern. Despite resilience in global equities, the Indian rupee continues to

trade near weak levels against the US dollar. Persistent currency weakness not only heightens imported inflation risks but also keeps foreign institutional investors cautious towards emerging markets such as India.

"As a result, broader market stability continues to rely significantly on domestic institutional inflows absorbing periods of FII-led selling pressure," they said. Investor sentiment remained cautious due to persistent geo-political tensions, which continued to keep crude oil prices elevated. Meanwhile, a sharp rise in bond yields, driven by concerns over rising inflation and the possibility of prolonged higher interest rates, kept investors on edge. Overall, global uncertainty and macroeconomic headwinds led to cautious trading activity across the markets. Looking ahead, institutional flows are likely to remain sensitive to developments around US-Iran tensions, oil-price movement, said analysts.

Petrol price raised by 87 paise, diesel by 91 paise; third hike in 10 days

New Delhi, (Agency)

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked again across India on Saturday, with petrol increasing by Rs 0.87 per litre and diesel by Rs 0.91 per litre. This marks the third upward revision in retail fuel rates this month by the state-owned oil companies amid sustained pressure from rising global crude oil prices and geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

In Delhi, as per a PTI report, petrol prices were raised by 87 paise per litre, increasing from Rs 98.64 to Rs 99.51, while diesel prices went up by 91 paise from Rs 91.58 to Rs 92.49 per litre.

The hike comes a day after the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas had assured that, despite rumours, India has adequate petrol and diesel supplies.

"India has adequate availability of petrol and diesel supplies across the country continue to remain stable. Citizens are advised to avoid panic buying and purchase fuel only as per actual requirement. Temporary pressure at some retail outlets is being addressed through continuous supply monitoring and coordinated distribution efforts by Oil Marketing Companies," read a tweet by the ministry. It also further

added that responsible consumption and public cooperation will help ensure smooth fuel availability for everyone during the ongoing high-demand period. On May 16, India saw a



significant rise in its fuel prices after the state-run oil companies revised them, raising petrol and diesel rates by around Rs 3 per litre in several cities. Following this, prices again saw a 90 paise increase in all metros on May 19. With the latest increase, fuel prices have risen by nearly Rs 5 per litre over the period. The fresh hike is likely to put additional pressure on commuters, transporters and businesses across multiple sectors. Experts have warned that repeated increases in petrol and

diesel prices may lead to higher transportation and logistics costs, which could eventually push up the prices of essential goods and food items. Government officials, however, maintained that the revisions are essential to offset rising import costs and ensure stability in fuel supplies amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and uncertainty in international energy markets. India relies on imports for nearly 85 per cent of its crude oil requirements, making domestic fuel prices vulnerable to fluctuations in global markets. Growing concerns over possible disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most crucial oil transit routes, have further intensified fears of supply shortages. Meanwhile, CNG and PNG prices have also been revised upward in several cities in recent days, adding to concerns over inflation and increasing household expenses.

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) prices in Delhi have been increased by Re 1 per kilogram, adding to the burden on commuters and commercial vehicle operators amid rising fuel costs.

Govt urges people to use electricity judiciously as heatwave pushes power demand to record high

New Delhi, (Agency)

Amid growing demand for electricity due to heatwaves in the country, power ministry on Friday urged citizens to use electricity judiciously. The ministry, however, said though there is no shortage of electricity, it should be used wisely. In the last four days, electricity demand has broken all previous records due to the searing heat across the country, which has led to increased use of cooling devices by people. In fact, the peak power demand has even crossed the estimated 270.82 GW, the highest so far, surpassing the ministry's projection of peak power demand in the country. Over the past four days, power demand has continued to rise. For instance, the peak power demand met on May 18 was 257.37 GW, on May 19 it was 260.45 GW, on May 20 it reached 265.44 GW, and on May 21 it hit the

highest level of 270.82 GW.

"The peak daytime demand usually occurs between 2 PM and 4 PM. Although we are prepared to supply electricity as required, due to the



intense summer, let us all try to use electricity wisely and judiciously," said the Power Ministry in a social media post on X. The spike in electricity consumption comes amid severe

heatwave conditions across northwest and central India. According to the India Meteorological Department, temperatures in several regions are nearing the 45-degree Celsius mark.

Last summer, India recorded a peak power demand of 242.77 GW in June 2025, although it remained below the government's projected estimate of 277 GW. In May 2024, the country's peak power demand had touched 250 GW, surpassing the previous record high of 243.27 GW recorded in September 2023. According to the ministry, the peak demand was met through a diversified energy mix comprising 59 GW from solar power, 14 GW from wind energy, 15 GW from hydro power, 169 GW from thermal power, 2.386 GW from gas-based generation, and 7.20 GW from nuclear power.

and outward FDI, which, according to him, reflects Indian corporates maturing internationally rather than being a vote against India, "but a line that deserves far sharper disaggregation than it has received".

However, the RBI said that with the recent correction in financial asset valuations, it expects repatriations to moderate, improving the net capital account position going forward.

Meanwhile, the central bank said in its blletin that global economic conditions remained fragile, shaped by heightened geopolitical tensions, elevated energy costs and persistent uncertainty surrounding the growth and inflation outlook.

"The near-term outlook is somewhat clouded by supply-side pressures. Although headline inflation remains firmly within the tolerance band, the pass-through to domestic prices needs to be monitored. Financial conditions, crude oil prices and capital flows continue to pose challenges to the external sector outlook," the RBI said in its monthly report.



Kevin Warsh sworn-in as Federal Reserve chair, Trump wants him to be 'independent'

Speaking at the White House East Room ceremony on Friday, Trump called Warsh "one of the truly great chairmen of the Federal Reserve that we've ever had".

New Delhi, (Agency)

President Donald Trump swore in Kevin Warsh as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and said he would restore confidence in the US' Central bank. Speaking at the White House East Room ceremony on Friday, Trump called Warsh "one of the truly great chairmen of the Federal Reserve that we've ever had". He's respected by everybody, and that's so important in that position," the US President said. Warsh took the oath of office from Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas before an audience that

included House Speaker Mike Johnson, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Trump said he wanted Warsh to operate independently.

"I want Kevin to be totally independent," he added. "Don't look at me, don't look at anybody, just do your own thing and do a great job." The US President criticised the Federal Reserve's recent direction.

He said the institution had become distracted by "climate policy and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives" instead of focusing on inflation and employment. Trump also praised Warsh for supporting reforms at the central bank. "He'll bring much needed reform and modernisation," Trump said, referring to data collection, economic modelling and the Fed's communication practices.

Warsh said the Federal Reserve must remain focused on price stability and maximum employment. "Our mandate at the Fed is to promote price stability and maximum employment," he added. "When we pursue



those aims with wisdom and clarity, independence and resolve, inflation can be lower, growth stronger, real take-home pay higher, and America can be more prosperous."

