

Early trade deal, energy security: Jaishankar sets India's priorities with Rubio

➤ **S Jaishankar and Marco Rubio discussed trade, energy, defence and strategic cooperation in Delhi. The talks underlined India's push for affordable energy and quicker movement on an interim trade pact.**

New Delhi.(Agency)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday underscored the importance of trade and energy security in India's ties with the United States, saying New Delhi's priority was to ensure affordable and accessible energy for its 1.4 billion people while pushing for an early trade agreement with Washington. Addressing a joint press conference with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Delhi, Jaishankar said both sides discussed accelerating negotiations on an interim trade arrangement that could pave the way for a broader bilateral agreement envisioned during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States in February 2025. "We spoke about the value of concluding at an early date the final text of the interim agreement regarding reciprocal and



mutually beneficial trade," Jaishankar said, adding that an Indian team had recently visited Washington and an American delegation was expected in India soon to carry forward the talks. The minister also highlighted the growing importance of energy cooperation between the two countries, saying diversified supply chains remained central to India's energy security strategy. "Our government's fundamental responsibility is to address the needs of 1.4 billion people. Ensuring the accessibility and affordability of energy for them is our prime objective," Jaishankar said. He said both countries welcomed the recent expansion in bilateral energy trade and also discussed opportunities in nuclear energy cooperation. According to Jaishankar, the passage of the "Shanti Act" had opened up new possibilities for collaboration in the nuclear sector, with an American delegation recently visiting India to explore opportunities.

Mandsaur Chaturmas Under Threat: 'Extortion Gang' Exposed for Trying to Disrupt Sacred Jain Event

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Mekan

Mandsaur. The historic city of Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh is preparing for what is being described as one of the grandest Jain Chaturmas events in recent history. For the first time, five revered Jain Acharyas are expected to stay together during the holy Chaturmas period, creating a wave of devotion and excitement across the Jain community. Under the spiritual guidance of revered saints including Acharya Shri Ashok-sagar Surishwarji Maharaj Sagarji Maharaj Saheb, and Shri Somaychandra Sagarji Maharaj Saheb, devotees from across Madhya Pradesh are gathering in large numbers for the religious celebrations organized by the Mandsaur Jain Shri Sangh. However, amid the spiritual atmosphere, controversy has erupted after allegations surfaced against a group accused of spreading misinformation, fake content, and attempting to create unrest around the event. Allegations Against Self-Styled Journalists and Social Media Activists According to claims made by members associated with the Jain community, several individuals — including alleged self-styled journalists and social media activists — have been accused of circulating misleading information, edited photographs, and unverified allegations targeting



Jain saints and organizers connected to the Chaturmas event. The report alleges that certain individuals attempted to create confusion within the Jain community by spreading rumors online and portraying themselves as protectors of the religion while allegedly working to damage the image of saints and religious institutions. Claims of Extortion and Pressure Tactics Community sources further allege that the controversy was part of a broader attempt to pressure organizers and create fear during the preparations for the event. It is being claimed that threats of public defamation and disruption were allegedly used as tools to mentally harass members of the Jain Sangh. The accused individuals have not publicly responded to these allegations at the time of publishing. Fake Images and

"Edited Content" Allegedly Debunked Organizers associated with the Jain Shri Sangh claim that several images and documents circulated online were found to be manipulated or edited. They further state that internal inquiries and discussions within the community found no evidence supporting the allegations being spread on social media. The report also claims that a national newspaper allegedly carried misleading information earlier, but later refrained from continuing the coverage after facts were reportedly clarified. Jain Community Stands United As tensions grew, members of the Jain community across Madhya Pradesh reportedly came together in support of the Chaturmas event and the saints associated with it. Religious leaders and community

members have appealed for peace, unity, and respect for religious sentiments. According to the report, police authorities have also started examining complaints related to fake content, online misinformation, and alleged attempts to disturb communal harmony. Call for Strict Action Community representatives have demanded strict legal action against individuals allegedly involved in spreading fake news, edited images, and defamatory campaigns targeting religious figures. The Mandsaur Chaturmas event continues to draw strong participation and support from devotees, while the controversy has sparked wider discussions about misinformation, social media abuse, and the misuse of religious sentiments for personal or political motives.

AIIMS Delhi team conducts Twisha Sharma's second autopsy after High Court order

Bhopal.(Agency)

A team of doctors from AIIMS Delhi on Sunday started performing a second autopsy of former-model-turned-actor Twisha Sharma in Bhopal, family sources said. The family has requested the team to adopt a multidisciplinary forensic, pathological and radiological approach and independently examine concerns they claimed were not adequately addressed during the first post-mortem conducted in Bhopal.

Twisha (33) was found hanging at her matrimonial home in Bhopal's Katara Hills area on May 12, with her family accusing her in-laws of dowry harassment and abetment to suicide. Her in-laws, however, claimed she suffered from drug addiction. Acting on a May 22 order from the Madhya Pradesh High Court, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, constituted a four-member team of senior doctors to conduct a second autopsy. The medical team arrived here on Saturday night. The team has started the second autopsy. Twisha's last rites would be performed in the evening, her family members said.

Earlier, a senior AIIMS Bhopal doctor, requesting anonymity, told PTI that the autopsy would be conducted strictly in accordance with the high court's directions. He declined to disclose the timing of the examination. On Saturday, Twisha's father, Navnidhi Sharma, submitted a detailed representation along with a copy of the high court order to the medical board, raising several concerns regarding the first autopsy.



Shashi Tharoor's subtle praise for PM Modi on Maldives reset

Shashi Tharoor cited India's emergency water aid to the Maldives as an example of trust-building diplomacy. He said the response helped soften sentiment despite earlier tensions under Mohamed Muizzu.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has offered what many viewed as a subtle endorsement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and India's handling of ties with the Maldives, using the island nation as an example of how diplomacy is strengthened through actions rather than rhetoric. Speaking at the Fletcher School, Tharoor recalled how India responded during a water crisis in the Maldives despite strained bilateral ties after President Mohamed Muizzu rose to power on an "India Out" campaign.

"In the last Maldives election, the guy who became president ran on a campaign of India Out," Tharoor said in a video shared by his office on X. "Soon after, the only desalination plant in Maldives broke down and they had no water. India sent millions of litres of water without asking for anything. That's how India builds trust."



INDIA'S RESPONSE DURING MALDIVES WATER CRISIS Elaborating on the episode, Tharoor said Muizzu's government had initially moved to distance itself from India after coming to power, including cancelling contracts awarded to Indian companies and asking Indian personnel to leave.

However, he noted that India stepped in immediately when the Maldives faced a severe drinking water crisis after the breakdown of the desalination plant in Male. "India, without hesitation, flew in plane loads of millions of litres of bottled drinking water to save them," Tharoor said. "Didn't ask for anything. It was just a gesture from a next-door neighbour." He added that the humanitarian assistance helped soften public sentiment towards India in the Maldives. "Trust gets built by actions," he said.

FROM 'INDIA OUT' TO DIPLOMATIC RESET

Relations between India and the Maldives had sharply deteriorated after Muizzu assumed office in November 2023. The Maldivian leader had campaigned on an "India Out" plank and later sought the withdrawal of Indian military personnel stationed in the island nation.

BJP chief Nitin Nabin's maiden Karnataka visit sparks talk of party's 2028 Assembly poll plans

➤ **The key takeaways from Nabin's visit will result in the party's revamp, if necessary, as it will be discussed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit**

BENGALURU.(Agency)

BJP national president Nitin Nabin's maiden visit to the state for three days starting Saturday late evening has created a buzz in political circles as it is being interpreted as a precursor to the turnaround of the party's fortunes in the 2028 assembly polls in Karnataka. It assumes significance as he is visiting after the party's emphatic win in West Bengal which has also been attributed by critics to Special Intensive Review (SIR) of electoral rolls. He will also hold talks with the SIR wing of the party on Sunday.



the party leaders, including the legislators and MPs at the party's office and address the workers at a resort on the outskirts of the city. On Monday, Nabin is likely to meet the

before wrapping up his trip.

The key takeaways from his visit will result in the party's revamp, if necessary, as it would be discussed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. The issue of the party's nomination for the RS seat from Karnataka, as the BJP can win only one out of the four, is also likely to be discussed. Union Minister and JDS leader HD Kumaraswamy has held talks with Nabin in New Delhi besides Modi and Amit Shah. On Sunday Nabin will have breakfast at former chief minister BS Yeddyurappa's residence. Before visiting

Kadumalleshwara temple at Malleshwaram. At 3 pm Nabin will chair the BJP core committee meeting at the party office and discuss the RS nomination issue.

Four electric vehicles have been arranged for him to travel during his stay in Bengaluru and there will be no grand reception or road shows to mark his visit, a BJP source said. About 1,000 party workers will gather at the party office to welcome him.

Priyank welcomes Nabin

Karnataka RDPR and IT/BT minister Priyank Kharge welcoming Nabin, albeit

News box

After spate of faults, Haryana orders strict checks to prevent power disruptions

GURGAON.(Agency)
Amid rising temperatures and a spike in power outages and tripping incidents, Haryana has ordered stricter checks to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply across the city.Special energy secretary and managing director of the North and South Haryana Power Distribution Corporations, Vikram Singh, directed officials to prevent avoidable disruptions, particularly during peak summer demand.Singh was in Gurgaon for a whole-time director-level review meeting ofDHBVN to assess the progress of ongoing projects, schemes and pending works.“Power outages should be kept to a minimum and consumers should not face any unnecessary disruption in electricity supply,” Singh said, calling for immediate improvements in service reliability.

The meeting reviewed a range of issues, including progress on infrastructure projects, pending captive connectivity cases, electrification plans, and work under the Mera Gaon Jagmag Gaon scheme. Officials also discussed the solarisation of govt buildings.

Deliberations were held on technical specification approvals, pending electrical works in several areas, shifting of 33kV lines, procurement of transformers and cables, and issuance of agricultural tubewell connections. Proposals for hundreds of new tubewell connections in the Fatehabad and Bhiwani circles were examined, along with requests to extend commissioning timelines for solar power generators under the PM-KUSUM scheme and appoint an agency for publicity under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

The meeting also reviewed progress under the RDSS project, Smart City work components, daily and field visit monitoring, pole removal, and Right of Way (RoW) issues. Newly proposed substations and augmentation plans were also discussed.

The review came a day after a major technical fault disrupted power supply in several parts of the city. On Friday, both circuits of the 220kV substation in Sector 72 developed faults, affecting supply to substations in sectors 15, 38, 44, 46, 52 and 56, along with the Maruti area.According to power corporation officials, one circuit was restored within around 30 minutes. The outage also affected Rapid Metro services for nearly 35 minutes, from 7.50pm to 8.25pm.

Another exam fraud, gave solvers remote access to candidates’ screen, guaranteed success for Rs 4L

Noida.(Agency)
As NEET, India’s main medical entrance exam, finds itself in choppy waters after a paper leak, yet another exam fraud has come to light, this time in UP.

The special task force (STF) has arrested seven members of an organised racket involved in sophisticated manipulation of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) online recruitment examinations. The accused were allegedly helping candidates clear competitive exams by giving answer writers remote access to candidates’ screens.The arrests were made after the Noida unit of STF raided Balaji Digital Zone Centre in Knowledge Park on Friday evening. Officials said the gang was involved in rigging the SSC examination for constable (General Duty) posts in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and Secretariat Security Force (SSF), as well as the Assam Rifles exam for rifleman recruitment this year.Among those arrested is Pradeep Chauhan, the alleged ringleader of the operation and the IT head of the exam centre. The others were identified as Arun Kumar from Mathura, Sandeep Bhati, Vivek Kumar and Nishant Raghav from Bulandshahr, and Amit Rana and Shakir Malik from Baghpat. Kumar and Malik appeared as candidates in the examination.During the raid, STF recovered Rs 50 lakh in cash, 10 mobile phones, five laptops, a router, a list of candidates, two admit cards and four identity cards of Eduquity, a private company associated with the examination process.

Teen found dead in abandoned house near Jewar; villagers block road for four hours

Noida.(Agency)
Tension prevailed in the Jewar area of Greater Noida after the body of a 15-year-old boy, who went missing under suspicious circumstances, was found in an abandoned house in a neighbouring village late Friday night. The killing sparked widespread outrage, with villagers staging a road blockade and protest for nearly four hours on Saturday, demanding the immediate arrest of the accused and capital punishment for those responsible.The deceased, Gopal, son of Ravi Bhushan alias Buntty and a resident of Banwari Bans village in Jewar, was missing since May 21. According to police and family members, Gopal went missing from outside his house. When he failed to return till late that night, the family approached the police and a missing person report was registered.

Police teams were subsequently formed to trace the teenager and searches were conducted in nearby areas. However, around 11 pm on Friday, the family received information that the body of a boy was lying inside an abandoned house in neighbouring Rohi village. Family members and police personnel rushed to the spot and identified the body as Gopal.

Officials said the body was found lying in a pool of blood inside the deserted house. The room reportedly carried a strong foul smell as decomposition had begun. Preliminary investigation revealed that the teenager suffered severe injuries to the head and body. Police sources said the victim appeared to have been brutally assaulted before being killed. His eyes and tongue were protruding, indicating severe physical trauma.

The incident triggered anger among residents. After the post-mortem examination was conducted on Saturday morning, the body was handed over to the family. As it reached Jewar, villagers gathered near Sabauta Cut and attempted to block the road. Carrying placards and banners, protesters demanded the death penalty for the accused and accused the police of failing to prevent the crime.

MAHANAGAR METRO

Khaki Sold Out in Ankleshwar? ‘Dattu’ Terror Alleged as Toxic Liquor and Gambling Empire Flourishes Behind Sargam Shopping Center

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Ankleshwar | Special Investigative Report
Law and order in Ankleshwar of Gujarat’s Bharuch district is allegedly collapsing under the shadow of an expanding illegal liquor and gambling nexus operating openly near the Ankleshwar ‘A’ Division Police Station. Serious allegations from local sources claim that illegal gambling dens and toxic country liquor units are flourishing behind Sargam Shopping Center under the protection of a powerful extortion network.Gambling Dens and Toxic Liquor Operations Raise AlarmAccording to explosive local inputs, two alleged women bootleggers identified as Bharti and Jyoti are reportedly running multiple gambling rackets without fear of police action. Sources claim that card gambling, Worli Matka, and other betting activities involving lakhs of rupees are being conducted daily in the area.At the same location, a bootlegger identified as Ramesh Vasava is allegedly operating an illegal country liquor business. Residents allege that hazardous chemicals are being mixed into the liquor to create stronger intoxication at lower cost, putting the lives of consumers at severe risk.Locals fear that the situation could trigger a major hooch tragedy similar to previous deadly liquor disasters witnessed in Gujarat. Questions are now being raised over whether



authorities will act only after innocent lives are lost.Alleged ‘Dattu’ Network and Daily Protection Money RacketSources further allege that nearly 30 to 40 illegal dens are operating under the protection of a well-organized hafta (protection money) network. A man locally known as “Dattu” is being described as the alleged key handler co-ordinating collections and ensuring smooth functioning of these illegal activities.Residents claim that huge amounts of cash are allegedly collected daily and distributed through the network, allowing bootleggers and gambling operators to function fearlessly while openly mocking the law.Public Anger Mounts Over Police SilenceLocal residents

say they have repeatedly submitted verbal and written complaints to Ankleshwar ‘A’ Division Police, the Local Crime Branch (LCB), and even the State Monitoring Cell (SMC) in Gandhinagar. Despite multiple representations, locals allege that no concrete action has been taken.Serious questions are now being asked about the silence of senior Bharuch district police officials and whether higher authorities will conduct surprise raids to expose the alleged corruption and protection racket.Public outrage in the area continues to intensify as residents demand immediate intervention before the situation spirals into a larger law-and-order disaster.

