

6 Bengaluru cops suspended after explosives found near PM Modi's convoy route

New Delhi.(Agency)

►Six policemen were suspended after two gelatin sticks were found during security checks ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bengaluru visit. The discovery has triggered an inquiry, while BJP leader BY Vijayendra called it a serious security lapse.

Six police personnel have been suspended in connection with the recovery of gelatin sticks near the route of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Bengaluru earlier this month, officials said on Sunday. The suspensions were ordered by the Superintendent of Police, Bengaluru South (Ramanagara), pending completion of an enquiry into the incident, which has triggered concerns over a possible security lapse during the Prime Minister's May 10 visit.

According to police officials, the gelatin sticks were discovered during routine security sanitisation and checking operations conducted ahead of PM Modi's arrival. Deputy Inspector General of Police (Central Range), Bengaluru,



said two gelatin sticks were found lying near a footpath on the outskirts of Bengaluru, around three kilometres away from the main event venue that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's arrival, during the checking, two gelatin sticks were found on the side of the footpath, nearly 3 kms away from the main venue where PM Modi was scheduled to arrive. Further investigation is underway," the DIG said. Officials said the six policemen have been placed under suspension until the enquiry is completed. Police have launched a detailed probe to determine how the explosive material ended up near the Prime Minister's route and whether there was any deliberate attempt to compromise security arrangements. Minister was scheduled to visit. The suspensions come days after at least two gelatin sticks were recovered near an event venue ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on the outskirts of Bengaluru on May 10, triggering a major security scare and an intensive police probe.

Major ACB Crackdown in Gandhinagar: Assistant Engineer of Prantij Municipality Caught Red-Handed Accepting ₹45,000 Bribe

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Mekan

Gandhinagar. In a major anti-corruption operation in Gujarat, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has arrested an Assistant Engineer posted at Prantij Municipality while allegedly accepting a bribe of ₹45,000 in cash. The accused, identified as Rajdeepsinh Shambhuji Chavda, was caught red-handed by the Gandhinagar ACB team during a trap operation conducted on May 25, 2026. What Was the Case About? According to official information, the com-



plainant — described as a vigilant citizen — had installed two Water ATM Machines in the Prantij Municipality area under a tender-based project. After completion of the work, the complainant approached the municipality to get the project bill approved.

It is alleged that Assistant Engineer Rajdeepsinh Chavda demanded a percentage-based "commission" of ₹45,000 in exchange for clearing the payment bill. ACB Trap Operation The complainant was unwilling to pay the bribe and therefore approached the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), which immediately initiated legal action and planned a trap operation. Key Details of the Operation: Date of Trap: May 25, 2026 Location: Public road near Karmayogi Bhavan, Gandhinagar Bribe Amount: ₹45,000 cash According to

ACB officials, as soon as the accused engaged in explicit conversation regarding the bribe and accepted the cash amount from the complainant, the ACB team moved in and arrested him on the spot. The entire bribe amount was recovered during the operation. Charges Against the Accused Authorities stated that the accused abused his position as a government servant and committed criminal misconduct under anti-corruption laws. A formal case has been registered, and further investigation is currently underway.

'Death Row Killer' Finally Nabbed After 22 Years: Ahmedabad Crime Branch Arrests Fugitive Murder Convict

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Mekan

Ahmedabad In a major breakthrough, the Ahmedabad Crime Branch has arrested a dreaded fugitive criminal who had been absconding for nearly 22 years after jumping parole. The accused, identified as Satish alias Bhikhu Rupareliya, was previously sentenced to death in a horrifying 1994 murder case that had shocked the entire city. The Chilling 1994 Murder Case According to police records, Satish Rupareliya and his associate Rajan Panchal lured prominent cloth merchant Arvind Shah into a trap by promising him high-quality textile goods at unusually cheap rates. The victim was