He pledged to lead what he called a "reform-oriented Federal Reserve".

"I will lead a reform-oriented Federal Reserve learning from past successes and

mistakes," Warsh said. Trump used the event to promote his administration's economic record. He said the stock market had hit new highs during trading on Thursday.

"Stock market's up 600 points," Trump said.

"That means they like you." President Trump also said the United States had attracted "\$18 trillion being invested in the US" during the first 11 months of his administration. He credited tariffs and deregulation for driving manufacturing and technology investment. "We're building factories, car plants, everything, AI, everything all over the country," Trump said. "Nobody's ever seen anything like it." Warsh previously served as a Federal Reserve Governor during the 2008 financial crisis. Trump said he studied under economist Milton Friedman and was mentored by former Treasury Secretary and Secretary of State George Shultz.

Short news

Andhra HC raps officials over cancellation of social welfare pensions

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

The HC has expressed strong displeasure over the cancellation of social welfare pensions allegedly based on the recommendation of TDP MLA Bendalam Ashok Kumar.

The HC directed concerned officials to restore pensions to five beneficiaries, including two widows, a differently-abled person, and two single women from Srikakulam district.



Justice Satti Subba Reddy observed that pensions are not charity distributed by the government but a security right intended to ensure a dignified life for vulnerable sections.

The court criticised officials for allegedly cancelling pensions without following due process and questioned how action was taken on a complaint filed by an illiterate village sarpanch capable only of affixing a thumb impression.

It noted that notices were issued even before the alleged complaint was filed, raising doubts over the fairness of the process. Officials denied acting on an MLA's recommendation despite records suggesting otherwise. The court criticised authorities for filing a false affidavit and failing to submit the Tahsildar's report. It directed officials to clear pending pension arrears within 12 weeks.

Six killed, four injured as bus hits auto in Odisha's Ganjam

BERHAMPUR.(Agency)

A joyous trip to Maa Singhasini temple in Ganjam's Polasara turned tragic after a passenger bus rammed into an auto-rickshaw near Ladkapalli chowk under Purushottampur police limits, killing six people including two children on Friday morning.

The deceased were identified as Mali Behera (75), Nrusingha Behera (43), Lilabati Behera (45), Ratani Behera (39), Sneha Behera (10) and Kiran Behera (12). All of them were residents of Erendra and nearby Purushottampur villages under Girisola panchayat in Chikiti block. They were members of an extended family.

Sources said the Behera family hired an auto-rickshaw to visit the temple for Sneha's 'mundan' (tonsuring) ceremony. They started their journey from Erendra village, unaware of the tragic fate that awaited them.

Near Ladkapalli chowk, a speeding passenger bus coming from the opposite direction allegedly crashed into the auto-rickshaw. The impact was so severe that the three-wheeler was completely mangled. Locals claimed the bus dragged the auto-rickshaw to a distance of 100 metre before coming to a halt. Fire services personnel rushed to the spot and launched a rescue operation. The victims were shifted to Kodala community health centre where doctors declared six of them dead.

Karnataka HC cuts driver's one-year jail term to a day, cites conduct after accident

BENGALURU.(Agency)

In a rare instance, taking note of the immediate conduct of an accused after an accident in shifting the injured to the hospital in his car, the Karnataka High Court reduced the one-year simple imprisonment awarded by the sessions court to him to a single day, till the rising of the court. The fine amount, however, was increased from Rs 5,000 to Rs 1 lakh which is to be paid to the dependents of the deceased.

While reducing the sentence, the court also considered the willingness of the accused to pay the enhanced fine amount, besides the compensation received by the dependents from the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal.

Justice V Srishananda passed the order recently, partly allowing the criminal revision petition filed by the accused Riyaz Ahmed (53). The accused, a driver from Pakshikere of Mangaluru, had run over one Anand Shetty while driving rashly and negligently in Mangaluru.

In 2018, the sessions court confirmed the sentence passed by the magistrate's court the same year. As per the order, Ahmed was supposed to serve one-year simple imprisonment and pay a fine of Rs 5,000.

The petitioner's counsel submitted that the accused did not run away from the spot after the accident, but shifted the injured in his own car, which is a mitigating circumstance. He argued that the court should show lenience by setting aside the sentence and enhancing the fine amount reasonably, which can be paid as compensation.

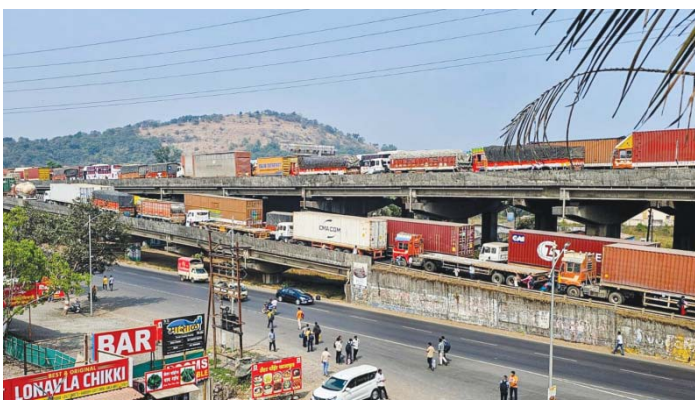
Mumbai-Pune Expressway may require 'visa' for hazardous tankers after 30-hour traffic nightmare

Mumbai.(Agency)

More than four months after a propylene gas tanker toppled on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway and triggered a traffic jam lasting nearly two days, a seven-member expert committee constituted to study the accident has submitted its report to the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), proposing stricter regulations, including a "visa-like" system for vehicles transporting hazardous chemicals on the corridor.

The 250-page report shifts greater responsibility for safe transport of hazardous and toxic chemicals onto manufacturers, refiners and transporters, and recommends a regulatory approval system

under which such vehicles would be allowed on the expressway only after complying with a series of safety conditions.



"The committee has recommended manufacturers, refiners and transporters be mandated to fill out four to five forms, with details of origin, destination, a standard operating procedure (SOP) in case of a

mishap, an escort vehicle with necessary equipment, etc," an MSRDC official said.

"These forms will then be submitted to the transport department, highway security police (HSP) and MSRDC, and if permission is given, only then will the vehicles be able to ply on the expressway," the official added.

Officials said the proposed system would function like a "visa" mechanism for vehicles carrying hazardous materials on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway.

The recommendations come in the wake of the February 3 accident near the Adoshi Tunnel in the Khandala Ghat section, where a tanker carrying propylene gas overturned and began leaking, raising fears of an explosion. Authorities had to cordon off a large stretch around the tanker while emergency teams attempted to contain the leak, forcing closure of one side of the carriageway and causing a massive traffic gridlock for over 30 hours.