120 Achievers Felicitated at Shri Kshatriya Rajput Talent Honour Ceremony

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Sumerpur: The Shri Kshatriya Rajput Samaj organized a grand Talent Honour Ceremony that became a remarkable symbol of social unity, education, and encouragement of excellence. The event was conducted in a dignified and enthusiastic atmosphere, while the divine presence of revered saints added spiritual grace to the occasion.A total of 120 talented individuals were honoured for their outstanding achievements in academics, sports, government services, and various other fields. Benefactors who contributed towards social service and construction activities were also felicitated during the program.The ceremony was blessed by the presence of revered saints Shergiri Ji Maharaj, Bheemgiri Ji Maharaj, and Premmath Ji Maharaj. Addressing the gathering, the saints emphasized the importance of education, values, and unity in society. They encouraged the youth to move forward with positive thinking and stated that educated and cultured youth are the true future of the nation.The chief guests of the event included Sub-Divisional



Officer Hari Singh Deval and State President of Kshatriya Rajput Samaj Um Singh Rathore. Distinguished guests included former EO Anop Singh Rathore, Prosecution Officer Bhopal Singh, Axis Bank Manager Vikram Singh Pomawa, and Mumbai Rajput Sabha President Guman Singh Bhayal.The guests praised the initiative and said that such programs promoting education and talent inspire the younger generation and encourage them to achieve greater success.Students who excelled in Classes 8th, 10th, and 12th exam-

inations, college achievers, sportspersons, candidates selected in government services, and individuals performing exceptionally in the private sector were honoured on stage. The auditorium echoed with applause as the achievers received recognition.During the ceremony, community benefactors were also honoured for their contributions. Special recognition was given to representatives of JBR Group — Vijay Singh, Shaitan Singh, and Mahavir Singh — for supporting the construction of the newly built hall in the community building.The program was chaired by Vijay Singh Sisodiya. Several social workers and volunteers, including Sawai Singh Rathore, Tej Singh, Devendra Singh Sisodiya, Sultan Singh Parmar, Shaitan Singh Birolia, Shaitan Singh Radbar, Padam Singh, and Jorawar Singh Pomawa played an important role in making the event successful.The event was managed under the supervision of Secretary Moti Singh Jeevada, BJP Vice President Poonam Singh Parmar, Treasurer Lal Singh, Vice President Bheekh Singh, Vijay Singh Joyla, and Govind Singh Pomawa.

Broken roads, endless jams: Why officer-goers leave home early in Ghaziabad

Noida.(Agency)
For 31-year-old Kaushambi resident Shailesh Kumar Yadav, reaching office in Sector 62, Noida, had been a test of his patience. The commute felt like a mobile game. He had to dodge potholes, open pits dug up for the ongoing CM GRID projects, squeeze through everlasting snarls and manage to reach the office on time. He started to leave home early but ended up getting late. So last month, the product manager finally requested that his office shift him to night duty.Ongoing construction and dug-up roads across Indirapuram, Vaishali and Kaushambi have turned the morning commute into an ordeal for office-goers, who say they now leave home at least 30 minutes earlier than usual to reach work on time. Dust, broken stretches and peak-hour gridlock have made daily travel exhausting. Working women bear a disproportionate burden, contending with long delays, safety concerns and the added pressure of managing household responsibilities alongside professional commitments. Residents say authorities have offered no timeline for when the construction will be completed. Yadav has two children — a 9-year-old son and a 5-year-old daughter — whom he drops off at school every day. “I



thought I would be able to juggle everything, until the authorities decided to dig up the roads for infra work every 2 metres. I was unable to manage all of it anymore and asked my superiors to change my shift from 11pm to 7am,” he said.Due to the civic works, the carriageway has been narrowed at places and during peak hours, major gridlocks are noticed in sectors 3, 4 and 7 of Vaishali, the stretch connecting Vaishali and Kaushambi, and Indirapuram’s Ahimsa Khand, Niti Khand and Gyan Khand. Commuters claimed that it takes

nearly 15-20 minutes for each snarl to clear up.Unlike Yadav, Randheer Thakur begins his journey from Delhi’s Mehrauli to Indirapuram almost half an hour early to avoid congestion on the internal roads leading to his store.“I come from Delhi. Since I am on a bike, I manage to not get into the congested areas, but I always get stuck,” he said. “Sometimes, the roads that were not blocked the day before become off-limits because a new set of revamps begins. Then I have to recalibrate and figure out a new route. So, I feel it is always better to set off at least 30

minutes early.”However, the problem for working mothers is different. They not only have to start early at home, but a few of them are also struggling with their sleep schedules.A resident of Shipra Vista in Indirapuram, Priya Bisht (35) said, “I travel to Barakhamba Road for work and since they started digging the road, I too began waking up an hour earlier to cook for my kids.” Bisht said all her friends and neighbours have started leaving earlier than usual. “Yet, it feels like we are trapped in the same endless traffic,” she said in frustration.For people who work at Gurgaon-based companies, the problem is worse. They have to travel for at least 2 hours to reach the office.A resident of Max City, Vaishali, Akhil K, who works at PWC in Gurgaon, said, “I am a father of two young kids. My wife is a working professional herself. It is so frustrating to see these dug-up sites right outside my society for months and I have never seen any men at work at these sites.”He said that his entire professional and personal life has been altered by the ongoing construction. “I just want these diggings to be over as soon as possible,” he said. “Commute to work should not be agonising anymore.”



AAP claims abduction by 'masked men', boycotts voting; BJP says internal rivalry

Amid the uproar, the BJP's Ramesh Rathwa was declared the president while Surji Rathwa was elected vice-president, allowing the BJP to seize control of the Taluka Panchayat despite the deadlock in the seat tally.

Vadodara. (Agency)

In a dramatic showdown marked by allegations of daylight abduction, a walkout and sloganeering, the election to the posts of president and vice-president of the Chhota Udepur Taluka Panchayat on Saturday sparked a row as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of forcibly removing three of its elected members before the voting.

The taluka panchayat, which had seen a tie with both parties bagging 13 seats each after the April 26 elections, saw the BJP eventually forming the board even as the remaining 10 AAP members walked out of the voting process.

Amid the uproar, the BJP's Ramesh Rathwa was declared the president while Surji Rathwa was elected vice-president, allowing the BJP to seize control of the Taluka Panchayat despite the deadlock in the seat tally.

Before the voting began, AAP leaders alleged that three of their members had been "abducted" by "masked men" from the premises of the taluka panchayat and prevented from attending the meeting. In protest of the alleged incident, AAP members raised slogans at the election



venue and later staged a walkout, boycotting the voting altogether. The BJP, with 13 members, staked its claim to the

posts, completed the election process, and formed the board.

Sub-divisional magistrate Muskan Dangar said, "...13 out of 26 members were present today for the first meeting. In this election, Ramesh Rathwa has been declared the president, and Surji Rathwa the vice-president..."

Outside the venue near the Polytechnic College gate, AAP workers and leaders raised slogans against the BJP and accused the ruling party of "murdering democracy". AAP leader Vinu Rathwa alleged, "Our members were dragged away publicly. This is the murder of

democracy."

The AAP's presidential candidate Sharma Rathwa also accused the police of collusion. "Police questioned only us...with police support, our members were taken away from the main gate itself," she claimed. While senior police officials remained unavailable for comment, SDM Dangar said she had no knowledge of any such 'abduction'.

The Saturday's scuffle came weeks after the AAP made significant inroads in the Chhota Udepur district during the April 26 taluka panchayat elections. In the Kawant taluka panchayat of the district, the AAP had won 16 out of 26 seats. On Saturday, AAP formed the board in Kawant taluka.

Short news

PU pupils break campus lock, raise slogans against police

Patna. (Agency)

Students affiliated with the All India Students' Association (AISA) staged a protest at Patna University on Saturday during the ongoing senate meeting, triggering tense scenes and a confrontation with police on the campus.

Police locked the university gates and attempted to stop the protesters from entering the premises. However, several students, including women protesters, climbed the gates and raised slogans against the police action.

The students shouted slogans including "Policia daman band karo" and "PU hamara-aapka, nahi kisi ke baap ka". Shortly afterwards, the protesters broke the gate lock and entered the campus. Police later stopped them near the Jayaprakash Narayan Auditorium, where the senate meeting was being held. Heavy police deployment remained in place outside the venue.

Saba Aftreen, a university student, said, "We came to our college to meet vice-chancellor for a meeting, but he called the police and closed the gates. We are being thrown out of our own university." Another student, Adarsh Gupta, said, "If our demands are not heard in the Senate meeting, then whose demands will be heard?" He alleged police frequently entered the campus and harassed students. The protesters demanded adequate budget allocation for student-related work, withdrawal of fee hikes and an end to alleged police repression on campus. Following the senate meeting, the Proctor and Dean met a delegation of students and assured them their demands would be addressed soon.

Kerala braces for early monsoon onset; yellow alert issued for districts

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. (Agency)

Kerala is bracing for an early onset of Southwest Monsoon as the weather system advanced further over the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal on Saturday, bringing widespread rainfall activity across the state. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said conditions remain favourable for the monsoon to advance into more parts of the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal over the next three to four days. Yellow alerts have already been issued for districts across the state till May 27.

MET director Neetha K Gopal said the next three to four days would be crucial for the monsoon onset over the state. "We are seeing conditions evolving as we had expected for the monsoon onset. An official statement is likely to be issued soon. As per the current assessment, the situation remains favourable for the arrival of the monsoon," she said.

She said that Kerala is likely to witness continuing rainfall activity in the coming days, with some districts expected to receive yellow-alert level rainfall. "There are no major additional weather systems currently influencing the region. Compared to last year, the wind strength ahead of monsoon onset is relatively weaker. So at present we are only expecting moderate rainfall activity," she said. "The situation could still evolve after the official onset of the monsoon, as rainfall intensity and weather patterns often undergo changes during the early phase of the season," she added.

Despite a normal pre-monsoon rainfall pattern during May, the broader monsoon outlook for Kerala continues to remain below normal. "May rainfall has been reasonably good and close to normal levels.

WR completes Bandra demolition op; concrete work for rly project begins

Mumbai. (Agency)

Western Railway (WR) on Saturday completed the fifth day of its anti-encroachment drive at Garib Nagar slum near Bandra station (East), with all 500 unauthorised structures dismantled, said chief spokesperson Vineet Abhishek. With the demolition phase largely over, concrete work for the integrated railway project has commenced from the north side of the plot. Sources said railways want to expedite their project so that there is no re-encroachment.

Officials said over 50-60% of the debris has already been cleared from the site.

As per a Bombay High Court order, around 100 structures have been retained. However, WR said it has removed the maximum possible portions from atop



these hutments. "Wherever applicable, the ground floor is being retained and only upper floors — first to fourth — are being dismantled," said officials. The upper-floor demolition was carried out manually, with teams working overnight to ensure controlled dismantling and adherence to

safety protocols so that no one is injured. Railway officials said nearly 100% of this planned dismantling work has been completed.

More than 1,200 staffers were deployed for the operation, which officials described as complicated due to the dense settlement pattern and the need for careful, step-by-step dismantling. "The complicated work has been completed in five days. We will continue the work," said Abhishek, adding that similar anti-encroachment drives will continue in the coming days. WR said the cleared space in Bandra East will be used for passenger amenities and capacity augmentation projects. The larger objective is to ease overcrowding on local trains and improve access to the upcoming Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train station at BKC.

Fuel price hikes push Patna's cab drivers towards financial crisis

Patna. (Agency)

A third consecutive hike in fuel prices within a month pushed petrol prices to Rs 111 per litre in the state capital on Saturday, intensifying financial stress among nearly 4,000 cab drivers associated with aggregator platforms in Patna.

Operating under the Patna cab drivers union, a wing of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (Intuc), the drivers alleged that fare structures have steadily declined over the past decade despite rising fuel and maintenance costs, pushing many towards a financial crisis. They said drivers are forced to bear most operational expenses, including fuel, maintenance and platform-related charges, which are rapidly eroding daily earnings. Ramanand Pathak, a cab driver from Darbhanga who has been working



in Patna for the past five years, said his financial liabilities had sharply increased in recent years. Despite holding an Economics Honours degree, he said he was compelled to drive a cab due to a lack of employment opportunities elsewhere. "My house rent is Rs 7,000, school fees for my children cost almost Rs 5,000, and my

monthly car EMI is Rs 15,000. This, along with maintenance and refuelling expenses, far outweighs my income," Pathak said. Dhananjay Singh, president of the Patna cab drivers union, said drivers earn nearly Rs 1,500 daily from the three major aggregator platforms, but most of the amount is consumed by operational costs. "Summers require constant air conditioning, consuming 30% extra fuel, yet summer and winter rates remain the same," Dhananjay said.

"With an oversupply of cabs and fewer bookings, companies no longer take a commission but demand mandatory platform fees. We will give companies an ultimatum to increase rates to Rs 30 per kilometre — which was the rate several years back — or ask the Bihar govt to blacklist these private entities.

Vijayawada set to host AP MSME Growth Summit 2026 today

The summit is positioned as a flagship platform for multi-crore infrastructure launches, digital transformation rollouts, and direct policy interventions.

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

The city of Vijayawada is fully geared up to host the prestigious Andhra Pradesh MSME Growth Summit 2026 on Monday at the newly constructed Dr Ambedkar Kala Vedita Convention Centre, which will be formally inaugurated by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu ahead of the summit.

Positioned as a flagship platform for multi-crore infrastructure launches, digital transformation rollouts, and direct policy interventions, the summit is expected to draw more than 1,500 stakeholders, including new land allottees under the 175 MSME Parks Scheme, PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries, industry associations, policymakers, financial institutions, and technology



partners. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas, Industries Minister TG Bharath, and several cabinet colleagues will also participate.

The day's proceedings will commence at 10:50 am with the dedication ceremony of the convention centre, where the Chief Minister will unveil the inauguration

stone. He will then tour the State-of-the-art auditorium to inspect its modern facilities and artwork before visiting the summit's exhibition stalls. The Chief Minister is scheduled to deliver his keynote address at 12:25 pm, focusing on grassroots industrial growth and inclusive development. On this occasion, 16 major initiatives and partnerships will be launched. These include foundation stones for 38 MSME Parks under Phase III of the 175 Parks Scheme, extending infrastructure benefits to 700 new allottees. The AP Cluster Development Programme (Rs 200 crore) will be rolled out to establish Common Facility Centres across 45 clusters, while the RTIH Outpost RuTAGE Smart Village Centres in Kuppam, Mangalagiri, and Pithapuram

will be inaugurated to support rural entrepreneurs.

The Advanced Prototyping & Innovation Centre (APIC) in collaboration with KIA India will be unveiled, alongside the SIDBI-RTIH Seed Fund of Rs 20 crore to support deep-tech startups. Other key announcements will cover 1 lakh digital maturity assessments through DxEDGE with CII and NITI Aayog, 1,000 energy and water audits by EESL, and strategic partnerships with Meta Growth Academy, Amazon Global Selling, Zoho Corporation, Vodafone Idea Business, India SME Forum, Aramex, and the Quality Council of India for ZED Certification. Furthermore, an initiative extending National Pension System (NPS) coverage through PFRDA to MSME workers.