taken on Satish's scooter to Neelam Hotel in Shahibaug, where the two accused allegedly murdered him in a brutal manner. After killing the businessman, the accused looted cash and gold ornaments from him. In an attempt to erase his identity and mislead investigators, they allegedly severed the victim's head from the body and dumped it in the Adalaj area. The gruesome nature of the crime had sent shockwaves across Ahmedabad at the time. Death Sentence Later Converted to Life Imprison-

ment Following an intensive investigation, police arrested both accused. In the year 2000, a Sessions Court awarded death penalty to Satish Rupareliya and Rajan Panchal considering the brutality of the crime. However, in 2001, the Gujarat High Court commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment. Parole Jump in 2004 The case took a dramatic turn in 2004 when Satish Rupareliya was granted temporary parole from jail. Instead of returning to prison, he disappeared and remained underground for years, constantly evading police detection. Linked to Fake Currency Racket Police records further reveal that in 2008, Satish's name surfaced again

in a serious counterfeit currency case registered under Dariyapur Police Station limits. He was allegedly involved in circulation of fake Indian currency notes worth ₹20,000. Since then, he had reportedly been living under changing identities to avoid arrest. Crime Branch Finally Tracks Him Down Ahmedabad Crime Branch officials stated that teams had been continuously monitoring absconding convicts and hardened criminals. Based on precise intelligence inputs and technical surveillance, officers finally managed to trace and arrest Satish alias Bhikhu Rupareliya. Police officials described the arrest as a significant achievement,

Don't take it sentimentally: SC rejects CBI probe plea against Cockroach party

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to urgently hear a plea seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the "Cockroach Janta Party", the satirical online campaign that took shape after Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant's courtroom remarks earlier this month.

The petition, moved by Advocate Raja Choudhary, accuses individuals linked to the movement of commercially exploiting oral observations made during Supreme Court hearings, according to Bar and Bench. It also called for an investigation into alleged fake advocates and forged law degrees connected to certain persons associated with the campaign.

But when the matter was mentioned before a Bench led by the CJI and comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and VM Pancholi, the court refused to treat it as a matter requiring immediate intervention. "There is no such grave urgency. We will see," the CJI observed after lawyers pressed for urgent listing. During the exchange, Advocate NK Goswami argued that the campaign was harming the dignity and image of the judiciary. The Bench, however, indicated that the issue was being overplayed. "Don't take it so sentimentally," the CJI told the counsel.

The CJP recently came under scrutiny after remarks attributed to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant during a May 15 hearing triggered controversy. The comments, reportedly referring to "cockroaches" and "parasites", surfaced while the court was hearing a plea linked to the senior designation of a lawyer.



No Bakrid sacrifice at public places, no road blockade for namaz: Yogi Adityanath

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed Bakrid preparedness with officials and issued statewide directions on sacrifice, namaz and security. The meeting also expanded the agenda to public grievances, Ganga Dussehra arrangements and action against illegal activities.

Lucknow.(Agency)

Yogi Adityanath on Sunday directed officials across Uttar Pradesh to ensure strict compliance with law and order measures ahead of Bakrid, making it clear that animal sacrifice at public places will not be permitted and there will be zero tolerance towards the sacrifice of prohibited animals.

Chairing a high-level law-and-order and administrative review meeting via video conference, the Chief Minister instructed district administrations to allow sacrifices only at pre-designated locations and said that no new traditions should be encouraged during the festival. He also issued clear instructions that namaz should be offered only at traditional sites and no permission should be granted for blocking roads for prayers under any circumstances.

The Chief Minister further directed officials to ensure proper disposal of waste generated after sacrifices, maintain a ban on open sale of meat and take strict action against illegal slaughterhouses. He added that even legal slaughterhouses must not keep animals beyond their prescribed capacity.

He asked authorities to strengthen security arrangements, sanitation and electricity supply during the festival period. Flag marches in sensitive areas and continuous foot patrols around religious places were also ordered.

Interacting with officials from sensitive districts including Aligarh, Bijnor, Saharanpur, Rampur and Sambhal, the Chief Minister directed them to study incidents from previous years, identify potential troublemakers and take preventive action wherever required.