Scoot to shift commercial flight operations to Andhra's Bhogapuram airport from July 8

VISAKHAPATNAM.(Agency)

Singapore-based low-cost carrier Scoot has announced that all its flight operations in Visakhapatnam will shift to the upcoming Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram from July 8, 2026, marking the first formal airline announcement ahead of the airport's commercial operations.

According to an advisory issued by the airline, all Scoot flights currently operating from the existing Visakhapatnam Airport (VTZ) will thereafter operate from the new greenfield airport located at Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram district, around 50 km from Visakhapatnam city.

The airline stated that its check-in counters would function from Terminal-1 of the new airport and open two-and-a-half hours prior to flight departure. Passengers have been advised to arrive at least 120 minutes before



scheduled departure time to complete check-in and security procedures.

The announcement assumes significance as the Bhogapuram airport project moves closer to operational readiness. In January this year, an Air India aircraft from New Delhi successfully completed the maiden trial landing at the airport.

Being developed as the Alluri Sitarama Raju Greenfield International Airport, the project is expected to become the primary aviation

hub for North Coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Aerotropolis planned as part of airport proj

In the first phase, the airport has been designed to handle six million passengers annually, with provisions for future expansion based on traffic growth. The project includes plans for an Aerotropolis, an aviation-linked commercial hub, and a dedicated cargo terminal aimed at supporting logistics and freight operations in the region. The airport is being developed by GMR Visakhapatnam International Airport Ltd (GVIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airports Ltd, at an estimated investment of around Rs 5,000 crore. With Scoot becoming the first airline to formally announce operations from the new airport, aviation experts expect more domestic and international carriers to outline their transition plans soon.

'From Delhi to Bangladesh jail, finally a ray of hope,' — Sweety Bibi and her two children are set to return, a year after push back

Kolkata.(Agency)

A lot has changed in West Bengal since the summer of last year, including a contentious Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls that has spilled over into tribunal hearings, and the voting in of a government that has promised to go after "infiltrators". Sweety Bibi has been watching, from afar.

She was deported as a Bangladeshi on June 26, 2025. On Friday, a relative called up to tell her what she had been awaiting for nearly a year — that the Centre had told the Supreme Court that it would bring back some of those deported to Bangladesh, and determine their citizenship status here; that it meant that she and her two children, 6 and 16, may finally return home to Dhitora village in Birbhum.

Breaking down while speaking to The Indian Express over the phone from Chapainawabganj, Bangladesh, over 220 km from Birbhum, Sweety said: "I had lost hope for myself and my

children... Finally the highest court of the country has delivered justice. Now all I want to do is to get back home safely."

Appearing for the Centre before the Supreme Court Friday, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told a three-



judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant: "My instructions are, the Government will bring them back, and thereafter will examine their status, and depending on the outcome, will take steps accordingly." Mehta also urged the Bench to record that this step was being taken as regards this particular case and should not be treated as a precedent.

The Bench was hearing an appeal filed by the Centre challenging a Calcutta High Court order of September 27 last year asking it to bring back some persons deported to Bangladesh as the due process appeared to have not been followed in their case. The High Court

passed the order on a habeas corpus petition by Bhodu Sheikh, whose daughter Sunali Khatoon and her family were deported along with Sweety Bibi and her family, after being picked up from Delhi, where they were working as daily wagers.

Sunali, who was pregnant then and has since delivered a boy, was brought back earlier in December to Paikar village, also in Birbhum, along with a minor son, 8, on humanitarian grounds. Her husband Danish continues to be in Bangladesh, and is expected to come back now along with Sweety Bibi. At Friday's hearing, Justice Kant sought to know how long it would take for those deported to be brought back. The SG said it usually took 8-10 days and urged the Court to post the matter for further hearing after the summer

Odisha govt prohibits strike in power sector, invokes ESMA

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

The government on Friday prohibited strikes in power sector establishments under the Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, 1988, to ensure uninterrupted generation, transmission and distribution of electricity. The order comes as power cuts are being seen at many places of the state in the midst of the heatwave conditions.

The order covers GRIDCO, OPTCL, OHPC, OPGC and DISCOM utilities, and will remain in force for six months from the date of issuance. A notification from the Home department said the move was necessary to maintain essential electricity services for the public, industries, hospitals, and agriculture, especially during the peak summer and upcoming kharif season.

Under ESMA, any violation of the order can attract legal action, including disciplinary proceedings and prosecution. Officials said the step is preventive and aimed at avoiding any disruption in power supply due to labour unrest. "The step has been taken to keep industrial peace to optimise generation, transmission and distribution of power in the state," it added.

Meanwhile, reacting to power cuts in the state, deputy chief minister and Energy minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo said the ongoing heatwave is pushing up electricity demand. "More air conditioners are being used. As a result, there is overload and transformers are burning out," he said and added arrangements are being made for quick restoration. "We are making arrangements to restore supply quickly. We are trying to ensure that people get uninterrupted electricity," he added.

Around Town: Nine months pregnant, coal stove, 600 people a day — how Surekha Walke built Chaitanya — Assal Malvani Bhojangruh

Mumbai.(Agency)

Chaitanya — Assal Malvani Bhojangruh began the way most lasting things do: out of necessity with no margin for failure. It was a love marriage, opposite castes. The families cut them off. Surekha and Nitin Walke had one small space in Malvan, and each other. Nitin loved how Surekha cooked. He kept saying: "How good would it be if other people could eat like this". A friend pointed out an empty space. They collected broken furniture, hung a sign, and called it Chaitanya — after Nitin's younger brother. The name also means happiness. "Chaitanya is found after food," Surekha, 65, told us when we met her at the newly launched Thane outpost, designed like a home.



That was 35 years ago, in 1992. Back then, she says, nobody was precisely naming the cuisine. Nitin added the tagline himself: Assal Malvani Bhojangruh. They started with three thalis — chicken, fish, veg — priced at Rs 30, Rs 50, and Rs 15. From the first day, fish curry, sol kadhi, and rice were unlimited. "This is what Malvani people eat," Surekha said. "Rice, curry, sol

kadhi. That's it."

She also wanted to serve tikhala, a rustic, thick fish preparation with coconut and tirphal (Sichuan pepper), in thali format, which nobody was doing. "Many people don't like it because it has a very different flavour. But if you are a true fishtarian, you will love it."

Business was slow but steady. Four or five people some days, nobody other days. Then in 1993, the state government organised a teachers' seminar in Ratnagiri. Teachers from across Maharashtra came, and many made their way toward Malvan and Goa. Malvan barely had a place to eat. For eight days straight, Surekha — nine months pregnant with her son Mitra — cooked from 6 in the morning until 2 at night. Five hundred to six hundred people

a day. No gas stove, coal. Her elder daughter Sayee, then barely eight years old, washed utensils. Two workers made chapatis. Nitin handled the front. She ran the kitchen. "Malvan tourism started from that time," her son Mitra shared, adding that prior to that, Malvan was known for its port and rice market. Chaitanya was at the centre of Malvan when it happened.