SC draws the line on stray dog menace

IN July 2025, the Supreme Court took suo motu cognisance of the stray dog menace in the country and instituted a case: 'City Hounded by Strays, Kids Pay Price.' In November 2025, in furtherance of its constitutional mandate to uphold constitutional principles, especially the fundamental right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution, the apex court gave exhaustive directions for the permanent removal of stray dogs from institutional areas, including schools/colleges, hospitals, highways, airports, rail/bus stations. The court additionally prohibited the release of aggressive/biting stray dogs back onto the streets, and the unregulated feeding of stray dogs in public places. These directions reversed several provisions of the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 (ABC rules), which require the release of stray dogs back to wherever they were picked up from after sterilisation. Predictably, a tsunami of petitions was filed by stray dog activists/NGOs, bizarrely fighting for the "rights" of stray dogs. To provide context, the ABC rules, which require the sterilisation and release of stray dogs onto the streets, have been a national policy since 2001. These rules were amended in 2023, and arguably made worse, with the allowance of feeding stray dogs in public places, ostensibly to keep them fed and, therefore, supposedly less likely to bite people, and a blanket ban on the removal of stray dogs even if they attacked or killed citizens. Authored by acclaimed dancer and animal welfare activist Rukmini Devi Arundale, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, (PCA Act) is an 'animal welfare' legislation as opposed to an 'animal rights' one. The PCA Act does not give rights to animals but, instead, protects them from "unnecessary suffering" and not 'necessary' suffering for the upholding of human rights. It, therefore, allows the humane usage and killing of animals for food, cultural and religious rights and medical research. Most importantly, the PCA Act already recognises the negative impacts of stray dogs on society and their own suffering as homeless dogs and allows for their humane euthanasia. Conversely, the ABC rules violate their own parent PCA Act by promoting dog homelessness. Over the last 25 years, the ABC policy hijacked public health and safety in the name of "animal rights", a concept alien to the Indian Constitution. They also weaponised Article 51A(g) — an undefined, unenforceable duty to show 'compassion towards living creatures', against the weakest and most vulnerable in society, placing their safety and rights below the so-called rights of stray dogs. Proponents of the ABC rules squarely blame the 'evil humanity' for all stray attacks on themselves. As a side note, perhaps the stained legacy of 'compassion' via Article 51A(g), inserted into the Constitution via the 42nd Amendment during the Emergency, that also severely curtailed the powers of the apex court and freedoms of citizens, has forever left it utterly hypocritical and irrevocably meaningless. The ABC policy functions on several false notions and a deeply flawed understanding of dog behaviour and ecology. If a full stomach alone were enough to prevent dogs from attacking people, no pet would ever attack anyone. Dogs are domestic, companion animals, meant to be under 100% human supervision and control. That is why even the most well-fed, well-cared-for and well-loved pets are required to be leashed in public. In its May 19, 2026 judgment, the apex court reinforced and justified its directions and explicitly permitted euthanasia of rabid and dangerous stray dogs wherever necessary, stating "...the magnitude of the problem and the resultant threat posed to public safety has assumed deeply disturbing proportions.

Diplomats need not play to the gallery

Reaching out to foreign opinion-makers is the key purpose of Indian diplomacy

A Norwegian journalist, Helle Lyng, asked Sibi George, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs, three questions during his media briefing in Oslo on May 18 — Why should India be trusted? Can India promise to try to stop the human rights violations in the country? Will Prime Minister Narendra Modi start taking critical questions from the Indian press? George did well not to answer the query regarding the PM. It is not for a diplomat to dwell on a political leader's way of dealing with the domestic and foreign media. Indian Prime Ministers have had different styles of media interaction. Some like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee dealt with the media comfortably and deftly. Others may not have shied away from the press, but they also did not seek it out. PM Modi only deals with the media in carefully curated setups. That is his choice, just as his predecessors made theirs.

Back in May 1981, I witnessed Indira's interaction with the media in Dubai. At the conclusion of her UAE trip, she addressed a press conference. After the journalists had gathered, a UAE official asked me if any of them was likely to cause an embarrassment to their guest; he informed me that the journalist concerned would be removed from the conference before the PM arrived. I said if Indira got to know that I was responsible for a journalist's ejection, I was likely to lose my job!

A British woman journalist from a Western wire service raised a question about the communal situation in India. This was obviously in the context of the Meenakshipuram conversions of 1981 and the distressing Moradabad riots of 1980. Indira responded briefly. Her basic thrust was that communal problems were not unique to India. She then asked, "What is happening in Northern Ireland"? Her words, tone and demeanour did not display any irritation or emotion, but her message to the journalist was firm and clear: don't try to put us on the mat. Instead, look within. There was no follow-up question from the journalist.

The way Indira handled that intrusive and difficult query was a lesson for Indian political leaders and diplomats in responding to such questions and observations. Sibi George responded to Helle Lyng's first question — Why should Norway trust India? — with a peroration that spelt out the characteristics of a modern state. Thereafter, he asserted that India was a civilisational state whose contributions were visible everywhere. He then gave an account of Indian assistance to the Global South during the Covid pandemic; how India had reconciled competing interests of G20 members during a contentious summit (2023) and how it succeeded in getting the African Union to become a G20 member. George did not stop there; he referred to the 2026 AI



Impact Summit in New Delhi, where PM Modi called for "human-centric" AI. He concluded that international trust in India was built through these activities.

Regarding the question about the human rights situation in India, George said, "We are one-sixth of the total population of the world, but not one-sixth of the problems of the world." He emphasised that citizens were guaranteed rights in India's constitutional democracy. They could approach the courts for the enforcement of these rights. He asserted that people had no understanding of India's scale. "They read one or two news reports published by some God-forsaken, ignorant NGOs and come and ask questions. Don't worry about it," he said. George is an experienced diplomat. Surely, he would have known that he did not have to give such a long response to the "trust" question at a press conference. This is because the Norwegian media, let alone the Scandinavian media, could not have carried it in their reportage of PM Modi's visit. Hence, the inescapable conclusion is that George was trying to show to certain sections in India that he was giving a fitting reply to an impertinent Western journalist who was asking disrespectful questions about the country. The trend of giving forceful responses to Western

journalists was set in motion by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar soon after he assumed office in 2019. He especially targeted the global liberal media. He wanted to show them the mirror. This appealed to many in India and earned Jaishankar great popularity.

A politician may seek popularity, but that cannot be the purpose of Indian diplomacy. Its purpose is to reach out to foreign opinion-makers through responses during media conferences and other means. Catering to sympathisers of the ruling dispensation in India can never be the primary object of Indian diplomacy.

That can be a product of diplomatic success achieved by India in the comity of nations. Naturally, in articulating the Indian position, diplomats have to resort to plain-speaking sometimes, but their audience must always be external. This does not mean that Indian diplomats don't have to clarify foreign policy stances and positions to Indian institutions such as parliamentary committees and also to the media. But these situations are entirely different from what George faced at the media briefing in Oslo. Certainly, there is also a place for lectures in which diplomats can be expansive in their explanations, but responses at a press conference have to be worded differently.

Heat stress : Disaster preparedness must be scaled up

The 16th Finance Commission has recommended that heatwaves be included in the list of notified disasters under the Disaster Management Act

NDIA is feeling the heat — literally as well as economically. Rising temperatures are taking their toll on livelihoods and labour productivity amid back-to-back fuel price hikes and rocketing inflation. The worst-hit are the poor and informal workers who form the backbone of India's economy. The nationwide battle against heatwaves can no longer be regarded merely as a seasonal public health concern; it is now a full-blown economic challenge. The warnings in recent years have been stark. The International Labour Organisation estimated in 2024 that India lost nearly \$100 billion due to heat-induced productivity losses. The World Bank cautioned in 2022 that around three-fourths of the labour force in India worked in heat-exposed sectors, while the country alone may account for nearly half of the world's projected job losses caused by heat stress. The most vulnerable groups include construction workers, farmers and farm

labourers, street vendors and delivery agents. Central and state governments have issued advisories calling



for steps such as rescheduled work hours, shaded rest areas, hydration facilities, protective clothing and

health monitoring. Yet these measures remain fragmented and insufficient, considering the scale of the crisis. India's current heat action plans are largely temporary relief mechanisms. What the country urgently needs is a comprehensive policy framework that treats safe working conditions in the scorching summer months as an inalienable right.

Earlier this year, the 16th Finance Commission recommended that heatwaves be included in the list of notified disasters under the Disaster Management Act. This classification will enable states and UTs to use money from the State Disaster Response Fund for providing relief and assistance to people. Heatwaves, which inevitably trigger a surge in the demand for electricity and water, need to be tackled with robust, proactive preparedness. The choice before policymakers and other stakeholders is simple: adapt decisively now or pay a far greater human and economic price later.

From awareness to action: Yoga's next global movement

➤ The true success of yoga will not be measured solely by participation on June 21, but by how deeply it becomes woven into the everyday lives of people across the world.

When the United Nations adopted June 21 as the International Day of Yoga in 2014 with the support of 177 member states, following the visionary call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the United Nations General Assembly, the world recognised an idea India has cherished for centuries — true health is not merely the absence of disease, but a harmonious balance of body, mind and spirit. Over the past decade, the International Day of Yoga (IDY) has evolved into one of the world's largest wellness movements. Yet, as yoga's global visibility continues to expand, the next challenge before humanity is far more important: transforming awareness into sustained behavioural change. Today, awareness about yoga is nearly universal. Across continents, yoga is practised in schools, workplaces, public institutions, community centres and open public spaces. It has transcended geography, language and cultural boundaries to emerge as a shared global practice for wellness and balance. However, the real success of yoga cannot be measured only through participation in annual celebrations. Its true impact lies in whether individuals adopt yoga as part of their daily lives. This transition from awareness to regular practice has become especially important in the context of contemporary public health challenges. The world today faces rising lifestyle disorders, increasing mental health concerns, stress-related illnesses and growing healthcare costs. Rapid urbanisation, sedentary lifestyles and digital dependency have significantly altered patterns of living and well-being. Increasingly, nations are realising that healthcare systems built solely around treatment are neither sustainable nor sufficient. Prevention and healthy living must become central

pillars of future healthcare frameworks.

Yoga offers precisely such a preventive and holistic approach. Rooted in India's traditional knowledge traditions, yoga is not limited to physical exercise. It represents a comprehensive way of life that strengthens physical fitness, mental resilience, emotional stability and mindfulness. Importantly, yoga remains accessible, affordable and adaptable across age groups and social backgrounds. In an era where healthcare accessibility and affordability remain major global concerns, yoga provides a low-cost, people-centric solution for long-term well-being. The growing acceptance of yoga globally reflects a larger shift in healthcare thinking. There is increasing recognition that wellness must integrate physical, mental and emotional health. This is particularly relevant in addressing non-communicable diseases, stress disorders and lifestyle-related conditions, which now account for a significant share of the global disease burden. India's own experience demonstrates both the progress achieved and the immense potential ahead. According to the National Sample Survey (79th Round), awareness regarding traditional systems of healthcare stands at nearly 95 per cent in rural India and 96 per cent in urban India. The survey further reveals that in around 1.1 crore rural households and 1.4 crore urban households, at least one member practises yoga regularly. These figures indicate encouraging acceptance, but they also highlight the vast untapped opportunity to integrate yoga into everyday life on a much larger scale. The next phase of the wellness movement must, therefore, focus on converting widespread awareness into consistent daily practice.

Under the guidance of Union Minister of Ayush Prataprao Jadhav, the Ministry of Ayush has been placing renewed emphasis on encouraging the daily adoption of yoga as a behavioural practice rather than limiting it to annual observances. Efforts are being directed towards making yoga more accessible, practical and integrated into



citizens' everyday routines. In this direction, the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga has partnered with digital wellness platforms to provide free daily online yoga sessions, enabling guided practice to reach citizens across geographies, professions and age groups. Initiatives such as the Common Yoga Protocol, Y-Break at workplaces and specialised yoga protocols for non-communicable diseases are further helping embed yoga within broader public health and wellness frameworks.

The countdown activities leading up to IDY 2026 have also reflected the growing public enthusiasm surrounding yoga. The 75-day countdown witnessed a major milestone through a collective trikonasana performance during Yoga Mahotsav 2026, creating an

Asia Book of Records achievement and symbolising the scale of citizen participation. Similarly, the 50-day countdown saw more than 6,000 participants perform bhujangasana together, underscoring yoga's expanding public resonance and collective appeal.

The forthcoming 25-day countdown event at the Khajuraho Temples will further connect India's civilisational heritage with its contemporary wellness vision. Such initiatives remind us that yoga is not merely a physical activity, but part of a deeper philosophy centred on harmony, discipline and balance.

The significance of the International Day of Yoga today extends far beyond public gatherings. It has become a global platform for dialogue on preventive healthcare, sustainable lifestyles and collective well-being. In many ways, yoga represents India's enduring contribution to humanity's search for balance in an increasingly fragmented and fast-paced world.

The next chapter of the yoga movement must, therefore, focus on continuity and behavioural transformation. The true success of yoga will not be measured solely by participation on June 21, but by how deeply it becomes woven into the everyday lives of people across the world. India's vision for yoga has always been universal. The expanding global embrace of yoga demonstrates that ancient wisdom continues to offer meaningful solutions to modern challenges. As the world prepares for another International Day of yoga, the message is becoming increasingly clear: Yoga is no longer just an annual observance — it is evolving into a global movement for preventive health, mindful living and sustained behavioural change.



A perfect summer getaway, Andaman and Nicobar, is an archipelago at the confluence of the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. With an array of thrilling water sports, leisure facilities, and a host of activities, a vacation in Andaman and Nicobar can be as relaxed or filled with adventure as you'd like it to be. The weather is temperate most of the year and the best time to visit is between December-May. If you're planning to head here in this summer break then here's a pick of outdoorsy things which will keep you busy.

Radhanagar Beach, Havelock Island



Beach number 7 (or more commonly known as Radhanagar Beach) was bestowed with the title of 'Asia's Best Beach' in 2004 by the TIME magazine. Known for its picturesque sunset, white sand and turquoise blue waters, the beach is a very popular hub lying on the western coast of Havelock Island. There's a watersports centre at the beach where visitors can hire snorkelling and scuba equipment and boats.

Havelock Island, the Andamans



Havelock Island at the Andamans is the most popular spot for scuba diving. Home to one of the richest coral reef ecosystem in the world, the waters here are pristine, and teeming with diverse marine life. There are two diving operators on Havelock—Barefoot Scuba and Dive India—which provide wannabe divers with training and all the requisite equipment. Both the operators are PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) certified dive centres.

►North Bay Beach, Port Blair

Located just 15 minutes away from the Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex, the North Bay Beach offers one of the easiest water sports—Sea-walking—in Andaman and Nicobar. Walking barefoot on the base of the sea offers you an exquisite view of rich marine-life and the corals. If you're heading to Andaman and Nicobar, don't miss this. Skilled life guards accompany you underwater, to ensure maximum safety.



Must-visits in

Andaman and
Nicobar

▣ Mangrove creek, Baratang Island



Baratang Island is located about 100 kilometres away from the Port Blair city and offers a boat-safari, amidst the nature-made tunnel of thick mangrove plantations. A variety of exotic birds can be spotted along the lush trail of dense tree knots and canopies. This mangrove creek leads to the magnificent Lime Stone Caves, for which you must carry a torch with you. Baratang Island is located about 100 kilometres away from the Port Blair city and offers a boat-safari, amidst the nature-made tunnel of thick mangrove plantations. A variety of exotic birds can be spotted along the lush trail of dense tree knots and canopies. This mangrove creek leads to the magnificent Lime Stone Caves, for which you must carry a torch with you.

Best time of the day to visit:

Morning and afternoon.

Required equipment: A transparent helmet, which pumps the oxygen in from an oxygen cylinder kept in the pontoon.

Mt. Harriet, the Andamans

This trek stretches up 16 kilometres starting from Mt. Harriet to Madhuban, winding across a picturesque terrain. Expect to see exotic birds and rare plants along the lush trail. Taking a guide along is highly recommended. Tents and all the trekking equipment are available on hire from the Andaman Teal House. Do not forget to acquire food, water, torch, and first aid, before you start. The best time to go hiking here is November-April.

Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex,

Port Blair

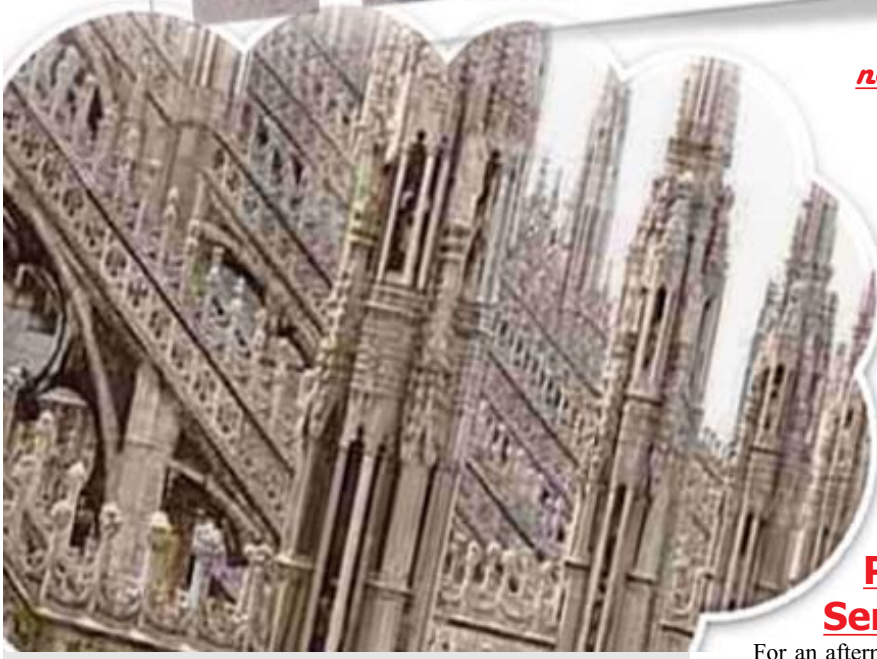
Located in the heart of Port Blair, the Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex offers an array of aqua-sports: banana rides, jet skiing, parasailing, speed boat rides, rowboat paddling, you name it! This ought to be your first pit-stop in the Andamans. The Centre is well-equipped with changing rooms, and trained staff to ensure safety. The State Theatre of Opera and Ballet is yet another lavish construction, made of marble and gold trimmings. The tickets can get very expensive, but if you want to see a good Kazakh, Russian or Italian opera this is the place to be. You might not think of Kazakhstan as a prime place to experience such European culture, but the productions at the State Theatre of Opera and Ballet are as good as any you'll find in the old cities of Europe. This opera house can easily rival those of Vienna and Budapest. Apart from shows, the building in itself is worth the visit—filled to the brim with interesting pieces of art. The staff is very polite and helpful.





48 hours in Milan

Known for fashion and design, Milan is located in northern Italy and is the country's second largest and most cosmopolitan city. Offering top-notch art, culture, history and food, Milan is the perfect spot for a weekend of urban exploration.



collection, Pinacoteca di Brera, which houses Giovanni Bellini's 'Madonna and Child' and Francesco Hayez's 'The Kiss'. The gallery closes at 7:15 pm, so you'll have plenty of time to browse.

Parco Sempione

For an afternoon stroll, head over to Parco Sempione, a beautiful city park ornamented by the Porta Sempione (Arch of Peace) and the 14th-century Castello Sforzesco (Sforza Castle). The castle's fountain, nicknamed the 'Torta degli Sposi' (wedding cake) for its design, is a magnet for children in need of a quick splash in the summertime.

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II is home to a number of luxury shops, including Prada, Gucci and Louis Vuitton—and some of Milan's oldest bars and restaurants. Scope out a lunch spot in the Galleria and stop by Zucca in Galleria afterwards for a cup of coffee or an aperitif.

Opened in 1867 along with the inauguration of the Galleria, Zucca was the first to offer Campari, a popular brand of Italian bitters.

Piazza del Duomo

No trip to Milan is complete without a visit to Piazza del Duomo (Cathedral Square), the city's main square. There you'll find the city's Gothic cathedral, the Duomo—it is the largest cathedral in Italy and the fourth largest in the world. The architecture inside and out is worth a close look. Ladies, make sure you cover your shoulders and legs (above your knees), or you won't be permitted to enter the cathedral. If you happen to be wearing a sleeveless shirt, there are a number of vendors in the piazza taking advantage of the opportunity by selling scarves and shawls.

Ristorante Pizzeria

If you're staying in Navigli, end your day with dinner at Ristorante Pizzeria Sant'Eustorgio, a restaurant and pizzeria that features simple dishes, a wide wine selection and terrace seating overlooking Piazza Sant'Eustorgio.

Pasticceria Marchesi

While in the Magenta neighbourhood, stop by Pasticceria Marchesi for the best sugar-coated croissants (called brioche) in the city. Circa 1824, Pasticceria



Marchesi is one of the oldest pastry shops in Milan. Don't forget to spend a few hours exploring on your own—after all, that's when the most exciting discoveries can take place.

Santa Maria delle Grazie

Make time to visit Santa Maria delle Grazie, a church and former monastery with a beautiful facade and interior. The church is home to Leonardo da Vinci's 15th-century masterpiece—The Last Supper. In order to see the painting, you will need to book a tour at least a few days in advance, as it is only shown to small guided tours for its protection.

Rinomata Gelateria

Stop by retro-styled Rinomata Gelateria (Ripa di Porta Ticinese, 1) for crepes or ice cream and continue your stroll along Naviglio Grande, as Gelateria doesn't offer seating. Navigli is worth a second look, as its beauty isn't limited to the night hours and it offers a completely different vibe during the daytime. Strolling along the canals in the afternoon, you'll encounter specialty boutiques and shops, rather than neon-lit bars.

Colonne di San Lorenzo

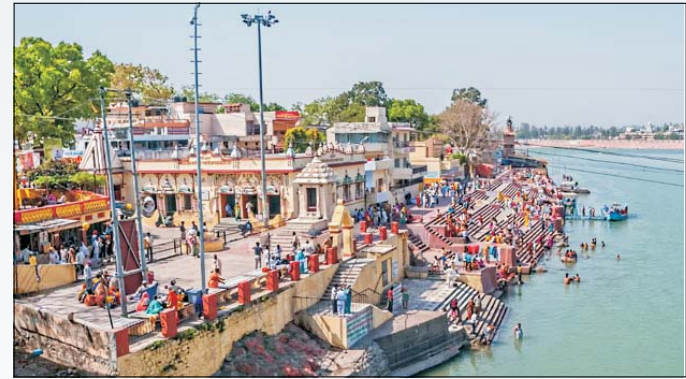
In front of the church stands the Colonne di San Lorenzo, Milan's best-known Roman ruin. Dating from the 2nd century, the columns were moved to their current location during the 4th century.

Navigli

After visiting the art gallery, make your way towards Milan's trendy Navigli neighborhood, noted for its charming canals and vibrant nightlife. The oldest canal, Naviglio Grande, is lined with restaurants and pubs, as well as old barges fitted out as bars. You'll be able to find dinner and drinks in the area, a great way to wrap up your first night in Milan.

Pinacoteca di Brera

Just a few blocks from the castle is Milan's largest art



summer by the British, Ooty is a visual delight filled with pretty cottages, fenced flower gardens, thatched-roof churches and terraced botanical gardens. Venture a few kilometres out and find yourself surrounded by greener, quieter areas dotted with an abundance of pine trees.

Darjeeling, West Bengal

Surrounded by emerald-green tea plantations and set against a backdrop of jagged white Himalayan peaks, Darjeeling is nestled away in the northern regions of West Bengal. A journey on the 'Toy train,' which meanders up the hills to Darjeeling

from New Jalpaiguri in the plains is a great way to explore and soak in the magnificent surroundings of this hill station.

Munnar, Kerala

Sprawling tea plantations, picture-perfect towns and winding lanes make Munnar a perfect destination for those looking for respite from the summer heat. Although the town itself is forever buzzing with activity, wander a few kilometres out and you'll be engulfed in a thousand shades of green.

Perfect summer destinations in India

Planning a vacation in India is a challenging task with the country's incredible diversity throwing up a long list of names. From tropical islands and tea plantations to lush valleys overlooking the mighty Himalayas, there is no dearth of options when it comes to planning the perfect summer getaway in India.

Coorg (Kodagu), Karnataka

Spread out across the Western Ghats, the misty valley of Coorg offers the perfect getaway from the scorching summer heat. Fondly referred to as the 'Scotland of India' due to its verdant beauty and pleasant weather conditions, Coorg has a special place among all hill stations in India. A place where you can just sit around and watch the fog roll by.

Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

Styling itself as the 'Yoga Capital of the World', Rishikesh is a magnet for spiritual seekers. Surrounded by the fast-flowing Ganga and forested hills, the setting is definitely conducive for relaxing and meditation. Rishikesh is also a popular white-water rafting centre and backpacking hang-out.

Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

A heady mix of religion, history and nature, Tawang is one of the least discovered towns in Arunachal Pradesh. Dotted with Buddhist monasteries and mystical gompas on one end and a war memorial on another, the valley begins to work its magic on travellers the moment they start descending the hills.

Ooty, Tamil Nadu

Established as a retreat from the scorching heat of the



Pahalgam, Kashmir

Known as the 'Valley of Shepherds,' Pahalgam is a low-rise town that stands at the confluence of Lidder River and Sheshnag Lake. The surrounding mountains contain many picturesque spots and over 20

lakes to which countless guides and horsemen and more than eager to take you to.

Manali, Himachal Pradesh

With mountain adventures beckoning from all directions, Manali is the perfect destination for those looking to unwind during the summer months. Backpackers come to hang around in the villages near the main town and adventure tourists come for trekking, paragliding, rafting and skiing. About 53 km away from Manali is the famous Rohtang Pass offering up breathtaking sights of glaciers, peaks and valleys.

Nainital, Uttarakhand

A welcome relief from the heat of Delhi, Nainital is a small town in Kumaon which encircles the picturesque Naini Lake. There's a busy town bazaar and a web of walking tracks around the forested hillsides, which have enticed travellers since pre-independence days to retreat to Nainital during the summer months.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The perfect summer getaway, Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer tourists a relaxed tropical ambience and an array of thrilling adventure activities. Tourists from all over the world visit this tropical paradise for its rich and diverse marine life which is best seen while snorkelling and scuba diving around its many pristine beaches.



Doors shut, details confined: Census teams face heat, suspicion and silence

New Delhi.(Agency)

As India pushes ahead with its nationwide census exercise amid an intense summer, the process on the ground is proving far from smooth. From Delhi to Gurugram, Gorakhpur, Chandauli, Punjab, Maharashtra and Bhopal, teachers and government staff engaged in the exercise say extreme heat, lack of awareness and public hesitation over sharing personal information have emerged as the biggest hurdles.

Across several cities, enumerators said residents are refusing to open doors, hiding details about income and property, giving incorrect phone numbers, and questioning why the government needs financial information at all. In many areas, field staff are spending hours outside homes in temperatures crossing 40 to 45 degrees Celsius.

DELHI: FEAR & HESITATION

In the national capital, census workers described widespread hesitation among residents over sharing personal details. Government school teachers assigned to door-to-door surveys in South Delhi's Vasant Kunj area refused to speak on record, but several officials admitted off camera that awareness around the census remained extremely low.

Enumerators said many residents do not allow them inside their homes to avoid answering questions. Even after repeated requests, several households either provide incomplete details or refuse to disclose information related to income and assets.

Workers said the situation is particularly difficult in affluent neighbourhoods, where

most residents are away at work during the day and are more reluctant to share financial details. While people generally



disclose information about family members, they often avoid answering questions related to movable and immovable assets, making entire days of fieldwork unproductive.

In Delhi's village areas too, the situation has remained tense. Enumerators said some residents reacted angrily when questioned about property and assets, with arguments and confrontations reported in certain localities. Conditions, however, appeared relatively smoother in slum clusters. Workers said residents there were comparatively more willing to share details, partly because they hoped the census could help them access government welfare schemes in the future.

Several residents who objected to the process said off record that questions related to family size and caste were understandable, but they could not understand why the government needed details about homes, income and assets. Many expressed fears that sharing such information could invite scrutiny from the

Income Tax Department or other agencies.

Officials on the ground said the administration first needs to build awareness and address public concerns if the census exercise is to be completed smoothly in the capital.

KANPUR: TEACHERS OUT ON HOLIDAYS

In Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur, teachers engaged in census work said they have been carrying out field duties despite the summer vacation and extreme heat. Teacher Sudhanshu, who is part of the exercise, said staff begin work early in the morning and continue till afternoon under harsh sunlight. He said people are initially reluctant to share details related to income, property and family members, especially in rural areas where residents first want to know whether the survey is linked to any government scheme.

Delhi Gymkhana Club to approach Land and Development Office to seek clarity on handover order

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi Gymkhana Club said it will write to the Land and Development Office seeking clarification on multiple issues after the Centre directed the club to vacate and hand over its premises by June 5. In an official communication to its members, the club said the Centre has asked it to hand over its premises in Lutyens' Delhi to "strengthen and secure defence infrastructure" and for other public security purposes.

The club said it received the notice on May 22 from the Land and Development Office (L&DO) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, seeking "re-entry and resumption" of the 27.3-acre land parcel, which is located on 2, Safdarjung Road, adjacent to the prime minister's residence on Lok Kalyan Marg.

"Pursuant to the sudden development, the Gymkhana Club met today on an urgent basis and after detailed deliberation decided to file an immediate response to the L&DO requesting clarity on several issues in the interest of the members and employees of the club," it said.

The club also said that it has sought an urgent appointment with the officials of the housing and urban affairs ministry. "The immediate priority of the club is to ensure that its operations continue without dislocation," the communication said, adding that further developments would be shared once it receives a response from the government.

The development comes after the Centre asked the Delhi Gymkhana Club to hand over its premises by June 5, saying the 27.3-acre land parcel was required for "strengthening and securing defence infrastructure" and for other vital public security purposes. In its May 22 order, the L&DO said the land falls in a highly sensitive and strategic zone and was critically required for urgent institutional and governance-related needs.

The office said the land had originally been leased to the then Imperial Delhi Gymkhana.

Massive fire erupts at furniture market in northeast Delhi, locals allege delay in response by firefighters

New Delhi.(Agency)

A massive fire tore through the furniture market in northeast Delhi's Shastri Park late on Friday night, gutting nearly 500 shops and causing extensive losses to traders ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, officials said. According to the Delhi Fire Service (DFS), information about the blaze was received at 11.57 pm, following which 25 fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

Police personnel from Shastri Park police station also reached the area immediately, while nearly 200 officers were deployed to manage the crowd and maintain law and order during the overnight firefighting operation. The blaze was brought under control around 3.15 am on Saturday. No casualties were reported.

A case, FIR No. 157/26 under Section 326(g) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), has been registered at Shastri Park police station and an investigation is underway, officials said.

According to Delhi Fire Service officials, the fire erupted in the furniture market near New Seelampur Metro Station and spread rapidly due to the presence of highly combustible materials such as wooden furniture and plywood. Angry locals, alleging a delay in the arrival of fire tenders, pelted stones at firefighting vehicles as crews attempted to douse the blaze. Visuals from the scene showed intense flames engulfing large parts of the market while a crowd gathered nearby.

A local resident said the fire broke out around 11.15 pm and initially affected only two shops before spreading rapidly. "The blaze had started in the middle of the market. Initially, only two shops had caught fire, and we still do not know how it started. Now, almost the entire market has been destroyed—barely 20 shops are left. People have suffered massive losses. It is festival time, which makes this even more tragic," he said. Some residents alleged that the fire tenders reached the spot late, resulting in major financial losses for traders. Officials said the exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

Avoid non-essential travel: India's advisory for 3 African nations amid Ebola surge

New Delhi.(Agency)

India has advised its citizens to avoid all kinds of non-essential travel to countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan, as the outbreak of the Ebola virus has hit these three nations severely. In addition to avoiding travel, the government also advised nationals who are residing in these three nations to take needed precautionary measures and follow guidelines issued by the local authorities.

"In view of the evolving situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other affected countries, and in line with WHO's recommendations, the Government of India advises all its citizens to avoid non-essential

travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and South Sudan," the health advisory issued by the Indian government said. The development came after the World Health Organisation (WHO)



and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention declared the outbreak a global emergency concern. "In light of the reported outbreaks of Ebola Disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(DRC) and Uganda, the World Health Organisation (WHO), under the International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005, on 17 May 2026, determined the situation to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)," the WHO advisory read.

The global health watchdog has also issued temporary recommendations aimed at curbing the spread of the Bundibugyo virus. Under the new directives issued on May 22, health authorities across the affected countries are urged to scale up disease surveillance at key international border checkpoints. The measures are specifically designed to detect, assess, report, and manage any travellers arriving.