WEEKLY CHAUPALS FOR PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

The Chief Minister announced that weekly chaupals would now be organised at every development block level to address public grievances on the spot. Issues related to revenue disputes, domestic violence, illegal extortion and complaints that remain unregistered at the police station level will be taken up during these chaupals. Eligible people deprived of government welfare schemes will also be linked with such schemes.



Terrorism an ecosystem, Pakistan-based networks still active: NSA Doval to Rubio

►Marco Rubio met Ajit Doval and S Jaishankar in Delhi to advance talks held with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The discussions centred on counter-terror concerns, defence co-production, technology transfer and wider India-US

New Delhi.(Agency)

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met National Security Advisor Ajit Doval in New Delhi on Sunday, with India conveying strong concerns over Pakistan-based terror networks and warning that terrorism was "not just an ideology but an entire ecosystem". According to sources, Doval told Rubio that terror infrastructure operating from Pakistan remained continuously active and that instability across the Afghanistan-South Asia region continued to pose serious security concerns. Sources said Doval underlined



focused merely on remaining vigilant against terror threats, but was increasingly moving towards an "action mode" approach in dealing with terrorism and

Regional security, counter-terrorism cooperation and strategic coordination in the Indo-Pacific and South Asian region figured prominently in the discussions, officials said.

The two sides also discussed expanding India-US defence cooperation, with a focus on technology transfer, joint development and co-production initiatives under the India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET).

Officials described the defence push as part of a broader strategic shift aimed at positioning India not merely as a defence

manufacturing partner in advanced technologies.

Rubio later held a bilateral meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at Hyderabad House, where both sides reviewed cooperation across trade, technology, artificial intelligence, supply chains, defence and energy sectors. After the meeting, Rubio said India-US ties "have not lost momentum" and expressed confidence that relations between the two countries would become stronger in the coming years. "India-US relations have not lost momentum India-US relations will come out much stronger in the coming

News box

Family harassed with 200+ threat calls, OTP spam, says bank executive in Gurgaon

GURGAON.(Agency)

A senior executive of a private bank and his family were subjected to more than 200 abusive calls, WhatsApp messages, OTP spam alerts and threats over several days. According to an FIR registered at Cyber Crime East police station in Gurgaon Sector 43, the harassment — at the hands of unknown persons posing as loan recovery agents — began after the banker started “receiving repeated calls enquiring about an unknown employee who allegedly took a loan”, the banker alleged. The complainant said the women members of the family were subjected to vulgar verbal abuse.

The complainant told police that he informed the callers he had no knowledge of the person or the alleged loan account and requested them not to contact him again. However, the callers continued contacting several members of his family throughout the day and night.

The callers misused delivery service platforms and third-party numbers linked to Blinkit and Swiggy to bypass blocked numbers and continue contacting the family. According to police, the situation escalated after the accused allegedly sent photographs of the complainant’s family members and children through WhatsApp and other online platforms, “raising concerns over privacy and safety”. Police said the complainant and his family collectively received “more than 200 calls through normal cellular networks and WhatsApp calls”. Whenever one number was blocked, calls allegedly started coming from different numbers.

The callers were accused of using abusive and obscene language during calls and messages and attempting to intimidate the family. The FIR said that “the accused also flooded the family’s phones with OTP and spam messages from platforms such as Zepeto, Allen, Licious, EatSure, Physics Wallah and Lenskart in an attempt to mentally harass us.”

A year gone, roads in these Noida sectors still wait for repairs

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Residents of several Noida sectors, including 41, 71 and 122, have raised concerns over the deteriorating condition of roads and related infrastructure, saying the problems have persisted for nearly a year. Complaints were sent to Noida Authority over a range of issues, from pothole-ridden stretches to inadequate drainage systems. Rajiv Ajmani, a resident of J Block in Sector 41, submitted a plea urging officials to immediately repair a stretch of severely damaged road from house numbers J-47 to J-77. Residents claim over a dozen potholes have come up on this stretch, leading to accidents and injuries, especially for cyclists. Ajmani said that the problem has persisted for over six months, with no repairs conducted. As monsoon nears, the problem will only worsen if the stretch is not repaved, he said.