Mumbai happened in 2010. A well-known Malvani figure, Jyotirbhaskar Jayantrao Salgaonkar of Kalnirnay, had been urging her for years. She found herself a 300 sq ft space in Dadar, opposite Shivaji Park, and started with home delivery and a parcel counter. She knew the kitchen; she didn't know the front. She learned licensing and vendor management from scratch, eventually did a business literacy.

NEWS BOX

Sabalenka cuts short media duties in protest against French Open prize money

CHENNAI. (Agency)

World number one Aryna Sabalenka cut short her French Open media duties on Friday as part of a coordinated protest by leading players over Grand Slam prize money distribution. The Belarusian was among several top stars who adhered to a self-imposed 15-minute limit on press obligations ahead of the tournament in Paris.

The protest reflects growing dissatisfaction among players, who believe the four Grand Slam tournaments should allocate a larger share of their overall revenue toward prize money, benefits, and player representation in key decision-making areas. Sabalenka, one of the most vocal figures in the ongoing discussions, limited her media interaction to a brief five-minute interview with the host broadcaster followed by a 10-minute press conference with print reporters. "I'm here to talk to you because I have respect for you guys," Sabalenka said. "We just wanted to make our point and we are united, 15 minutes is better than zero."

The symbolic 15-minute cap was designed to



highlight the fact that the French Open currently allocates roughly 15% of its revenue toward prize money. The strategy was reportedly communicated to most of the top 200 singles players, although participation in the protest remained voluntary. "As I said a thousand times today, I have huge respect, but we know what's happening here, so thank you so much," she added before ending the English-language portion of her media session to accommodate reporters from Belarus. Several high-profile names, including men's world number one Jannik Sinner and four-time French Open champion Iga Swiatek, also followed the "work-to-rule" directive during Friday's media day.

GROWING PUSH FOR REVENUE SHARE

The coordinated action marks another escalation in the wider conversation around revenue sharing in professional tennis. Leading players on both the ATP and WTA tours have increasingly argued that Grand Slam events generate enormous commercial income while players receive a comparatively limited share of the profits.

ISL clubs urge 'no binding decision' on commercial partner at AIFF SGM



NEW DELHI. (Agency)

The Indian Super League (ISL) clubs have urged the All India Football Federation (AIFF) and its General Body members against taking a decision on the long-term commercial rights model when it convenes in Kolkata today for the Special General Meeting (SGM).

In a late-night email to AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey and Deputy Secretary General M Satyanarayan, FC Goa CEO Ravi Puskur -- and rest of the ISL clubs -- reiterated their concerns regarding the proposed commercial structure while "requesting for a collaborative engagement."

On Friday, ISL clubs had two virtual meetings with senior AIFF officials over the way forward but no solution was found. The two parties are warring over the commercial rights partner. AIFF are in favour of UK-based Genius Sports -- who have bid for the commercial rights -- over a 15-20 year period. The teams, however, have proposed a club-led model with Genius Sports' scope limited to data and technology partner.

In a 13-point email, Puskur and clubs requested that "no binding decision be taken at the Special General Meeting scheduled for tomorrow [May 23]. The Clubs remain willing and available to continue engaging constructively with the AIFF and Genius Sports to arrive at a collaborative and financially sustainable framework that protects the interests of all stakeholders and, most importantly, secures the future of Indian football." The clubs once again said they had not been provided detailed financial projections, revenue assumptions or long-term modelling over the Genius Sports-led model. The UK-based company has bid Rs 64.4 crore annually with 5% increase for the rights of the ISL and the Federation Cup. East Bengal, Mohun Bagan share spoils in dramatic 1-1 ISL Kolkata Derby. They argued that while AIFF and Genius Sports appear financially protected under the structure, clubs -- who bear the operational costs of running professional football through player salaries.

Carrick at the wheel: Another false dawn like Solksjaer, or a new era for Man United?

Michael Carrick is finally going to be given a fair crack at Manchester United as he has been made the new full-time head coach. Can Carrick continue his fine start and prove that it isn't another false dawn at the club?

New Delhi. (Agency)

And so it begins. A new era at Manchester United. Or perhaps, more fittingly, the continuation of one, as Michael Carrick becomes the new head coach, not manager, of the 13-time Premier League champions. When United decided to part ways with Ruben Amorim, it felt as though the club was bracing for yet another implosion. It is never a good sign when a tactician publicly questions the board before walking away,

and Amorim's departure left a dark cloud hanging heavily over Old Trafford. Darren Fletcher's brief spell in charge did little to lift the gloom as United crashed out of the FA Cup, leaving them with just 39 matches across the season. For a club of United's stature, that was an almost unimaginable reality. Yet, for many fans, it had become an all-too-familiar story over the years.

Then came Carrick. Quiet, composed, understated, much like the midfielder he was during his playing days. Never flashy, never desperate for the spotlight, just a man who understood balance, control and responsibility. From the moment he arrived at United in July 2006, Carrick was rarely the headline act. He simply did his job, slipped under the radar, and prepared for the next battle. Perhaps that is why Cristiano Ronaldo once wrote a heartfelt message for him during his first spell as United's caretaker boss after Ole Gunnar Solksjaer was sacked. The task back then was straightforward, to steer United away from disaster in a season that looked destined to sink without resistance. Then came the tests:

Manchester City, Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool. This was part of 11 wins in his 16 games.

All beaten. Some emphatically.

And now comes the real question: can Carrick build something lasting? At a club like United, success is never judged in moments. It is measured in trophies.



BRINGING BACK EXCITING FOOTBALL

"You want to win games, it goes without saying, we want to win games. There's different ways of doing it, of course, different scenarios, different situations in games that [mean] you might have to play a certain way." "But I think for me it's [about] working

with the players. I love working with the players and helping them get better individually, which, hopefully, will help the team improve and [I want to] be there to support them. I'm one of them, we're all in it together, and I think it's important that we all look after each other." "But I know it comes down to results. Hopefully, we can play a really exciting type of football and be positive and express and bring excitement. I want to be off my seat. I want to be enjoying watching the boys play, and results obviously need to come with that. "You can feel my kind of enthusiasm for it, because I'm buzzing to get started and see what we can do." These were Carrick's words while speaking on the Inside Carrington podcast about the football he wanted United to play. More importantly, he has stayed true to that vision. Until May 8, United had scored 26 goals under him, boasting a shot conversion rate of 13.9 percent -- the best in the league since his arrival. They had also conceded just 16 goals, several of them coming in tense contests like the Fulham clash and the dramatic 2-2 draw away at Bournemouth.

IPL Play Of The Day: Heinrich Klaasen makes Hazlegod look human in Uppal carnage



New Delhi. (Agency)

For RCB, Josh Hazlewood has been a cheat code. When they need wickets in the powerplay, middle or the death, the Australian pacer has been the man they turn to. He had 22 wickets in 12 matches when they went to claim the IPL title in 2025 and has 12 scalps to his name from 11 matches this time around. This made the Bengaluru fans fondly call him 'Hazlegod' purely based on his skill and the way he functioned with the ball.