Beyond the gun: Winning permanent peace in India's Naxal belt

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Union Home Minister's announcement on achieving the goal of "Naxal Mukti Bharat" by March 31, 2026, signalled more than political intent. It reflected the confidence and willingness to take one of its longest and largest internal security challenges headlong. This goal has been nearly achieved, largely because of security measures. The challenge now is to ensure that it does not rise like a phoenix some years later.

For decades, Naxalism posed a serious challenge across large tracts of central and eastern India. At its peak between 2004 and 2011, the insurgency spread across tribal and forested regions stretching from Bihar and Jharkhand to Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and parts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Violence became routine and civilians were killed, terming them as informers. Violence also meant living in constant fear and lack of development.

To recap briefly, a major turning point in the Naxal movement came in 2004



when the People's War Group and the Maoist Communist Centre of India merged to form the CPI (Maoist). The merger strengthened the insurgency's leadership, recruitment, coordination, and military capability.

Entire districts gradually came under Maoist influence. Roads, schools, public health centres, communication infrastructure and police stations became regular targets. In many remote tribal regions, the state's presence was weak, while the

Maoists projected themselves as an alternative authority. The geographical spread of the insurgency has reduced sharply, and levels of violence have declined phenomenally. This transformation is the result of sustained efforts by the central and state governments, security forces, intelligence agencies, and local administration. At the same time, the Maoist movement itself has suffered from leadership losses, severe attrition, ideological depravity, insurgency fatigue, declining public support and years of continuous operational pressure.

Delhi Gymkhana Club seeks urgent meeting with government after eviction notice

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi Gymkhana Club has moved swiftly to seek clarity from the Centre after receiving an eviction order asking it to hand over its sprawling 27.3-acre premises in Lutyens' Delhi by June 5 for "defence infrastructure and public security purposes". In an official communication to its members on Saturday, the club said it received a letter dated May 22 from the Land and Development Office (L&DO) under the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, seeking "re-entry and resumption" of the Safdarjung Road premises.

The club said its Governing Council held an urgent meeting following the "sudden development" and decided to immediately respond to the L&DO, seeking clarification on several issues linked to the order. "The immediate

priority of the club is to ensure that its operations continue without dislocation," the communication said, adding that it has also sought an urgent appointment with officials of the ministry.

CENTRE CITES DEFENCE, SECURITY NEEDS

The Centre on Friday ordered the elite club to return the land, saying the premises were "critically required" for strengthening and securing defence infrastructure and other vital public security purposes. Located at 2, Safdarjung Road, the club occupies one of the most strategically sensitive land parcels in the national capital, adjacent to the prime minister's residence on Lok Kalyan Marg and surrounded by key government and defence establishments.

In its order, the L&DO said the land was



essential to fulfil "urgent institutional needs, governance infrastructure and public-interest projects", along with the resumption of adjoining government properties.

Invoking Clause 4 of the lease deed, the government said the President of India, through the L&DO, was determining the lease and ordering immediate re-entry of the premises. The order stated that the entire 27.3-acre plot, along with all buildings, lawns, structures and fittings,

would vest with the government upon re-entry. The club has been directed to hand over peaceful possession of the premises on June 5, failing which possession would be taken "in accordance with law".

MEMBERS CALL MOVE 'SHOCKING', LEGAL CHALLENGE LIKELY

Several members described the order as a "shock" and indicated that it may be challenged in court. One member, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the club's current affairs are being managed by a government-appointed committee following earlier intervention by authorities, making it unlikely that the management itself would legally contest the order. "Members will have to move court independently if they want to challenge the government.

Net fuel rates up by Rs 5/L after third hike

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prices of petrol and diesel went up by up to 91 paise per litre on Saturday, the third such hike in less than 10 days, raising the cumulative retail fuel rates across the country by nearly Rs 5 a litre. In Delhi, petrol became costlier by 87 paise, from Rs 98.64 to Rs 99.51 per litre. Diesel rates jumped by 91 paise — from Rs 91.58 to Rs 92.49 a litre. Likewise, the cost of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) went up by Rs 1 per kg, taking its retail cost in the Capital to Rs



81.09 per kg. The latest hike comes amid disruption in global oil and gas supplies following the conflict in West Asia.

Despite the hikes, fuel retailers continue to absorb significant losses. Amid long queues and reports of shortage at petrol pumps and some outlets running dry, Indian Oil said there was no overall shortage, adding fuel outage at certain retail outlets as “highly localised” and temporary.

The IOL statement said the higher demand at certain outlets was driven by a seasonal rise in diesel consumption during the harvesting season, migration of customers from private pumps where retail prices were relatively higher, and increased institutional purchases at public sector outlets.

Multibagger stocks: These 2 made investors wealthy; turned Rs 1 lakh into Rs 46 lakh

Kolkata .(Agency)

Multibagger stocks are a dream probably for all investors. There are such gems to be found in the Indian stock market that packs the potential to turn investors into millionaires by delivering phenomenal returns over the long term. Over the last five years, several stocks have demonstrated this kind of power-packed performance. Companies operating specifically within the power equipment, renewable energy, and EV infrastructure sectors have generated exceptional wealth for investors. Two such companies are TD Power Systems and Servotech Renewable Power System. They have transformed a Rs 1 lakh investment into a value ranging from Rs 34 lakhs to Rs 46 lakhs within a short period of five years. Both these companies have demonstrated robust financials, strong order books, growing demand and operational efficiency. let's have a closer look at these two multibaggers.

TD Power Systems returns

TD Power Systems is engaged in manufacturing AC generators and electric motors which are utilised in power plants and various industrial applications. The company manufactures equipment for steam, hydro, gas, wind, and diesel-based power generation systems and currently commands a market cap of approximately Rs 20,228 crore. On May 22, 2026, the company's share closed at Rs 1,295.80.

Five years ago, on May 22, 2021, the share was trading at approximately Rs 38. This means that over this period, the stock delivered returns of nearly 3,325%. Had an investor invested Rs 1 lakh in the company five years ago, that investment would be worth approximately Rs 34 lakhs today.

India's exports grew in May to a four-year high even as trade deficit widened

New Delhi.(Agency)

At a time when the economy is increasingly coming under the stress of a falling rupee, India's export sector has registered a rise of 13.78% in this month, Union commerce minister Piyush Goyal has announced. According to him, the growth trajectory witnessed in April has continued this month too, when the value of the rupee against the US dollar fell further. Exports, foreign investment and domestic production are three parameters that are growing, the government has highlighted. Goyal stated that a significant increase in exports was recorded during the first three weeks of May. In April, India's exports had already risen by 13.78% to reach \$43.56 billion. This figure was recognised as the highest monthly export level recorded in the last four years. Demand for petroleum products and rising crude oil prices played a pivotal role in this achievement.

Trade deficit widened

Unfortunately, the exports could not result in a narrowing of the trade deficit and alongside the surge in exports, an increase in imports was also recorded. Consequently, the trade deficit widened to \$28.38 billion, which is a three-month high. Experts attribute this primarily to a surge in the imports of crude oil and other essential commodities. The government believes that this rise in imports is driven by robust domestic demand and heightened industrial activity. In the coming months, the prevailing conditions in the global market are expected to impact both exports and imports. This is precisely the reason why Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the people of the country to curb consumption of petrol, diesel, gold, edible oils and fertilisers. These items have to be imported in India in huge quantities which is draining forex resources big time and is creating a continuous downward pressure on the value of the Indian currency.

Digital detox trend | Old iPods, off-grid holidays, Lego bricks: Switching off the phone is new and growing market

For a generation that grew up with smartphones, the appeal of a device that plays music and does nothing else is not retro nostalgia so much as deliberate restraint. Google Trends data from the US showed a notable surge in searches for both the iPod and the iPod Nano in 2025.

New Delhi.(Agency)

As screen time climbs and digital anxiety becomes an increasingly familiar complaint among parents, young professionals, and even policymakers, a quiet but fast-growing market is emerging around the proposition of helping people put their smartphones down.

Its offerings range from refurbished iPods flying off second-hand shelves to Lego's most complicated brick sets selling out among adults and curated wilderness

retreats where checking WhatsApp is, by design, not an option. Together, they form an unlikely but booming market: a break from the dopamine-laced tyranny of smartphones.

Much of this feeds into a rising demand for keeping off devices and weaning away from social media platforms. Bangalore-based Transforming Travels, for instance, is among the travel firms specifically offering “unplugged vacations” packages, involving what the agency calls periods of abstinence from smartphones and social media platforms. The hard sell typically entails a sojourn in a remote location, high up in the hills or inside the confines of a reserve forest, to help reduce screen dependence and anxiety. These trips range from weekend getaways to week-long group retreats, including a number of women-only groups, Chandni Aggarwal, the founder of Transforming Travels, told.

“Digital detox retreats work best in natural

and remote locations, which is why those are the only kinds of destinations we usually propose,” Aggarwal said. “At times we intentionally choose places with limited network reception.”

The approach, she explains, is more



disciplined than it might sound. Participants frequently arrive hoping to negotiate partial access — the occasional email check, a quick scroll. That, she says, is precisely what the retreat is designed to resist. “Even briefly checking emails or messages can immediately pull

your mind back into stress, work, or social pressures, interrupting the entire process of self-disconnection and reflection.” Nearly 90% of her clients end up choosing remote or natural destinations, she adds — not because they are pushed to, but because once the logic is explained, it makes sense.

Few symbols of the detox moment are quite as striking as the iPod's unexpected revival. Apple retired the device in May 2022, having long since folded music listening into the iPhone. Yet demand for the original, single-purpose music player has quietly crept back, driven, analysts suggest, by precisely the thing that made the iPhone seem like an upgrade: its connectivity.

For a generation that grew up with smartphones, the appeal of a device that plays music and does nothing else is not retro nostalgia so much as deliberate restraint. Google Trends data from the US showed a notable surge in searches for both the iPod and the iPod Nano in 2025.

IOC assures of ample fuel supply, ‘shortage localised’

New Delhi.(Agency)

Amid reports of fuel retail outlets running out of petrol and diesel stocks in some pockets, the country's largest oil marketing company (OMC) Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) assured consumers that there is no “overall shortage” of the two automobile fuels and the issues being faced at certain retail outlets are “highly localised and temporary”.

Indian Oil also said that the three OMCs —Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum being the other two — are continuously monitoring the situation and taking necessary steps to address such “isolated situations”.

Fuel demand, particularly of diesel, is seeing a surge in certain pockets as a large number of bulk fuel consumers have shifted to public sector OMCs retail outlets due to a wide gap between retail prices — which are still below market rates — and the market-linked bulk prices, according to the government. On top of that, certain

private sector fuel retailers are retailing the fuels at higher prices than the OMCs, leading to additional pressure on the latter's retail network as consumers are preferring to buy from them. Higher fuel demand due to the



crop harvesting season is also leading to additional demand pressure.

“Indian Oil wishes to reassure customers and the general public that there is no overall shortage of petrol and diesel in the country. The current situation being witnessed at certain retail outlets is

highly localised and temporary in nature, arising due to local demand-supply imbalances and redistribution of sales patterns in select areas,” Indian Oil said Saturday.

“The higher demand being witnessed at some locations is attributable to the following factors: seasonal increase in diesel demand during the ongoing harvesting period; temporary shift of customers from certain private retail outlets owing to relatively higher retail prices at some private pumps; increased migration of institutional and commercial demand to PSU retail outlets, as bulk and institutional supplies are currently priced significantly higher in line with prevailing international market prices,” the company added.

These shifts are a major reason why the OMCs' retail outlets in some areas are running out of fuel stocks faster than usual, leading to dry-out-like situations, according to industry sources.

Energy boost: OIL strikes gas in Rajasthan's Dandewala

New Delhi.(Agency)

State-owned Oil India Limited (OIL) has successfully unlocked a new gas-bearing pay zone in Rajasthan's Dandewala field, with a flow of nearly 25,000 standard cubic metres per day, petroleum and natural gas minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Saturday.

Congratulating OIL on its technological excellence, Puri said on social media that the discovery by the energy Maharatna would “provide momentum to India's journey towards energy self-sufficiency”.

OIL called the discovery, made at a depth of 950 metres, “modest but significant” and said it indicated deliverability and potential of the area.

“This marks the first-ever successful

establishment of gas presence in Sanu Formation within Dandewala field,

The newly discovered gas stands out for its better quality, containing low levels

of carbon dioxide, which aligns with the country's push for cleaner fuel alternatives. This discovery not only marks an important advancement for the hydrocarbon sector in western Rajasthan but also solidifies the region's status as a strategic energy hub.

Energy experts are optimistic that the unlocking of the new pay zone will catalyse further exploration and production activities in Rajasthan, which has substantial oil and gas reserves. Industry observers suggest that the

latest discovery could open doors to further exploration in adjacent regions of the Jaisalmer basin.



thereby opening up a new play and validating our strategy of revisiting the subsurface potential through focused technical interventions,” it said.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal is heading to Canada for trade talks on May 25, with easier access for Indian textiles and leather from India in return for tapping uranium and critical minerals on the table as the two sides look to step up efforts for the proposed free trade agreement, for which talks have resumed a few months ago.

Separately, a team from the US is expected to visit India next month as the 150-day deadline for current tariffs ends in late July. The Trump administration, which has launched two Section 301 probes against a host of countries, including India, is expected to unveil its fresh tariff plan in the coming weeks.

Goyal will lead a business delegation of over 150 industry leaders to Canada to seek investments and enhance collaborations. He said a series of meetings are scheduled with leaders and



businesses in Ottawa and Toronto.

Goyal said he will also meet representatives of “Maple 8” pension funds of Canada. The “Maple 8” refers to Canada's eight largest public pension funds, which together manage assets worth around \$2.4 trillion Canadian dollars and are considered among the world's most influential long-term investors.

Some of the members, such as Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, and Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System, have already invested in India.

He added that Canada is strong on oil, gas, critical minerals, and mining, while India can offer its talented workforce and strengths in several sectors. Goyal said that the goal is to step up bilateral trade to \$50 billion over the next five years, from under \$9 billion in 2024-25.

About 600 Canadian companies are operating in India at present, and “we are looking at increasing it to 1,000”, he said. Canada has a very large Indian diaspora, and investment is expected to be a key element of the comprehensive agreement.

Indians spent \$623 million on foreign holidays, card settlements in March

The “other travel” segment — covering holiday expenses and international credit card bill settlements — accounted for \$623 million (over Rs 5,900 crore) in the month of March 2026, highlighting the discretionary overseas spending.

Mumbai.(Agency)

Despite the ongoing war in West Asia, outward remittances under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) for travel-related expenses didn't show sign of big moderation at \$1.09 billion in March, a drop of 16% from \$1.31 billion recorded in February, data released by the Reserve Bank of India said.

High air fares and disruption in travel services failed to dampen the travel spirit as over 60% of the travel-related expenses were for holiday expenses and international credit card bill settlements

by Indians. In January, remittances under the travel category had touched \$1.66 billion. Total LRS in March was \$2.59 billion, against \$2.33 billion in February. The “other travel” segment — covering holiday expenses and international credit card bill settlements — accounted for \$623 million (over Rs 5,900 crore) in the month of March 2026, highlighting the discretionary overseas spending.

The numbers make it clear that affluent and aspirational Indians are increasingly prioritising foreign experiences, education and lifestyle-driven consumption at an unprecedented scale. The RBI has provided a break-up for remittances under the travel category after credit card transactions were brought under separate LRS category for the first time in March 2026.

The government has brought overseas spending through credit cards under the LRS to curb excessive foreign exchange outflows and close regulatory loopholes. The move follows concerns that some individuals were using international

credit cards to spend beyond the annual remittance ceiling of \$250,000 permitted under the scheme. Until now, overseas transactions made through debit cards were already counted under the LRS framework, but credit card expenditures



remained outside its ambit. Data gathered from leading money remittance agencies and financial institutions indicated that several international credit cards were being issued with spending limits significantly higher than the prescribed annual threshold, allowing users to bypass the cap indirectly.

By bringing credit card spending within the LRS net, the government aims to create uniformity across payment instruments, strengthen monitoring of foreign exchange outflows and prevent misuse of the existing regulations.