RWA general secretary of PK Abadi Block Bhushan Sharma said that patchwork repairs have begun on the main road in Sector 122 after nearly a year. So far, only eight to 10 patches have been fixed, Sharma added.

Sanjay Shukla, the RWA general secretary of Shiv Shakti Apartments, said that roads in Sector 71 are regularly broken and waterlogged. “Road repairs have not been carried out in our sector for a long time. As a result, potholes posing accident threats are a concern here,” Shukla said. Other issues highlighted included waste gathering along roadsides and unauthorised parking taking over seven vacant lots across four blocks in the sector. Shukla said broken tiles and toilets are also in urgent need of repairs. Drains have recently been constructed without proper slopes, leading to waterlogging concerns, he added. Officials said resurfacing work has been delayed due to the unavailability of bitumen. Namita Chaubey from Noida Highrise Federation, 100x sectors, echoed these sentiments and said work would commence once materials are available. “Till then, temporary repairs will be undertaken,” Chaubey added.

E-ricks on wrong side turn this Ghaziabad stretch into a daily traffic mess

Noida.(Agency)

Residents and commuters express growing frustration over the traffic chaos caused by e-rickshaws travelling in the wrong direction on PWD road no. 70, particularly near New Seemapuri and Dilshad Garden DTC depot. The problem is especially severe on the stretch from Bharat Mata Chowk to the drain near Agarwal Sweets.

They have written to the special commissioner of police (traffic), pointing out that e-rickshaws—especially their wrong-side movement on the busy Shukra Bazaar (Friday Market)—are causing severe traffic jams. Around 200 to 300 e-rickshaws use this route every day. “We are witnessing frequent near-misses, head-on collisions, and altercations between motorists and e-rickshaw drivers,” said Pradeep Gupta, a resident. He emphasised the urgent need for action, calling for a



dedicated traffic enforcement initiative on the problematic route. Residents also said that police presence is insufficient during peak hours, with officers often arriving only after traffic jams have already built up. According to Rakesh Singh, a regular commuter on the stretch, “Encroachments by local shopkeepers further complicate matters, as limited sidewalk space forces pedestrians to walk in the roadway, raising safety concerns for children, senior citizens, and women.”

Among the key demands are the deployment of permanent traffic police personnel at critical intersections, installation of barricades and clear signage, and strict enforcement of traffic regulations, including fines for violators.

Marriage offer rejected thrice, man attacks girl’s family, kills her mother

GURGAON.(Agency)

A man, whose marriage proposal was rejected thrice, allegedly climbed on to the terrace of a house in Harola and stabbed a family in their sleep, killing a 40-year-old woman and grievously injuring her husband and two daughters.

Police said the accused, enraged after the family repeatedly refused his proposal for the elder daughter, struck around 1.30am on Sunday before roaming the building with a knife and shouting at anyone who came near.

The attack took place on the terrace of a four-storey building in Sector 5, where the family had been sleeping. Sanju Devi died after being taken to a private hospital in Sector 27. Her husband, Surendra Sharma (43), and daughters Jyoti (20) and Julie (17) are undergoing treatment. According to police, the accused, Harpal (26), lives in the same area and runs an AC repair shop nearby. “Initial inquiry shows the attack resulted from an alleged love affair. Over the past year, Harpal sent a marriage proposal for



Jyoti more than thrice, but her family rejected it each time,” said Manisha Singh, ADCP. Police said Jyoti’s marriage was fixed elsewhere, but the alliance collapsed after Harpal allegedly

created a scene. “He proposed again and began pressuring the family to agree, but they refused. It appears he attacked them in that rage,” Singh said. Sanju was stabbed multiple times in the throat.