But on Friday, May 22, Heinrich Klaasen decided to take down Hazlewood in what was carnage at the Uppal stadium and show that he was also a mortal in the end. Klaasen has been enjoying a purple patch this season, not with his usual destructive ways, but with a measured approach. He said that his mindset has changed and he wasn't trying to strike at 300 this season. But against RCB, he decided to go back to his old ways and unleash his fury on the RCB bowlers and particularly Hazlewood. Now, many moments could have easily become the Play Of The Day for the SRH vs RCB clash. Ishan Kishan continuing his fine form against Bengaluru and the way the Hyderabad bowlers cleverly used slower deliveries to nullify RCB's firepower are worthy shouts.

But just for his pure brilliance, Klaasen takes home the honour for the match.

KLAASEN SCARES RCB BOWLERS

SRH went out to score big and that was something Pat Cummins said at the toss. Travishek got going and put on 45 runs for the first wicket in four overs. Abhishek Sharma and Kishan added 52 in the next 4.2 overs to push the run-rate even further. Abhishek scored a fine fifty but didn't waste time and allowed Klaasen to come in. But something seemed to be off. Klaasen wasn't timing the ball well and suddenly the pressure seemed to build on the South African batter.

Kavya Maran's priceless reaction to Krunal Pandya's bouncer takes spotlight: Watch

New Delhi. (Agency)

The IPL 2026 match between Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) on Friday night had plenty of big hits. But a reaction from the stands stole the show on social media. Sunrisers Hyderabad CEO Kavya Maran went viral for how she reacted to RCB bowler Krunal Pandya.

Krunal is known for trying different things when he bowls. This season, he has been mixing up his pace. Sometimes, instead of standard spin, he bowls a fast ball or throws in a surprise short bouncer to catch the batsman off guard.

The incident happened during the 17th over of the first innings when SRH batter Nitish Kumar Reddy was on strike. Krunal decided to try a surprise tactic and fired in a sharp, fast bouncer. The delivery went so

high that the umpire actually called it a wide, meaning Krunal had to bowl the delivery over again. When the ball went over the batter's head, the cameras immediately



showed the VIP box. Kavya Maran looked completely shocked by the unexpected delivery. The clip quickly went viral on social media, with fans loving her passion for the game. Even though his bowling

Should RCB have gone for the win vs SRH? Qualifier 1 priority in 255 chase spilt fans

Kolkata. (Agency)

A Royal Challengers Bengaluru may have secured the bigger prize from Hyderabad on Friday night, but the manner in which they approached their 256-run chase against Sunrisers Hyderabad has now opened up an entirely different debate among fans online.

After losing by 55 runs at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, RCB still managed to finish inside the IPL 2026 top two and seal their place in Qualifier 1 thanks to Net Run Rate. In tournament terms, that is massive because a top-two finish gives teams two opportunities to reach the IPL final. But while the qualification math worked perfectly for RCB, many fans were left frustrated watching the defending champions seemingly shift focus midway through the chase from winning the match to simply protecting their qualification scenario.

And social media immediately split into two sides. One section questioned why RCB appeared to back away from the chase after a flying start, especially on a batting surface where SRH themselves had crossed 250 comfortably. The other side argued that

once Virat Kohli got dismissed and the risk of a batting collapse emerged, protecting Qualifier 1 became the smarter cricketing decision. HOW RCB APPROACHED 255 CHASE VS SRH

Venkatesh Iyer came out aggressively and smashed 44 off just 19 balls while Virat



Kohli looked positive early on. RCB raced to 75 runs in the powerplay despite losing two wickets, and for a brief period, SRH were being forced to think defensively. But the momentum shifted sharply after the powerplay.

Kohli departed for 15 and suddenly the run flow completely slowed down. In a chase of 256, RCB surprisingly took until the 13th

over to even reach the 120-run mark, and from there onwards, the innings increasingly looked more focused on qualification security than genuinely threatening SRH's total. Rajat Patidar and Krunal Pandya added 84 runs together off 57 balls, which in isolation is not a poor partnership at all. But in the context of such a gigantic chase, it never truly created scoreboard pressure on SRH.

Patidar completed another half-century and ended with 53 off 37 balls, but it was one of those knocks the RCB captain himself probably would not look back at too fondly despite the milestone. A strike rate of 143.24 in a 250-plus chase felt unusually subdued for someone who has built his entire season around fearless intent and momentum-shifting batting. The delayed arrival of hitters like Tim David and Jitesh Sharma only added more fuel to the online debate. Many RCB supporters defended the approach by pointing towards the bigger picture. Their argument was simple: RCB did begin the chase seriously, but once Kohli got out, the batting lineup carried the danger of collapsing completely under scoreboard pressure.

Virat Kohli ignores handshake with Travis Head, moment goes viral: Watch

Virat Kohli sparked controversy as he ignored the customary post-match handshake with Travis Head following the SRH vs RCB game in Hyderabad.

Hyderabad. (Agency)

The heat was well and truly on during the IPL 2026 match between Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Friday, May 22. While SRH walked away with a dominant 55-run victory, social media was quickly set ablaze by a tense post-match moment involving Indian batting legend Virat Kohli and SRH opener Travis Head. A viral clip circulating

online appears to show Kohli completely ignoring the customary post-match handshake with the Australian left-hander. While Kohli warmly shook hands with SRH captain Pat Cummins, Abhishek Sharma, and Ishan Kishan, his swift bypass of Head became the talk of the night.

HOW THE KOHLI-HEAD DRAMA UNFOLDED

The post-match snub wasn't an isolated incident; the friction had been building all evening. During the first innings, Kohli uncorked an extraordinarily animated celebration when Head was cleaned up by Rasikh Salam Dar for 26.

The verbal battle peaked during RCB's steep chase of 256. Kohli was seen exchanging heated words with Head and even gestured aggressively, challenging the Australian to come into the attack and try his luck with the ball. In a cinematic twist, Head did come on to bowl later in the innings and promptly picked up the massive wicket of RCB



skipper Rajat Patidar, who was going strong on 56 off 39 deliveries.

ISHAN KISHAN, ABHISHEK SHARMA POWERS SRH

Powered by explosive half-centuries from Ishan Kishan, who smashed a dazzling 79 off 46 balls to claim the Player of the Match honours, and Abhishek Sharma, who blasted 56 off just 22 deliveries, SRH piled up a mammoth 255 for 4. Heinrich Klaasen added late fireworks with a 24-ball 51. In response,

a disciplined Hyderabad bowling unit choked RCB's momentum, restricting the visitors to 200 for 4 despite Patidar's fighting fifty and Krunal Pandya's unbeaten 41.