Travel for education also remained one of the biggest drivers of outbound money flows, touching \$ 450.16 million in March alone. The amount covered tuition fees, accommodation and a wide range of student expenses overseas, reinforcing the growing migration of Indian students — and Indian money — into global education markets. Within the broader travel category, business travel remittances stood at \$ 16.05 million, while pilgrimage-related travel accounted for \$ 2.55 million. Overseas medical treatment travel bill touched \$ 2.79 million. Total travel remittances was \$16.4 billion in FY2026 as against \$ 16.9 billion in FY2025. Overseas travel has declined since March this year as the US-Iran conflict disrupted air services and drove up air fares.

Short news

T cabinet okays joining Centre's RDSS; smart meters for power consumers**Hyderabad.(Agency)**

Telangana will join the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), a central govt initiative aimed at strengthening power distribution infrastructure and reducing transmission losses. As part of the scheme, pre-paid smart meters will be installed for all consumers except agricultural connections. The state cabinet, chaired by chief minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday, approved proposals submitted by Telangana discoms to join RDSS.

It also approved the construction of one lakh Indiramma housing units for low-income groups and another 30,000 units for middle-income groups in the CURE area, which covers 24 assembly constituencies. The decision assumes significance as elections to the GHMC, Malkajgiri and Cyberabad municipal corporations are expected later this year.

Briefing the media after the cabinet meeting, housing and revenue minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said the decision to join RDSS was not new.

"The previous BRS govt had already signed a tripartite agreement to join RDSS. The agreement was signed on Jan 2, 2017, between the Union power ministry, Telangana govt and the Southern Power Distribution Company Limited. However, the previous govt did not take it forward. The Congress govt discussed the issue for two days in the assembly before the cabinet approved it. This does not involve installing meters for agricultural connections," the minister said.

Bakrid holiday cut to one day in Bengal**Kolkata. (Agency)**

Bengal's new BJP govt has slashed a two-day holiday for Eid-ud-Zoha or Bakrid announced by the previous TMC administration to one day. In a notification issued Saturday, the BJP govt announced the Bakrid holiday would be observed on May 28.

Earlier, the official holiday calendar announced at the beginning of the year by the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC govt, two days — May 26 and 27 — had been earmarked as holidays for Bakrid under Negotiable Instruments (NI) Act.

But with the festival being celebrated on May 28, the BJP govt rescheduled the dates and announced a oneday holiday. All offices will function normally on May 26 and 27, the notification said.

The Mamata-led administration had significantly expanded the state's holiday calendar since it took charge in 2011. These included a two-day holiday for Eid-ul-Fitr as well as Chhath.

On many occasions, when Lakshmi Puja was on a Thursday or a Monday, the TMC govt had announced an extra holiday to club it into a long weekend. According to political observers, the latest move signals the BJP govt's intent to end the previous administration's "holiday culture".

Ahmedabad: To avert fires, updated rules to make consultant check of new buildings' wires mandatory**Ahmedabad.(Agency)**

To avert fire accidents — like the three that occurred last Thursday and Friday — reworked rules will mandate that new buildings use only standard wiring and have their mechanical, electrical, and plumbing plans approved by designated consultants.

Most fires are caused by electrical short circuits. Due to flaws in the current Comprehensive General Development Control Regulations (CGDCR), no inspections are conducted of basic elements such as wiring and circuit breakers in new residential or commercial buildings.

Therefore, the new CGDCR will mandate the registration of MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) consultants who will approve the plans.

This will ensure that all electrical safety measures, including the use of standard wiring and circuit breakers, are implemented in every new building. The state govt has indicated that the new CGDCR, with construction rules for Ahmedabad and other cities of Gujarat, will be implemented.

Sources from the AMC stated that the state govt implemented CGDCR in 2017. In Part I, Chapter 4 of CGDCR, the responsibility of the owner is defined. Registration is mandatory for the following: architect on record, engineer on record, structural engineer on record, clerk of works on record, supervisor of works on record, and fire protection consultant on record.

Lawyer who walks the talk on legal literacy in rural Dindigul**DINDIGUL.(Agency)**

A silence hangs over many village classrooms, children return home with bags on their backs and heaviness in their hearts, as teaching is limited to only what is 'necessary', laws are nothing but words, and action is fictional. In dusty courtyards and under the flicker of a single tubelight, questions bubble up to the point clarity can feel like a rescue from a lifetime of fear for these children.

Into that space steps Su Manikandan. A 44-year-old man clad in a lawyer's suit by day, has spent countless hours in government classrooms across Dindigul, translating legal texts into that lifeline. After more than 250 awareness sessions, thousands of women and children, who would otherwise have been kept from knowing the very laws that protect them, have been equipped to stand their ground. After his schooling, his grandmother, Kamatchi, became the compass that directed

him toward social work. A midwife with no formal schooling, Kamatchi went out of her way to help pregnant women in the village. "Regardless of rain, scorching heat, or the time of day, my grandmother travelled to the



homes of expectant mothers. The entire village deeply respected her. She was a one-woman army and showed me that while education is important for personal growth, acts of social service hold even greater value for the well-being of society," he says. Manikandan stepped into the Gandhigram

Rural Institute, enrolled in a BA social work course, and graduated with a gold medal, but a different calling knocked — law. The nudge to pursue law came from his senior professor, R Mani, who saw in the young social worker a courtroom presence he had not yet seen in himself. "My professor pointed out my abilities and strong public speaking skills, and their significance in a legal career," Manikandan says. Heeding the advice, he secured admission to the Government Law College in Madurai, and later assisted senior advocates in Madurai courts. As Manikandan moved on to preside over cases in Nilakottai and Dindigul, he did not let his briefcase eclipse his social-work calling. It began, he says, with a simple observation — ignorance among rural communities about basic laws. "If they are aware of their rights, they can protect themselves from exploitation and become responsible citizens."

Telangana government confirms 16 deaths in state due to intense heat**HYDERABAD. (Agency)**

Stating that the intense heat gripping the country has claimed 16 lives in Telangana so far this summer, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Saturday directed district collectors to remain on high alert and take immediate steps to prevent further casualties.

The minister, who conducted an emergency review meeting with senior officials at the Secretariat amid rising temperatures and severe heatwave conditions, announced ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each to the families of those who died due to heat stroke.

According to reports submitted by district collectors, four deaths were reported from Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, three each from Warangal Urban, Karimnagar and Nizamabad districts, and one each from Jogulamba Gadwal, Rangareddy and Suryapet districts. Srinivasa Reddy said the



compensation would be provided as per the directions of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and instructed officials to expedite the process.

With the IMD warning that heatwave conditions are likely to intensify over the next three days, the minister asked collectors to remain extra vigilant. He said the severity of the heat had reached abnormal levels and that El Nino conditions had worsened the situation.

"There should be no negligence in safeguarding human lives. The entire government machinery must remain fully alert," he said, directing officials to identify mandals and villages recording extreme temperatures and issue advance warnings to residents.

The minister instructed officials to ensure the supply of cool drinking water, buttermilk and ORS packets at bus stands, markets, major roads, labour-intensive areas and other crowded public places. "Not a single life should be lost due to the heat," he said. Srinivasa Reddy also appealed to elderly persons, pregnant women, children and those suffering from illnesses to avoid venturing out between 11 am and 4 pm unless necessary. Officials were asked to take special precautions for agricultural labourers, construction workers and roadside workers.

Trinamool councillor Sanjay Das found hanging at Kolkata home**Kolkata.(Agency)**

Cops on Saturday recovered the body of South Dum Dum Municipality Trinamool councillor Sanjay Das (49) from his home, with preliminary probe pointing to suicide. It was not immediately known whether the death was in any way linked to the ongoing probes into civic corruption and extortion allegations and the arrests of several Trinamool councillors over the past few days, but Das's family members and neighbours said he was under severe stress since a banner came up outside his house accusing him of land-grab and extortion.

Das, councillor of ward no. 18 and chairman-in-council (CIC) member (health) of South Dum Dum Municipality, was found hanging in his flat in a multi-storey building on Gorakshabasi Road near Nagerbazar where he lived with his wife, teenage son and 6-year-old daughter. The body was spotted by his son. He was taken

by cops to a nearby private hospital at 8.18 am but declared dead on arrival.

Das was a close aide of Bidhannagar MMIC Debraj Chakraborty, husband of former Trinamool Rajarhat-Gopalpur MLA Aditi Munshi.



Following the arrest of former fire minister Sujit Bose in the municipal recruitment scam, Chakraborty and his aides have come under the scanner. Three councillors close to Chakraborty and two close to Sujit Bose have been arrested by ED in the past few days. Both Chakraborty and his wife moved Calcutta High Court on

Thursday seeking anticipatory bail in a disproportionate assets case filed by Bidhannagar police.

Beleghata MLA and Trinamool spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said targeted trolling and blackmailing could have led Das to die by suicide.

Trinamool spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "Some banners had come up in the area accusing him of being an extortionist and being involved in scams. Two persons who were mentioned as having been cheated said the claims were false. But some people were pestering and blackmailing him to pay up or they would go to police and send him to jail. This had left him and his family jittery."

Ghosh added that Das continued to resist the blackmailers. He even went to see East Bengal's last ISL match on Thursday and celebrated the victory. "On Saturday, his family saw him getting ready for morning exercise and then this happened."

Gujarat University declares Mondays 'No Vehicle Day' to cut pollution**Ahmedabad.(Agency)**

Gujarat University (GU) has initiated a major step to curb fuel use and promote environmental sustainability by designating every Monday as a "No Vehicle Day" on its campus. The decision was conveyed through an official circular issued by the university authorities and will take effect from the coming Monday. The directive will continue to remain in force until further notice.

According to the circular released by the acting registrar, the rule will be applicable to all university departments along with all affiliated colleges. Teaching as well as non-teaching staff members have been instructed to avoid using their private vehicles on Mondays. The main aim of this initiative is to bring down pollution levels on campus and reduce the overall carbon footprint.

The move comes after a recent appeal by the Prime Minister to limit the excessive consumption of petrol and diesel. Earlier, Gujarat University had introduced a carpooling initiative, encouraging staff commuting from the same areas to share vehicles instead of travelling individually. This effort was intended to ease traffic congestion and reduce environmental impact.

University authorities have already communicated the new directive to all affiliated institutions. Principals of colleges, heads of departments and directors of various faculties and buildings have been directed to ensure strict enforcement of the rule.

Shelter plan for stray dogs faces opposition in Mumbai after apex court order**Mumbai.(Agency)**

With the Supreme Court ruling that human safety takes precedence over the welfare of sentient animals, activists have raised concerns over misinterpretation and misuse of the order and opposed the plan for shelters.

In Mumbai, the BMC has identified sites in Malad, Chembur and Malvani for permanent dog shelters, but activists argue that diverting resources toward confinement instead of sterilisation could prove ineffective, expensive and potentially cruel.

Civic officials have informed that currently there are 90,757 stray dogs in Mumbai, and around 13,000 sterilizations take place at eight centres annually. However, so far, no animal welfare group has come forward

with expression of interest to build the dog shelters.

Activist and legal advisor of PETA India, Meet Ashar, said: "Firstly, dog shelters will take resources away from sterilisation. Importantly, the areas vacated by sending dogs to shelters will be quickly repopulated by dogs from surrounding areas due to the vacuum effect, rendering the exercise completely futile and resulting in a complete waste of resources and taxpayers' money." Ashar added: "We have opposed the Animal Welfare Board of India's SOP, which recommends large-scale shelters that allot a mere 20 square feet per dog — roughly the size of a traditional funeral pyre. This is cruelty." Pointing at the impractical situation at hand, Ashar said: "With an



estimated 62 million free-roaming dogs in India, there is no infrastructure, funding, or administrative capacity to confine even a fraction of the canine population without causing mass suffering and public-health risks."

Animal lovers also pointed at the recent outcry among Delhi feeders who were highly disturbed after an affable old dog, Kaddu, was picked up from the airport.

"Kaddu had lived peacefully in the Delhi airport for over 12 years, and never even barked at any of the passengers. So, why was Kaddu picked up and imprisoned?", said activist and legal advisor Roshan Pathak in defence of strays. He added, "Besides the three sites marked by BMC for building dog shelters, we fear that more may come up in forest areas, including Aarey, to accommodate more stray dogs. If corruption happens, we wonder if the captive dogs will even get adequate food. At present, feeders are lovingly giving them food and also vaccinating and sterilizing them from their own pockets."

NEWS BOX

'I was struggling with hormonal issues': How Ancy Sojan turned sacrifice into gold with record leap



CHENNAI. (Agency)

All Ancy Sojan wanted coming into the long jump event at the National Senior Athletics Federation Competition was to be cautious and avoid foul jumps. She not only did that but also bettered her personal best and the meet record, leaping 6.75m to win gold at Birs Munda Stadium, Morabadi, here on Friday. It wouldn't have been possible without her determination to push herself, especially as she has been dealing with a hormonal issue that made it difficult for her to lose weight. As a result, she even had to starve herself at times, and now all her sacrifices have finally paid off. Speaking about it, the Asian Games silver medallist said, "I was struggling with hormonal issues, and it's been very hard for me to lose weight. I had to be very disciplined with my diet and training. I knew that if I wanted to perform well, I had to stay committed and follow what my coach was telling me."

"There were times when I felt very hungry, but I controlled myself and stuck to the plan. It was tough, but it worked. I've managed to lose fat and weight, and I can now see the difference in my performance," Ancy, who has been training under coach Anoop Joseph, added.

"I still remember those off-season days when I would literally be in tears after running. But deep down, all I wanted was to come back with a strong performance."

Ancy's series on Friday read 6.47m, 6.56m, 6.69m, 6.75m, 6.68m and 6.57m, and she now believes she can go even farther, beyond the current national record of 6.83m held by Anju Bobby George. "I was aiming for the Commonwealth Games, but I fell short by 9cm. I believe it will come," said Ancy, whose 2025 season was cut short because of an injury. Despite her failure to make the cut for the CWG, this has been a brilliant comeback after a below-par 2025, when her best was just 6.54m and her detractors began to question whether she had it in her to go farther. But she has proved them wrong, thanks largely to her fighting spirit.

"The mental preparation was always there, but I want to overcome obstacles."

French Open, Day 1 schedule: Novak Djokovic, Mirra Andreeva set to kick off campaign



NEW DELHI. (Agency)

The French Open 2026 begins with an exciting line-up at Roland Garros, featuring stars such as Novak Djokovic, Alexander Zverev, Taylor Fritz and teenage sensation Mirra Andreeva in first-round action across the show courts.

Court Philippe-Chatrier will host some of the biggest matches of the day. The action begins with Belinda Bencic of Switzerland taking on Austrian qualifier Sinja Kraus. Germany's Alexander Zverev, among the favourites for the title, will then face Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi. Rising Russian star Mirra Andreeva, seeded eighth, also begins her campaign against French wild card Fiona Ferro. The night session on Philippe-Chatrier will see 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic take on Frenchman Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard in a crucial first-round clash. Djokovic enters the tournament looking to win another Roland Garros title despite concerns over his form and fitness during the clay season. Court Suzanne-Lenglen will feature Karen Khachanov against French wild card Arthur Gea, while Taylor Fritz faces fellow American Nishesh Basavareddy. Former French Open champion Barbora Krejickova will take on Hailey Baptiste, while Sorana Cirstea faces French teenager Ksenia Efremova.

Meanwhile, Court Simonne-Mathieu will host several exciting young talents. Marta Kostyuk, who won the Madrid Open title, opens against Oksana Selekhmeteva, while Katie Volynets faces Clara Burel. Czech youngster Jakub Mensik takes on Titouan Droguet, and Brazilian teenager Joao Fonseca, one of the breakout stars of the season, begins his campaign against French qualifier Luca Pavlovic.

Gurindervir, Vishal, Tejaswin: The night Ranchi witnessed Indian track history

At the Birs Munda Stadium, Gurindervir Singh, Vishal TK, and Tejaswin Shankar shattered three national records, pushing India into elite Asian contention. This is how three athletes altered the trajectory of the nation's track history.