Surendra, who tried to save the family, was attacked on the left side of his neck. Jyoti suffered a stab wound to the shoulder, while Julie was injured on the leg. “The girls raised an alarm, but by then Sanju had already been stabbed repeatedly,” the officer said. The family lived on rent in the building, where Surendra worked as caretaker and also as a carpenter. Jyoti worked in a factory as a tailor. The building, owned by Rajkumar, has more than 100 rooms. Harpal had earlier lived there, but had recently shifted to his shop.

Police said he reached the terrace by climbing through an adjoining house and crossing over from its roof. After the attack, residents said, he remained in the building compound for some time, waving the knife and shouting.

Three police teams have been formed to trace him. “We are in the process of registering an FIR. CCTV footage is being scanned and his criminal record is being checked,” the ADCP said.

Gurgaon swelters through warm nights as intense heat set to persist till May 28

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The city continued to reel under intense heat on Sunday as maximum temperatures crossed 42 degrees Celsius at several locations, with India Meteorological Department (IMD) warning that heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are likely to persist across Haryana till May 27. According to IMD’s Chandigarh centre, Gurgaon AWS recorded a maximum temperature of 41.7 degrees Celsius on Sunday, while Gurgaon KVK station recorded 42.3 degrees Celsius. NorthCap University station logged 43.1 degrees Celsius, among the highest readings in the NCR region. Night temperatures also remained high. Gurgaon KVK station recorded a minimum temperature of 27.5°C, while NorthCap University station recorded 26.7°C.

The weather department said Haryana’s average maximum temperature rose by 1.7°C compared to Saturday and remained 2.5°C above normal. Sirsa was the hottest place in the state at 46°C, followed by Rohtak at 45.3°C and Bopani in Faridabad at 44.8°C.

Neighbouring districts also recorded high temperatures on Sunday. Nuh logged 43.5°C, Hajjar 42.3°C, Mahendragarh 42.5°C and Karnal 42.8°C.

IMD has forecast a further rise of 2-4°C in maximum temperatures over the next four days. A fresh western disturbance expected from May 28 may lead to a dip of 3-5°C next week. The weather department has forecast heatwave to severe heatwave conditions at isolated places in Haryana between May 25 and May 27. Thunderstorms, lightning, dust storms and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph are likely at some places on May 28, 29 and 30. This is likely to offer some relief from the prolonged heat spell. Private weather forecaster Navdeep Dahiya also said heatwave conditions are likely to continue across Delhi-NCR and Haryana till May 28, with daytime temperatures expected to remain between 43°C and 46°C.

Despite the intense daytime heat, Haryana’s average minimum temperature declined by 0.8°C compared to the previous day.

Rapido passenger among two killed in hit-and-run road crashes

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Two people died in separate hit-and-run accidents. A 26-year-old man died while undergoing treatment after a Rapido bike he was travelling on was allegedly hit from behind by an unidentified four-wheeler near Bristol Chowk on Golf Course Road early Friday morning.

The deceased was identified as Sujoe Chaudhary, who was working here. The Rapido bike rider, identified as Kalicharan, also sustained injuries in the accident and was taken to Max Hospital, Sector 43. According to the complaint submitted to DLF Phase 1 police station by Sushant Dutta, cousin of the deceased and a resident of Faridabad, the family received information about the accident around 4 am. Dutta stated that his maternal aunt informed him over phone that Sujoe met with an accident while travelling towards his room in Gurgaon and requested him to reach the hospital. On reaching Max Hospital, Dutta was informed by the doctors about the victim’s death during the treatment while the bike rider was admitted in the Emergency Ward.

Dutta later met the injured Rapido rider, Kalicharan, in the Emergency Ward. According to the complaint, Kalicharan told him that Sujoe booked his Rapido bike bearing registration number RJ05BO3536 from Iffco Chowk and they were proceeding towards DLF Phase 1.

After crossing the Bristol Chowk red light and entering Golf Course Road, an unidentified four-wheeler allegedly struck the bike from behind, following which he lost consciousness. Police said information regarding the accident was received at the police station around 7 am through an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) on May 22, 2026. Acting on the information, ASI Manoj along with Constable Pradeep reached Max Hospital and collected the medico-legal records, death summary and related documents from the Emergency Ward.