IPL 2026 PLAYOFFS: TOP 3 CONFIRMED

Despite the crushing defeat, RCB had a major silver lining. Thanks to their Net Run Rate (NRR) cushion, they managed to hold onto their spot in the top two of the standings, keeping them in a prime position for the knockouts.

As the league stage hits its business end, RCB, Gujarat Titans, and SRH all sit level on 18 points, with NRR deciding their final playoff seeding. While the top three spots are now officially locked in, the battle for the fourth and final playoff position remains wide open, with the Rajasthan Royals, Punjab Kings, and Kolkata Knight Riders all fighting to sneak into the knockouts.

Shanaya Kapoor

Wishes Suhana Khan On Her 26th Birthday, Says 'My Su, Love You For Life'

Actress Shanaya Kapoor gave a glimpse into her close friendship with actress Suhana Khan as she shared a beautiful birthday wish for the latter, through a post on her social media. Taking to her social media account, Shanaya Kapoor posted a picture featuring herself posing with Suhana against the backdrop of colourful European-style buildings and yachts.

Shanaya captioned the picture as, "Happy birthday my su. Love u for life," followed by a pink heart emoji. Suhana reshared the heartfelt post on her social media handle.



Talking about Suhana Khan and Shanaya Kapoor, the two girls are known to share a close bond and are often seen vacationing and partying together along with their other bestie and Bollywood actress Ananya Panday. Their

friendship dates back to childhood as the families of their respective parents, Shah Rukh Khan, Sanjay Kapoor, Chunky Panday have remained close and family friends over the years. On the work front, Suhana made her acting debut with Zoya Akhtar's 'The Archies', which premiered on OTT in 2023. The film also marked the debut of many star kids including Khushi Kapoor and Agastya Nanda. Suhana will next be seen sharing screen space with her father Shah Rukh Khan in the upcoming film 'King'.

Meanwhile, Shanaya Kapoor made her Bollywood debut with 'Aankhon Ki Gustaakhiyan'. The actress has been receiving Great reviews for her performance in her recently released movie 'Tu Yaa Main.' She is also gearing up for her pan-India film, "Vrushabha", opposite South superstar Mohanlal.



Is Kangana Ranaut Married? Truth Behind Viral Mangalsutra Video Revealed



Kangana Ranaut's fans were left surprised on Thursday evening when a video of the actress-turned-politician surfaced on social media in which she was seen wearing a mangalsutra. In the viral clip, Ranaut was seen walking with her security personnel when her mangalsutra grabbed everyone's attention. In no time, the video went viral, with netizens wondering if the actress had secretly gotten married.

No, Kangana Ranaut is not married. In fact, the actress' viral video is her look from her upcoming movie, Queen 2. Reportedly, Ranaut has already started shooting for the film, which is tentatively titled Queen Forever.

Released in 2013, Queen was directed by Vikas Bahl, starring Kangana Ranaut. The film follows Rani Mehra, a shy young woman from Delhi whose fiancé calls off their wedding just before the ceremony.

Instead of staying heartbroken, Rani decides to go alone on her planned honeymoon to Paris and Amsterdam. During her journey, she discovers independence, confidence and a new outlook on life. The movie also features Rajkumar Rao, Lisa Haydon and Mish Boyko. The film became both a critical and commercial success, winning several awards, including the National Film Award for Best Hindi Film and Best Actress for Kangana Ranaut.

Meanwhile, Kangana Ranaut will soon also be seen in Bharat Bhhagya Viddhaata. The film is a cinematic tribute to the unsung heroes, and it will be helmed by director-writer Manoj Tapadia. Reportedly, Kangana Ranaut will portray the role of a staff nurse in the film, which seeks to highlight the vital role played by such individuals who work relentlessly behind the scenes during the 26/11 Mumbai Attacks. This movie will hit theatres on June 12, 2026.

Pooja Bhatt Drops Old Photos With Aamir Khan, Says 'Someday I Will Share The Story Behind...'



Actress and filmmaker Pooja Bhatt recently sent her fans into a nostalgic frenzy after she shared a major throwback picture with superstar Aamir Khan from one of their old photoshoots. The vintage pictures were clicked by celebrated photographer Gautam Rajadhyaksha.

Sharing the photographs on her social media, Pooja wrote, "Someday I will share the story behind these impromptu photos shot on Gautam Rajadhyaksha's balcony, in his sprawling home on Hughes road. But not yet.. Not just yet." In the pictures, a young Aamir Khan and Pooja Bhatt are seen twinning in white outfits while posing candidly for the camera.

Talking about Pooja Bhatt and Aamir Khan, the two shared screen space in the 1991 romantic drama 'Dil Hai Ke Manta Nahin', directed by Mahesh Bhatt. The film, which also starred Anupam Kher, became a huge hit and is still remembered as one of Bollywood's most loved romantic films. In the movie, Aamir played the role of 'Raghu Jetley', a kind-hearted journalist, while Pooja essayed 'Pooja Dharamchand', a rich runaway heiress.

Talking about Pooja Bhatt, the actress made her acting debut with 'Daddy' in 1989, directed by her father Mahesh Bhatt. The film also starred veteran actor Anupam Kher.

For the uninitiated, Aamir Khan made his debut as a lead actor with 'Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak' in 1988 opposite Juhi Chawla. On the work front, Pooja Bhatt was recently seen in projects like Bombay Begums and Bigg Boss OTT 2.

Meanwhile, Aamir Khan has lately been supporting his son Junaid Khan, who stepped into Bollywood recently. The actor was seen promoting Junaid's film 'Ek Din', which also stars Sai Pallavi. The late Gautam Rajadhyaksha who was touted as one of India's most iconic celebrity photographers, was known for capturing timeless portraits of Bollywood stars.

Sonam Bajwa

Warns Against 'Wiping Dogs Off Streets' As Punjab Launches Massive Stray Dog Operation

As Punjab rolls out a large-scale campaign to tackle the growing stray dog crisis, the debate around public safety versus animal welfare is becoming increasingly intense. With concerns mounting across the state over rising dog-bite cases, the administration's latest move has now sparked reactions from public figures and animal rights advocates alike. Actor Sonam Bajwa has urged the Punjab government to ensure that the ongoing crackdown on stray dogs does not turn into what she described as an inhumane exercise. Addressing Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann through social media, the actor appealed for a more compassionate and structured approach while implementing the Supreme Court's recent directives on stray animal management.

Reacting to the discussions surrounding the state's campaign, Sonam said many people were misreading the court's observations. "The Court spoke about regulated removal from sensitive public spaces along with sterilisation, vaccination and sheltering — not wiping dogs off the streets," Bajwa stated in her social media post. The actor also questioned whether the current system had the capacity to responsibly handle such an extensive operation. Raising concerns over inadequate shelter facilities and rehabilitation mechanisms, she wrote, "Where are the shelters? Where is the infrastructure?" "This absolutely cannot become a death sentence for voiceless animals. Public safety matters. Human lives matter. But compassion and responsibility matter too," she added.