LONDON. (Agency)

For decades, Indian track and field functioned on a loop of isolated brilliance. A single star would emerge, shoulder the nation's hopes, and leave a vacuum upon retirement. But what happened at the Birs Munda Stadium in Ranchi wasn't a lone spark. It was a multipronged demolition of historical limitations, executed by three athletes who did not just break national records. They dragged Indian athletics back into relevance. Within a single session, Gurindervir Singh, Vishal TK, and Tejaswin Shankar achieved what generations before

them could only chase. They obliterated psychological barriers, topped continental charts, and proved that India can be more than just mere participants.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BREAKTHROUGH

The tone for the night was set by raw, unadulterated speed. For years, sub-10.10 seconds was the phantom wall Indian sprinting could never scale. A 10.3-second sprint won domestic praise, while a 10.2 made you an anomaly. But Gurindervir Singh stopped looking at domestic benchmarks. Following a gruelling, psychological back-and-forth rivalry with Animesh Kujur that has seen the national record traded multiple times over recent months, Gurindervir stopped the clock at a staggering 10.09 seconds.

The immediate aftermath was pure theatre. Gurindervir took off the running shoes that carried him into history and threw it on the ground, before flashing a handwritten note to the cameras, a nod to the defiant flair of

modern IPL stars. It read, "Task is not finished yet. 10.10, wait I am still standing." It was a declaration of war on low expectations. By clocking 10.09s, Gurindervir did not just qualify for the



Commonwealth Games. He logged the second-fastest time in all of Asia this season. He gave India something it has lacked for nearly a century: a pure sprinter capable of standing on a continental podium without an ounce of impostor syndrome.

Shattering the ceiling
The clock read 10.09 seconds, but the real breakthrough was psychological. For decades, Indian sprinting has been weighed down by an unspoken skepticism—a defeatist narrative about physiological limits and global standards. Gurindervir Singh didn't just break a national record; he challenged that entire premise. "People used to think Indian genetics are weak, that Indians can't run the 100m, and that there's no future in sprinting," Gurindervir said, addressing the historical bias that has long shadowed the discipline. By becoming the first Indian to breach the 10.10-second barrier, his performance serves as a definitive, track-tested eviction of those old doubts. It is a proof of concept for a new generation of athletes who no longer view global finals as an impossible destination.

Jannik Sinner's golden run threatens painfully one-sided French Open

New Delhi. (Agency)

Jannik Sinner can do no wrong at the moment. If there is anything like the Midas touch, the Italian appears to possess it. Heading into the French Open, the World No.1 looks untouchable, operating on a different plane from the rest of the competition. Six consecutive ATP Masters 1000 titles have only reinforced the surrounding aura, and with his triumph in Rome, Sinner became the youngest player to complete the coveted Career Golden Masters. Right now, it almost feels like he could beat any opponent even in his sleep. Such has been the sheer dominance of his run in 2026. Which naturally raises the question—is Roland Garros in danger of becoming a painfully one-sided affair? In Paris, Sinner now stands on the brink of history as he chases a Career Grand Slam. Last year, he came agonisingly close before Carlos Alcaraz halted his dream run in a thrilling final. This time, however, Sinner arrives looking far more complete, far more ruthless and far more dangerous. On current form, it would take something extraordinary to stop him from lifting his maiden French Open crown.

And it is not just his own brilliance that tilts the scales in his favour. There are other factors that have only strengthened the belief that this could finally be Sinner's moment to reign supreme on the red clay of



ROLAND GARROS. NO SINCARAZ IN PARIS

Alcaraz's absence has significantly altered the landscape at Roland Garros and perhaps handed Sinner his clearest path yet to the title. The Spaniard, sidelined by a lingering wrist injury that also forced him out of

Wimbledon, leaves behind not just a gap in the draw, but a massive void in the tournament's competitive edge.

Over the past few years, Sinner and Alcaraz have built one of tennis' most compelling rivalries. Their clashes have produced unforgettable Grand Slam moments, intense five-set battles, breathtaking shot-making and momentum swings that have captivated fans across Paris, Melbourne, Wimbledon and New York. Together, they have shared the last eight Grand Slam titles, firmly establishing the era of Sincaraz at the top of men's tennis.

But with Alcaraz missing, the balance shifts heavily in Sinner's favour.

The Italian arrives in Paris in devastating form, carrying an aura of inevitability. His relentless baseline game, composure under pressure and clinical precision have made him the most dominant player on tour in recent months. Sinner has stormed through tournaments with ruthless consistency, collecting major titles while barely allowing opponents room to compete. Without Alcaraz standing in his way, a huge portion of Sinner's toughest competition disappears. That is what makes the World No.1 so dangerous heading into the French Open.

IPL Play of the Day: How 26.75 crore outbid 27 crore in Lucknow's captaincy



New Delhi. (Agency)

Mereko andar se ek hi tension tha, woh tha Punjab. "Rishabh Pant had said that just days after the IPL 2025 mega auction. Two IPL seasons later, Punjab Kings are still alive in the playoffs race, Lucknow Super Giants are finishing with the wooden spoon, and Saturday night at Ekana felt like the perfect explanation why. Because the crowd in Lucknow did not just witness PBKS finally snapping their brutal six-match losing streak and keeping their playoffs hopes alive with a seven-wicket win.

What they really saw was Rs 26.75 crore thoroughly outbidding Rs 27 crore.

Shreyas Iyer outcaptained, outbatted and outright outclassed Pant in Lucknow's biggest game of the season, delivering the exact kind of leadership Punjab Kings thought they were buying at the mega auction. If this match proved anything, it is probably that Punjab quietly won the IPL 2025 auction battle long before the points table started confirming it.

One franchise spent huge money on a proven IPL-winning captain who had already dragged Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders deep into IPL seasons before. The other spent slightly more on superstar chaos and hoped the rest would somehow settle itself later. That has certainly not been the case.

A SARPANCH SPECIAL IN LUCKNOW

The scorecard will remember Shreyas for his unbeaten 101 off 51 balls. The three sixes off Mohammed Shami, who was undoubtedly one of LSG's best bowlers of the night. The towering slog over cow corner to finish the chase and complete his maiden IPL hundred.

But Punjab's captain had already started winning this game much earlier with his captaincy.

Because almost everything initially threatened to go wrong for PBKS with the ball. Josh Inglis walked out and instantly started treating Arshdeep Singh's bowling like a powerplay net session. Four boundaries in the opening over. Later, more punishment. By the end, Arshdeep had leaked more than 50 runs in his spell, including 17 in the final over of the innings.

IPL 2026: Shreyas Iyer joins Virat Kohli, Sanju Samson; becomes fourth captain to...

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Punjab Kings captain Shreyas Iyer delivered one of the finest knocks of IPL 2026, smashing his maiden IPL century in a high-pressure, must-win encounter against Lucknow Super Giants at the Ekana Cricket Stadium. Facing a do-or-die situation in the playoff race, Iyer rose to the occasion with an unbeaten 101, guiding PBKS to a commanding seven-wicket victory and keeping their qualification hopes alive.

The PBKS skipper reached his century in style with a towering six as Punjab comfortably chased down 196 and climbed into the top four of the points table heading into the final round of league matches.

Batting first, LSG posted 196/6 in 20 overs, powered by an explosive 72 off 44 balls from Josh Inglis. However, the hosts lost momentum during the middle overs as

PBKS bowlers tightened the scoring rate and picked up regular wickets.

Punjab's chase began shakily with early wickets, but Iyer anchored the innings brilliantly under pressure. Alongside Prabhsimran Singh, he stitched together a massive 140-run partnership that completely shifted the momentum in PBKS' favour. The victory not only ended Punjab's six-match losing streak but also produced a historic moment for Iyer.

The PBKS captain became just the third captain in franchise history to score an IPL century after:

KL Rahul – 132* vs RCB (2020)

Adam Gilchrist – 106 vs RCB (2011)

Shreyas Iyer – 101* vs LSG (2026)

Iyer also entered an elite IPL captaincy record list by becoming only the fourth captain in tournament history to score a century while

chasing a target.

Centuries by captains in IPL chases

119 – Virender Sehwag vs Deccan Chargers (2011)

108* – Virat Kohli vs Rising Pune Supergiant (2016) 119 – Sanju Samson vs PBKS (2021)

101* – Shreyas Iyer vs LSG (2026)

Punjab's playoffs chance

Punjab Kings (PBKS) currently sit fourth on the IPL 2026 Points Table with 15 points from 14 games, but their playoff qualification is completely out of their hands. If RR wins this afternoon's game against MI, they will reach 16 points and automatically secure the 4th spot, instantly eliminating Punjab. If RR loses to MI, Punjab then looks to the evening match. If DC beats KKR, KKR is stuck at 13 points and DC only reaches 14 points. Because Punjab has 15 points, they safely qualify.

3-way battle for playoffs. Royals, KKR threaten Punjab in top 4 race

Hyderabad. (Agency)

Phew! Look where we are. It is the final day of the league stage of the Indian Premier League. A lot has happened in India since IPL 2026's opening day. On March 28, when Royal Challengers Bengaluru played SunRisers Hyderabad in the first match of the season, Bengal was still under TMC's control, petrol prices had not been hiked by Rs 5, and the brutal heatwave had not yet fully gripped the country. What had looked like a fairly straightforward top-four race midway through the season has now turned into a thriller heading into the final day of the league stage. Three playoff spots have already been sealed, with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Gujarat Titans and SunRisers Hyderabad all finishing on 18 points this season. The race for the fourth and final playoff spot remains alive with Punjab Kings, Rajasthan Royals and Kolkata Knight Riders still mathematically in contention. Punjab beat Lucknow Super Giants in their final league-stage game and

finished with 15 points from 14 matches. Their competitors, Rajasthan and Kolkata, sit on 14 and 13 points respectively ahead of their final fixtures. Rajasthan face Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium, while KKR host Delhi Capitals at Eden Gardens.

IPL PLAYOFFS SCENARIO: PBKS vs RR vs KKR

The tension is palpable heading into the final day, with teams now completely dependent on one another's results. If Rajasthan Royals win, they qualify directly for the playoffs by sealing the fourth spot.

If Rajasthan lose and KKR win, then Ajinkya Rahane's side will tie Punjab on points and qualification will come down to Net Run Rate. KKR, who currently sit at +0.011, would need to beat Delhi Capitals by roughly 75 runs to sneak into the top four, provided Rajasthan lose earlier in the day.

If KKR end up batting second, the equation becomes even steeper. They would likely need to chase down a target of around 180 in under 13 overs.

But like everything in sport, it remains a mathematical possibility.

Punjab Kings head coach Ricky Ponting revealed after Saturday's win that the team



would stay back in Lucknow and closely follow Sunday's games. Ponting admitted that Rajasthan Royals posed the bigger threat, especially with the kind of batting firepower they possess. "I haven't got many fingernails left. By tomorrow afternoon, they could be a whole lot shorter," Ponting joked

on the broadcast after Punjab's win. Rajasthan Royals came into this game after obliterating Lucknow Super Giants in their previous match. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (93), Dhruv Jurel (53*) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (43) were the architects of a sensational 221-run chase. The toss could prove extremely tricky on Sunday. Rajasthan are clearly a better chasing side, but an afternoon game in Mumbai at the fag end of the season might tempt teams to bat first before the pitch slows down later in the day.

RR would also hope that Jofra Archer returns to his best and produces the kind of searing spells that made him so dangerous earlier in the season.

Mumbai Indians, meanwhile, are expected to treat this game almost like an audition for the future. IPL 2026 marked their second disastrous campaign in three years under Hardik Pandya's captaincy, and it would not be surprising if the franchise re-evaluates several aspects of the project once again.



Taking to her social media account, Kriti Sanon re-shared a fan-page collage edit featuring several of her memorable characters from films over the years.

Kriti Sanon

Marks 12 Years In Industry, Recalls Shooting First Heropanti Scene While Having Gol Gappas

Actress Kriti Sanon turned nostalgic as she celebrated 12 years in the Hindi film industry on the 23rd of May. Taking to her social media account, the actress re-shared a fan-page collage edit featuring several of her memorable characters from films over the years. The collage showcased Kriti in multiple iconic looks and roles from her Bollywood journey. Sharing the edit, Kriti wrote, "Wow! Its been 12 years since I entered this magical world of movies!"

In another social media story, Kriti shared a video clip from her debut film 'Heropanti'. The still featured the actress enjoying gol gappas in a fun scene from the film. Alongside it, she wrote, "Haha I'm such a foodie that my first shot on screen in my debut Hindi film was having gol gappas." Talking about Kriti Sanon, the actress made her Bollywood debut in 2014 with Sabbir Khan's action-romance film 'Heropanti', opposite Tiger Shroff, who also marked his acting debut with the movie. Released on May 23, 2014, the film also starred Prakash Raj. Kriti played the role of 'Dimpy', a free-spirited young woman who falls in love amid family opposition and chaos. The actress received a warm response for her screen presence. Over the last 12 years, Kriti has been a part of several successful films including 'Bareilly Ki Barfi', 'Luka Chuppi', 'Dilwale', 'Raabta', 'Hum Do Hamare Do', 'Bhediya', 'Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya', 'Crew' and 'Do Patti'.



Samay Raina To Appear On Shekhar Suman's Talk Show Ahead Of India's Got Latent 2? Find Out



Shekhar Tonite has been receiving a fabulous response ever since it premiered, with viewers loving the mix of candid conversations, humour, and unexpected celebrity moments. The first two episodes featuring Nitin Gadkari and Bobby Deol as guests were especially loved by audiences, quickly creating buzz online. Now, it looks like Suman is all set to welcome stand-up comedian Samay Raina on his talk show.

Recently, a new behind-the-scenes video surfaced on social media in which Shekhar Suman was seen singing alongside Samay Raina, who's strumming the guitar. Vishal Dadlani can also be seen in the clip, enjoying the jam session in the room. While it remains unclear if Samay will soon appear on Shekhar Suman's show, the video has left everyone wondering what's cooking.

Meanwhile, Samay Raina will soon return with the second season of his controversial show India's Got Latent. He confirmed the same during his 'Still Alive' act. "People keep asking me, will this show come back? I will bring the show, bro. I wanna do a wild, wild f***ing show. I'm gonna take away all your phones. And the first question I will ask the contestant, 'would you rather...?' And rahi baat India's Got Latent ki, log poochte rehte hain mujhse, kya yeh show wapaa aayega? Let me rephrase that, I don't think isse high point pe mere show ka season 1 end ho sakta tha," he said.

Alia Bhatt will be appearing on the first episode of India's Got Latent 2. Recently, a photo from the set leaked on social media, which left everyone wondering if Alia Bhatt will be appearing on the show as a special guest. Later, a user named Roshan Sahu also took to his Instagram handle and confirmed the same.

"I was amongst the 80 people who attended this episode live and the show was terrific," he said and then added, "I am a fan of Samay and I booked the ticket just to see raw Samay performing live."

'Mashooqa' Singer Defends Pritam Chakraborty Amidst Plagiarism Claims: 'Completely Baseless'



As the "Cocktail 2" track "Mashooqa" continues to spark controversy over claims that it resembles the 1993 Italian song 'Se So Arrubate A Nonna' by duo Bibi & Coco, singer Raghav Chaitanya has come out in support of Pritam Chakraborty, calling the plagiarism allegations "completely baseless." Chaitanya, who has lent his vocals for the number picturised on Shahid Kapoor and Kriti Sanon, penned a note in support of Pritam saying that he feels it's important to address the ongoing speculation directly.

He wrote on the note shared on Instagram: "There has been a lot of conversation around the song Mashooqa, and I feel it's important to address the ongoing speculation directly. The allegations of plagiarism against Pritam da are completely baseless."

As someone who has sung the song and been closely associated with its creative process, Chaitanya said that he "can confidently say that Mashooqa is an original composition."

"In music, certain melodic movements or motifs can occasionally evoke familiarity because there are only so many ways emotions can be expressed musically. A motivic similarity does not amount to copying or plagiarism," he added. He said that to call "Mashooqa" an inspired track is "inaccurate".

Revealing why, he mentioned: "To call this song inspired by another track is itself inaccurate, because the composition, arrangement, emotion and treatment of Mashooqa are entirely its own."