Police shifted the body to the local mortuary for the autopsy. During investigation, police also collected the MLC of injured rider Kalicharan. According to the FIR, doctors marked him as “LAMA” (Left Against Medical Advice).

Following examination of the complaint,

Taps sputter, tempers rise amid blazing heat, erratic water supply hits 50 homes in Gurgaon Sector 28

Noida.(Agency)

More than 50 households in Sector 28 have complained of erratic water supply over the past month, with some lanes not receiving any supply for the past three days amid rising temperatures in the city.

Harsh Jaidka, a resident, said the situation has deteriorated this summer despite repeated complaints to authorities. “Till last year, the situation was manageable. There were supply issues, but they were under control. This year, the system has failed to cope with the increasing demand,” he said. Residents claimed that households get water supply only for 15 to 20 minutes. In several parts of the sector, they alleged, there has been no supply at all for the past three days. “Today is the third consecutive day that

we have not received any water. Earlier, underground tanks used to fill automatically during supply hours, but proper water flow has not been seen for



over a month,” Jaidka added. Residents said rapid commercialisation in the area over the past two years has significantly increased water demand. They also

alleged that potable water is being used openly at construction sites despite norms requiring treated or tanker water for such activities. “Earlier, one plot had one family. Now, in many places, builder floors and commercial establishments have increased water demand several times. Further, there is no monitoring of water use at construction sites,” another resident said. With supply remaining irregular, many households said they have started depending on private water tankers for daily needs. “Dependence on tankers has increased expenses, with rates ranging from Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,500 per tanker. We have raised the matter with officials several times, but there has been no resolution so far,” said the RWA president, Harinder Anand.

Cheap jars, lookalike labels: Illegal RO units thrive as groundwater level sinks in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

In Basai, Sector 9-10, Dhankot, Sector 95 and Sector 86, operators running illegal RO units gave almost the same estimate — each supplies nearly 700 to 800 water jars every day. Yet, no agency has a clear count of how many such units operate across the city. A TOI ground investigation found a sprawling, decentralised network of illegal RO plants extracting groundwater through borewells, filtering it through basic setups and distributing water across the city with little oversight. Operating from residential plots, warehouses and small sheds tucked behind closed gates, these units supply 20-litre jars and bottled water to homes, offices, shops, roadside stalls and local events. Inside a unit in Basai, blue storage tanks lined damp walls as pipes carried groundwater directly from a borewell into filtration systems. Workers moved rapidly between rinsing, refilling and stacking jars for dispatch. Outside, a small goods vehicle waited in a narrow lane for deliveries. “On an average day, we send out 600-700 jars. In summer, the number goes higher,” said one operator. A similar setup was visible at a unit in Sector 10, where open wiring, waterlogged floors and stacks of jars marked a continuous cycle of filling and

dispatch. In Dhankot, pickup vans and tankers moved in and out of clusters of such units throughout the day.

Delivery workers described a tightly organised supply chain operating across the city. “We start early in the morning. First supply goes to houses, then shops and offices. By afternoon, we refill again,” said Mahesh, a delivery worker in Dhankot. “We cover different sectors across the city.” The network extends beyond water jars. At roadside stalls and kiosks visited by TOI, bottles labelled as packaged drinking water brands such as “Bilseri” and other lookalike labels were openly sold without any clear traceability. Vendors said crates arrive through local distributors and customers rarely question authenticity, particularly during peak summer demand. In several cases, bottles appeared loosely sealed or refilled, raising concerns over the circulation of potentially fake packaged drinking water through Gurgaon’s informal supply chain. “We also supply small bottles. These go to local shops, roadside vendors and events,” said Kamlesh Singh, pointing to stacks of crates inside one of the units. Most of these operations function without visible approvals or signage. At several sites, groundwater appeared to be pumped

directly into storage tanks before undergoing basic RO filtration.