Sonam further stressed the need for long-term planning instead of relying only on removal drives. According to her, sustainable solutions would require cooperation between animal welfare organisations, veterinarians, municipal authorities and public safety experts.

She also highlighted the importance of sterilisation programmes, vaccination campaigns and proper shelter systems if the state genuinely wants to reduce the stray dog population in a safe and organised manner. "How we treat the voiceless ultimately reflects who we are as a society," she added.



NEWS BOX

Eight dead, dozens trapped in China coal mine blast



BEIJING.(Agency)

At least eight people have died and dozens are trapped underground after a gas explosion at a coal mine in northern China, state media reported on Saturday. The blast occurred at 7:29 pm (1129 GMT) on Friday at the Liushenyu coal mine in Shanxi province, according to state news agency Xinhua. A total of 247 workers were underground at the time, of whom 201 had been brought to the surface safely as of 6:00 am on Saturday, Xinhua said. Eight people have been confirmed dead, while 38 remain trapped underground, the agency reported, citing local emergency management authorities.

President Xi Jinping urged "all-out efforts" to treat the injured and called for thorough investigations into the incident, Xinhua said. He "emphasised that all regions and departments must draw lessons from this accident, remain constantly vigilant regarding workplace safety... and resolutely prevent and curb the occurrence of major and catastrophic accidents". Rescue efforts were ongoing, Xinhua said. Xinhua reported earlier that levels of carbon monoxide -- a highly toxic, odourless gas -- had "exceeded limits" at the mine. Some of those trapped underground were in "critical condition", the earlier report said.

Shanxi, one of China's poorer provinces, is the country's coal-mining capital. Mine safety in the country has improved in recent decades, but accidents still occur frequently in an industry where safety protocols are often lax. China is the world's top consumer of coal and the largest greenhouse gas emitter, despite installing renewable energy capacity at record speed.

Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon kill 10, including paramedics and a child

BEIRUT.(Agency)

Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon Friday killed 10 people, including six paramedics and a Syrian girl, Lebanon's Health Ministry said, the latest in near-daily attacks from both sides that have not stopped despite the fragile, US-brokered ceasefire in the Israel-Hezbollah war. The first strike hit the village of Hanouiyeh, killing four paramedics working for Hezbollah's Islamic Health Association and wounding two others including one paramedic, the ministry said.

Another strike Friday morning on the village of Deir Qanoun al Nahr in the coastal Tyre province killed six people, including a Syrian child and two paramedics from the Al-Risala Scouts Association, a paramedic group affiliated with Hezbollah's ally, the Amal movement, the ministry said. An additional six people were injured, including three paramedics and a Syrian woman.

The Health Ministry said the two attacks "violated" international law. On Thursday, the World Health Organisation reported 169 confirmed attacks on healthcare workers and facilities in Lebanon, resulting in 116 deaths, since the latest Israel-Hezbollah war began.

The Israeli military said it struck several Hezbollah infrastructure sites in the area of Hanouiyeh where Hezbollah members were present. It said that it is examining the claim that several uninvolved individuals in the area, who were not the targets of the strike, were harmed, adding that in the area of the strike, steps were taken to evacuate the population. Before the strikes, steps were taken to mitigate harm to civilians, including the use of precise munitions and aerial surveillance, according to the military.

WHO chief says Ebola is spreading rapidly in Congo, upgrades risk assessment

BUNIA.(Agency)

The World Health Organization chief said Friday that the Ebola outbreak in Congo is spreading rapidly and now poses a "very high" risk there, as a lack of medical resources and anger among the population hamper the response in a vulnerable and conflict-ridden region. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the risk of global spread remains low, but that the U.N. health agency was revising upward its assessment of the risk within Congo from its previous categorization of "high."

The WHO chief noted that 82 cases have been confirmed in Congo, with seven confirmed deaths, though he said the outbreak is believed to be "much larger." He said there are now almost 750 suspected cases and 177 suspected deaths.

Supplies were being rushed to Ituri province in the northeastern corner of the country, where the illness has been spreading for weeks in areas where many people have been displaced by armed conflict.

Frontline medical staff have struggled with a lack of resources and, in some cases, pushback due to what has been characterized as misinformation or situations where medical policy has clashed with local customs such as burial rites.

Trump 'seriously considering' fresh strikes on Iran amid faltering truce talks

Trump met his senior national security team on Friday to discuss the Iran war as Pakistan Army chief Asim Munir and a Qatari delegation arrived in Tehran for last-ditch talks aimed at securing a deal.

World.(Agency)

United States President Trump is "seriously considering" launching fresh military strikes against Iran if last-minute diplomatic efforts fail to produce a breakthrough, according to US officials cited in a report by Axios. The assessment came after Trump convened a high-level meeting with his senior national security team on Friday morning to review the Iran conflict and possible next steps.

The discussions reportedly included Vice President JD Vance, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, CIA Director John Ratcliffe, White House chief of staff Susie Wiles and other top officials, with a focus on both the state of negotiations and military contingency planning.

Sources familiar with the talks said the President was briefed on multiple



scenarios, including options that would come into play if ongoing negotiations collapse. The White House later adjusted his weekend schedule following the meeting, signalling the sensitivity of the situation. The diplomatic tracks are still active but fragile. Pakistan's military chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, is currently in Tehran in what officials describe as a last-ditch mediation effort to narrow differences between Washington and

Tehran. A Qatari delegation has also arrived in the Iranian capital to support ongoing negotiations.

Munir is expected to meet Gen. Ahmad Vahidi of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a key figure in Iran's security establishment. Officials involved in the process describe the talks as stalled and slow-moving. Draft proposals are being exchanged, but progress remains limited and gaps on core issues persist.

A US official described the negotiations as 'agonising', saying documents were "going back and forth every day" without significant movement. Iranian state-linked outlets, meanwhile, have acknowledged that the discussions continued but maintained that no agreement is within reach. The IRGC-affiliated Tasnim news agency quoted a source saying talks over disputed issues remain underway but have

produced no final outcome, with current efforts focused narrowly on ending the war.

Tehran is also reviewing a fresh US proposal, transmitted earlier this week and described by one source to Axios as a final offer, which reportedly warned that rejection could trigger renewed military action. Inside the Trump administration, frustration appeared to have grown over the pace of diplomacy. Two people familiar with the President's thinking told Axios that his mood has shifted over recent days from cautious patience to growing impatience with Iran's negotiating stance. Earlier in the week, Trump told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he still wanted to give diplomacy another chance. By Thursday night, however, he was reportedly leaning toward ordering a strike.