"Pritam da has contributed immensely to Indian music for decades, and reducing creative coincidence to plagiarism undermines the integrity and hard work of everyone involved. I would urge listeners to experience the song in its entirety before jumping to conclusions based on short clips or online comparisons."

"There is already so much negativity in the world, let's please spread some love," Chaitanya concluded.

Trailer of Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai out, David Dhawan and Varun Dhawan reunite for a mass comedy with Mrunal Thakur and Pooja Hegde, releasing in cinemas June 5.

Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai Trailer Out

Varun Dhawan, Mrunal Thakur Promise Chaos, Comedy, Romance



There are some films that don't just arrive quietly, they walk in with music, chaos, colour, and that unmistakable "full Bollywood masala" energy. The trailer of Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai seems to be aiming exactly for that space, bringing back the kind of family entertainer vibe that thrives on confusion, comedy, and larger-than-life moments.

The newly released trailer has already set the tone for what looks like a loud, lively, and very familiar cinematic ride. It marks another collaboration between director David Dhawan and Varun Dhawan, their fourth project together, continuing a partnership known for high-energy comedy films designed for mass audiences. The film brings together Varun Dhawan, Mrunal Thakur, and Pooja Hegde in lead roles, supported by a packed ensemble cast including Rakesh Bedi, Chunky Panday, Jimmy Shergill, Mouni Roy, Rajesh Kumar, and Ali Asgar, all of whom appear to add to the film's chaotic humour and layered storytelling.

Speaking about the film, director David Dhawan reflected on his long journey in cinema and his continued focus on entertaining audiences. "This is my 46th film, and entertaining my audience continues to give me biggest joy. The film has all the ingredients of a classic family entertainer — humour, confusion, music, and heart," he said.

On the production side, producer Ramesh Taurani also shared his thoughts on what the film is aiming to deliver. "With Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, we wanted to create a wholesome entertainer filled with laughter, music, romance, and family fun. We're excited for audiences to experience the film's energy and madness," he said.

Adding to the early buzz, the film's music is already gaining attention, with tracks like WOW turning into a dance number favourite, Tera Ho Jaun leaning into romance, and Vyah Karwado Ji emerging as a wedding playlist contender.

Backed by Tips Films Ltd and co-produced by Maximilian Films (UK), the project continues David Dhawan's long-standing reputation for delivering mass-market comedy entertainers.

Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai is set to release in cinemas on June 5.

NEWS BOX

Nine-storey building under construction in the Philippines collapses, trapping 19 workers

LONDON. (Agency)

MANILA: Nineteen people are feared trapped after a building under construction near the Philippine capital Manila collapsed early on Sunday, government officials and witnesses said.

The building in Angeles city collapsed on itself at around 3:00 am (1900 GMT Saturday) while also heavily damaging an adjacent hotel where two of the 26 people who were rescued had been staying, they said. Local delivery rider James Bernardo, 30, told AFP by telephone he had just dropped off food on the same street when the disaster occurred.

"A few seconds later there was suddenly a loud noise in the area, and when I looked, I realised that (the building) had already collapsed," Bernardo said. "Thank God I'm safe."

A video clip taken by Bernardo and verified by AFP showed a giant pile of twisted steel beams, power pylons and slabs of concrete blocking the street as fellow witnesses took photographs with their phones.

In the clip Bernardo can be heard saying, "We thought it was an earthquake, but it turned out it was the building (collapsing)." Angeles city is around 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Manila.

City information officer Jay Pelayo told AFP the nine-storey building's walls and scaffolding had buckled, likely trapping people in a pile of debris.

While there were no initial reports of casualties, "there are 19 personnel that usually report in the area, so they are the ones we are trying to locate now", Pelayo said.

"There are big chunks of concrete, and we need equipment to lift them up. That is what's challenging for the rescue right now." Initial reports suggested 24 people had been rescued from the rubble, as well as two from a hotel that was also hit when the building came down, the city government said. "We hope the 19 people are part of that number" and therefore accounted for, Pelayo said.

Angry residents set fire to another Ebola treatment centre in eastern Congo; 18 people with infection flee

BUNIA. (Agency)

Angry residents of a town at the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo attacked and burned a tent that was part of a health center where people are being treated for the virus, the staff there said Saturday. It was the second such attack in the region in a week.

No one was hurt in the attack, according to initial reports but as patients ran out to escape the fire, 18 people with suspected Ebola infections left the facility and are now unaccounted for, a local hospital director said.

The angry residents had arrived at the clinic in the town of Mongbwalu on Friday night and set fire to a tent set up for suspected and confirmed Ebola cases by the Doctors Without Borders humanitarian group, Dr. Richard Lokudi, director of the Mongbwalu hospital, told The Associated Press.

"We strongly condemn this act, as it caused panic among the staff and also resulted in the escape of 18 suspected cases into the community," he said.

On Thursday, another treatment center, in the town of Rwampara, was burned down after family members were banned from retrieving the body of a local man suspected to have died of Ebola.

Burials of Ebola-victims stir anger, frustration
The bodies of those who died of Ebola can be highly contagious and lead to further spread when people prepare them for burial and gather for funerals. The dangerous work of burying suspected victims is being managed wherever possible by authorities, which can be met by protests from families and friends.

Southern California chemical tank at risk of exploding as 40,000 residents are ordered to evacuate

World. (Agency)

Authorities braced for the possibility that a damaged chemical tank in Southern California could leak or explode as an evacuation order continued into the Memorial Day weekend for 40,000 residents with no timeline on when they can return.

No injuries were reported after the pressurized tank overheated Thursday and began venting vapors at a company site in Garden Grove, about 40 miles (60 kilometers) south of downtown Los Angeles, according to the Orange County Fire Authority.

But officials said the valves on the tank are broken or "gummed up," which prevented crews from removing the chemical or relieving the pressure on the tank, said Craig Covey, Orange County Fire Authority division chief.

Firefighters' first hope is to find a way to cool off the chemical inside the tank so it won't leak or explode. If that is not possible, Purdue University engineering professor Andrew Whelton said it would be best if the tank sprang a leak so the chemical could be mostly contained. An explosion that could spread the chemical over a broad area and send shrapnel flying would be the worst-case scenario.

If the temperature inside the tank continues to increase, the pressure will continue to build as the methyl methacrylate converts from a liquid to a gas, because officials said the pressure relief valves on the tank were no longer working. Whelton said it's unlikely that firefighters would consider creating a hole in the tank because of fears that could create a spark that

Video: Reporters at White House duck for cover as gunfire erupts

A gunman opened fire at a Secret Service checkpoint outside the White House before officers shot him dead. The exchange injured a bystander, triggered a lockdown across the complex and forced reporters to take cover.

World. (Agency)

Panic and confusion unfolded live on camera outside the White House after journalists reporting from the North Lawn were forced to duck for cover and run to safety when gunfire suddenly erupted near a nearby security checkpoint. Several dramatic visuals from the scene quickly went viral on social media, capturing exactly how the reporters reacted to the incident outside the White House complex on Saturday evening.

One widely shared video posted by FaytuksNetwork on X showed a television reporter calmly continuing his live report about Donald Trump and Republican support moments before gunfire rang out nearby. The journalist finished his sentence before visibly reacting, adjusting his tie and earpiece while looking around in confusion as the situation escalated.

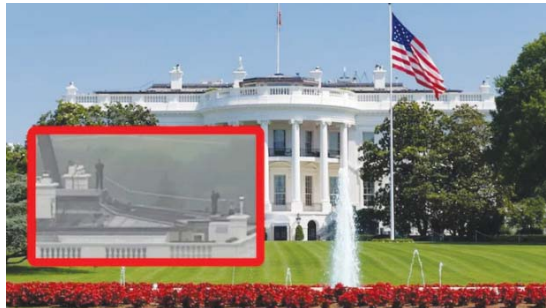
Another viral clip showed ABC News

correspondent Selina Wang and other reporters scrambling for safety after hearing what witnesses described as 15 to 30 rapid gunshots near the White House grounds. Wang later said she had been filming a social media report from the White House North Lawn when the shooting began. "It sounded like dozens of gunshots. We were told to sprint to the press briefing room," she wrote on X.

A third video that went viral showed a reporter standing exposed and reacting to the sudden burst of gunfire by repeatedly asking, "What is that?" while several others nearby immediately ducked for cover.

The gunfire erupted after a man opened fire at a United States Secret Service checkpoint near 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, according to officials.

Authorities said the suspect approached the checkpoint carrying a firearm inside a bag before suddenly opening fire on officers stationed there. Secret Service personnel



immediately returned fire, fatally shooting the suspect during the exchange.

The gunman was later identified as 21-year-old Nesire Best. Preliminary reports

claimed he had been pacing suspiciously near the checkpoint shortly before the shooting. One bystander was also injured during the incident, though officials said it remains unclear whether the person was struck by bullets fired by the suspect or by responding officers.

The shooting triggered a swift security response across the White House complex, with armed Secret Service agents securing the North Lawn and escorting journalists into the White House briefing room.

President Trump, who was inside the White House residence at the time, remained safe during the incident.

Federal authorities, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), have launched an investigation into the suspect's motive and the circumstances surrounding the attack.

21-year-old Nasire Best identified as White House shooter, believed he was Jesus

World. (Agency)

The gunman who opened fire at the Secret Service checkpoint outside the White House has been identified as Nasire Best, a report by the New York Post said.

While the gunman's exact motive remains unclear, reports indicate he was mentally disturbed and frequently flagged by Secret Service officials for loitering near entry checkpoints. Last year, he was arrested twice for committing involuntary crimes like obstructing vehicular traffic and entering a restricted White House pedestrian control post. When the Washington DC Police and the Secret Service officials detained him, he said that he wanted to get arrested as he was the modern-day incarnation of Lord Jesus Christ.

The investigators, hence, suspect that the attack stemmed from his mental instability. However, a further probe

into the incident is presently underway to ascertain whether a political motive lies behind the attack.

Earlier, a court order was issued against Best to stay away from the White House premises. However, the 21-

took out a gun and fired a few shots that hit at least one bystander, who suffered serious injuries.

However, officials from the Secret Service's uniformed division quickly neutralised him by returning fire in a barrage. Best was injured and was taken to the hospital, where the doctors declared him dead.

WE WILL UPDATE PEOPLE FURTHER, SAYS FBI DIRECTOR KASH PATEL

Talking about the incident, Kash Patel, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), said that the officials are presently investigating the case and all the details will be shared with the people once they come out.



year-old reportedly violated the order. On May 24 (as per Indian Standard Time), Secret Service officials spotted Best, who was appearing at 17th St. Northwest, behaving strangely. He

"FBI is on the scene and supporting Secret Service responding to shots fired near White House grounds - we will update the public as we're able," Patel said, through a post on X.

Second Ebola treatment centre torched in Congo, 18 suspected patients flee

TEGUCIGALPA. (Agency)

Tensions are escalating in northeastern Congo as fear and anger over the Ebola outbreak spill into violence, with two treatment facilities attacked within days and health workers struggling to contain the spread of the virus.

In the mining town of Mongbwalu, enraged residents stormed a medical facility late Friday and set fire to a treatment tent used for Ebola patients. The structure, operated by humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders, was part of a hospital treating suspected and confirmed infections, AP reported.

The attack triggered chaos inside the facility, forcing patients and staff to flee. While no injuries were immediately reported, hospital officials said 18 people suspected of

carrying the virus escaped during the panic and remain missing. Hospital director Dr. Richard Lokudi condemned the incident, warning that the disappearance of suspected cases



could worsen transmission in surrounding communities.

The violence followed another attack a day earlier in another town, Rwampara, where an Ebola treatment

centre was burned after local families were prevented from retrieving the body of a man believed to have died from the disease.

Health authorities say Ebola victims remain highly infectious after death, making traditional funeral rituals a major source of transmission. Efforts by officials and aid agencies to enforce controlled burials have increasingly clashed with local customs, fuelling resentment among residents.

On Saturday, authorities carried out a tightly guarded communal burial for Ebola victims in Rwampara. Armed police and soldiers surrounded the cemetery as Red Cross teams in protective suits buried sealed coffins, while grieving relatives watched from a distance.

Iran has agreed in principle to give up its highly enriched uranium stockpile in broader peace talks with the United States. The move could unlock a wider deal on hostilities, enrichment limits and frozen assets.

World. (Agency)

Iran has agreed to give up its stockpile of highly enriched uranium as part of a broader peace agreement being negotiated with the United States to end the ongoing West Asia conflict, two US officials told The New York Times.

The development came after US President Donald Trump announced that Washington and Tehran were close to finalising a deal aimed at ending hostilities and reopening the Strait of Hormuz. While Trump did not disclose the specifics of the proposed

arrangement, US officials told the newspaper that Tehran had agreed in principle to relinquish its stockpile of near-weapons-grade uranium.

However, the officials said the understanding remains broad at this stage, with the exact mechanism for disposing of the uranium yet to be negotiated. Detailed discussions on how Iran would transfer, dilute, or otherwise neutralise the material are expected to take place in a later round of nuclear talks once the broader agreement is formally reached.

The reported concession marked a major shift in negotiations, especially after Iranian sources recently claimed that Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei had directed that the uranium stockpile should not be sent out of the country.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran currently possesses nearly 400 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 per cent purity, a level close to weapons-grade. Israeli officials have repeatedly argued that the stockpile could

potentially be refined further to produce material for multiple nuclear bombs.

The issue had emerged as a key sticking point in the negotiations. Iranian negotiators had reportedly pushed to postpone any commitment on the uranium stockpile until a later phase of talks. But



US officials said Washington has insisted that Tehran must make at least a preliminary commitment in the initial agreement, warning that failure to do so could lead to the collapse of talks and a resumption of military operations.

The NYT report also said American military

planners had in recent days prepared options to target Iran's uranium reserves, much of which is believed to be stored underground at the Isfahan nuclear facility. The site had previously been struck by US Tomahawk missiles last year. Among the options reportedly discussed was the use of bunker-busting bombs to destroy the buried stockpile.

At one stage, Trump also considered approving a joint US-Israeli commando operation to seize the uranium stockpile after Iran regained access to the material following earlier strikes, the newspaper claimed. The operation was ultimately not authorised due to the high risks involved.

One possible route under discussion mirrors the framework used during the 2015 nuclear agreement negotiated under former US President Barack Obama, when Iran transferred large portions of its enriched uranium stockpile to Russia. Another option could involve reducing the enrichment level to make the uranium unusable for weapons purposes.

Protesters clash with police after an anti-government rally in Serbia's capital

BELGRADE. (Agency)

Clashes erupted between groups of protesters and riot police after a huge anti-government rally on Saturday in the Serbian capital of Belgrade by tens of thousands of opponents of the country's autocratic President Aleksandar Vucic.

While the rally at a central square in Belgrade passed peacefully, groups of young assailants later clashed with riot police, throwing flares, rocks and bottles at police cordons. Police responded with pepper spray as they charged forward to disperse them.

The groups, including apparent soccer hooligans, rolled trash cans into the streets as shield-carrying riot police tried to surround them. Police parked anti-riot vehicles in a central Belgrade area to block the demonstrators from returning and the violence soon ended. Police said 23 people were detained.

Protests have shaken Vucic



Crowds of protesters earlier on Saturday streamed into central Belgrade, many carrying banners and wearing T-shirts inscribed with the "Students win" motto of the youth movement which organized the gathering. Columns of cars drove into Belgrade from other Serbian towns earlier in the day.

Vucic has sought to curb the mass demonstrations that have shaken his hard-line rule in the Balkan country. Big crowds on Saturday suggested the dissent persists more than a year after protests first started to demand accountability for a train station tragedy in Serbia's north in November 2024 that killed 16 people.

Serbia's state railway company on Saturday canceled all trains to and from Belgrade, in an apparent bid to stop at least some people from coming from other parts of the country. The president said in a video on Instagram on Saturday that protesters "have shown their violent nature and that they cannot stand political opponents." Vucic, who was on his way to China for a state visit, added that "the state is functioning and will continue to work in line with the law."