Indian-origin man sentenced in UK to nearly 10 years over 8 million drugs plot

world.(Agency)

An Indian-origin man is among five gang members jailed in the UK for a total of 84 years for their involvement in what the Metropolitan Police described as a large-scale drugs conspiracy. Jagjit Singh, a 30-year-old from Birmingham, was sentenced to 10 years and six months for his role within a major organised crime group responsible for importing and supplying Class A banned drugs worth millions of pounds into London.

Over the course of the investigation, more than 300 kilograms of cocaine and more than 60 kilograms of heroin, with an estimated wholesale value of almost 8 million pounds in total were seized. The gang members were sentenced at Kingston Crown Court in south-west London on Thursday to prison terms ranging from 14 to 26 years each.

Singh had previously pleaded guilty on the first day of trial in October last year. "This case has centred on a criminal venture planned on a gigantic

commercial scale which would have likely caused violence and destruction on our streets," said Detective Constable Leon Ure from the Met Police's Specialist Crime unit, who led the investigation.

"These offenders organised a significant drug line into London and the



surrounding counties over a prolonged period of time. If people wonder why we are so relentless in going after those involved in drug supply, it's because this criminality fuels violence and rips families and communities apart," he said. The sentencing this week follows what the police force said was a

"complex" investigation into the organised criminal network responsible for importing and distributing significant quantities of cocaine and heroin across the UK.

"We are very grateful to our partners for their assistance. Our coordinated response has resulted in the disruption of a major threat to public safety and has taken this group of criminals off our streets," added Detective Constable Ure. The gang used a sophisticated method involving legitimate haulage routes and so-called "ghost warehouses" to move drugs from mainland Europe into the country.

Lorries arriving at UK ports would divert from their legitimate delivery routes to covert storage sites where drugs were secretly offloaded before the lorries continued to their intended destinations. Drugs that were found hidden at the warehouses would be removed, repackaged and distributed onward. Men flew in from Poland specifically to assist with unloading and onward supply, often using hired.

Want Green Card? US says leave country first, re-enter with immigrant visa

world.(Agency)

In a move likely to hit thousands of Indians waiting for US permanent residency, the Trump administration on Friday announced that migrants seeking Green Cards will have to leave America and apply from their home countries instead of staying in the US during the process.

Under new guidance issued by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), migrants seeking adjustment of status for a Green Card will now generally have to apply from their home countries instead of remaining inside the US during the process.

A Green Card is an official identification card that gives foreign nationals permanent residency rights in the US.



A Green Card holder can live anywhere in the US, work for most employers, study in the US, travel in and out of the country (subject to rules)

and eventually apply for US citizenship if eligible.

From now on, an alien who is in the US temporarily and wants a Green Card must return to their home country to apply, except in extraordinary circumstances," USCIS spokesman Zach Kahler said.

The move could significantly impact international students, H-1B workers and tourists currently residing in the US who had hoped to transition to permanent residency without leaving the country. "We're returning to the original intent of the law to ensure aliens navigate our nation's immigration system properly," Kahler said.

Tulsi Gabbard resigns as director of national intelligence, citing her husband's health

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

Tulsi Gabbard resigned as President Donald Trump's director of national intelligence on Friday, saying she needed to step away as her husband battles cancer. She is the fourth Cabinet official to depart during Trump's second term.

"Unfortunately, I must submit my resignation, effective June 30, 2026," Gabbard wrote in her resignation letter, which she posted on X. "My husband, Abraham, has recently been diagnosed with an extremely rare form of bone cancer." There had been rumblings that Gabbard would split with Trump after the president's decision to strike Iran, which caused some division within his administration. Joe Kent, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, announced his resignation in March, saying he "cannot in good conscience" back the war.

Gabbard, a veteran and former Democratic congresswoman from Hawaii, built her political name on her opposition to foreign wars. This put her in an awkward position when the U.S. joined Israel in launching attacks on Iran on Feb. 28.

During a congressional hearing in March, her measured comments were notable for their careful non-endorsement of Trump's decision to strike Iran. She repeatedly dodged questions about whether the White House had been warned of potential fallout from the conflict, including Iran's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Gabbard said in written remarks to the Senate Intelligence Committee that there had been no effort by Iran to rebuild its nuclear capability after U.S. attacks last year "obliterated" its nuclear program. That statement contradicted Trump, who has repeatedly asserted that the war was necessary to head off an imminent threat from the Islamic Republic.

This created several awkward exchanges with lawmakers who asked Gabbard for her opinion on the threat posed by Iran as the nation's top intelligence official. She repeatedly said it was Trump's decision to strike, not hers.

"It is not the intelligence community's responsibility to determine what is and is not an imminent threat," she said. Gabbard's departure follows Trump having ousted Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in late March, in the midst of mounting criticism over her leadership of the department -- including the handling of the administration's immigration crackdown and disaster response. The second Cabinet member to leave was Attorney General Pam Bondi, in response to growing frustration over the Justice Department's handling of files related to Jeffrey Epstein. And Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer resigned in April, after being the target of various misconduct investigations.

Pakistan Army chief Asim Munir arrived in Tehran as Pakistan and Qatar stepped up mediation with Iran and the United States. The renewed push comes amid unresolved disputes over uranium and the Strait of Hormuz, with markets remaining on edge.

World.(Agency)

Pakistan Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir arrived in Tehran on Friday as diplomatic efforts to end the Iran conflict intensified, while US Secretary of State Marco Rubio cautioned that negotiations were still far from a breakthrough despite some progress in talks with Tehran. "We're not there yet," Rubio told reporters after a

Nato ministers' meeting in Sweden, underscoring the uncertainty hanging over the latest diplomatic push involving Pakistan, Qatar and the United States.

Iran, however, signalled that major hurdles remain, with foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei describing differences with Washington as deep and significant.

PAKISTAN, QATAR STEP UP MEDIATION

Munir's visit came as Pakistan expanded its mediation role between Tehran and Washington. Earlier in the day, Pakistani Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi held another round of talks in Tehran with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, according to Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency. At the same time, Qatar dispatched a negotiating team to the Iranian capital in coordination with the United States, a source familiar with the

matter told Reuters.

The renewed diplomacy comes six weeks into a fragile ceasefire after months of conflict involving Iran, the United States



and Israel.

RUBIO WARNS OF UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Rubio acknowledged that negotiators had narrowed some gaps but stressed that critical disagreements remained

unresolved. "There's been some progress. I wouldn't exaggerate it. I wouldn't diminish it," Rubio told reporters. "There's more work to be done. We're not there yet. I hope we get there."

Among the key sticking points are Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium and Tehran's control over the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supplies pass.

Rubio reiterated Washington's opposition to Iran's proposed tolling system for ships using the strait, calling the idea "unacceptable". "We're dealing with a very difficult group of people, and if it doesn't change, then the president's been clear he has other options," he added. He also said the US had not asked Nato for military assistance in the Strait of Hormuz, though contingency planning remained necessary if Iran refused to reopen the waterway fully.