“Water comes from borewells. We filter and send it out. That’s how it works everywhere here,” said Sanjay Lal, another operator. Price remains the



biggest factor driving demand. Operators said branded water jars cost significantly more, while their supply ranges between Rs 60 and Rs 90 per jar. “People prefer cheaper supply,” said Vikas Chabra, a supplier. Another worker added, “Customers mostly want regular delivery. They don’t ask many questions.”

At the retail end too, traceability remains weak. “We get crates from suppliers. Customers don’t really check, especially during summer,” said Mohan Sahay, who

runs a roadside stall. Officials acknowledged that enforcement exists but said action is largely complaint-driven. “Action against illegal RO and bottling units is a continuous exercise. In our Manesar area, we had around five such units earlier, all of which have been sealed. At present, we have not received any fresh complaints nor found any such unit during regular inspections,” said Siddharth Bhargava, regional officer (Gurgaon South), Haryana State Pollution Control Board. Bhargava said authorities are also conducting a wider crackdown on illegal groundwater extraction. “Only borewells with valid permission from the state water authority are allowed, and others are being sealed through joint enforcement involving multiple departments,” he said. However, officials admitted there is no consolidated data on how many illegal RO units are operating or how many are shut every year, as enforcement responsibilities are divided across multiple agencies. The scale of groundwater extraction linked to such operations is substantial. A TERI assessment estimated the city has around 9,140 registered borewells, but over 15,000 illegal ones, with the actual number likely much higher.

Missing Girl, 12, Raped, Murdered In J&K, Body Found 200 Metres From Home

A 12-year-old girl was raped and murdered in Budgam district, triggering protests and SIT probe.

Srinagar. (Agency)

A 12-year-old girl was allegedly raped and murdered in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district on Sunday. The body of the minor girl was found near 200 metres from her home. The incident has triggered protests and demands for justice and tracking down perpetrators.

The police investigation has been launched and prima facie, it appears to be a case of rape and murder. According to reports, the child went missing on Saturday evening at Galwanpora village. On Sunday morning, she was found dead in nearby fields.

"At around 7:15 am today, the body was recovered from a spot nearly 200 metres from her home. All medico-legal formalities were subsequently completed and prima facie, it appears to be a case of

rape and murder," said Hariprasad KK, SSP Budgam.

Police said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted to probe the case. The officer said the SIT is examining all possible angles to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the incident. Police have assured that the investigation will be conducted in a fair, transparent, and professional manner.

Locals have described the incident as horrific and deeply disturbing. The killing has sparked widespread outrage, with political leaders

demanding strict action against the culprits. National Conference leaders,

assured them of prompt justice.

"She left home around 4 PM for her religious class. We fail to understand how she went missing despite so many houses in the surrounding area," said a local elderly resident. "The killer should be caught immediately. We just want justice for the girl," he said, adding that the girl was carrying a Quran with her, which was later found nearby too.

Police have requested people not to circulate unverified information or indulge in speculation regarding the matter, as such actions may hamper the investigation and cause unnecessary distress.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has strongly

condemned the brutal murder of a young preteen girl in the Budgam district, describing the incident as "shocking and deeply distressing".

Expressing profound grief over the tragedy, the Chief Minister condemned the heinous act in the strongest possible terms and conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family.

"May she find place in Jannat," the Chief Minister said while expressing solidarity with the grieving family. The Chief Minister said the incident should serve as a moment of serious introspection for society at large. "While the appropriate agencies enquire into the circumstances of her murder, it's also fitting that we reflect on where we as a society are headed when our young children are not safe," he said.



including Education Minister Sakeena Yatoo, visited the bereaved family and

Short news

Father, son stabbed to death in UP's Kanpur road rage after bike collision



Kanpur. (Agency)

A minor bike collision in Kanpur turned fatal after a violent road rage clash left a father and his son dead and another son critically injured. The incident took place late Sunday night near Vrindavan Guest House on the Yashoda Nagar bypass under the Naubasta police station area. According to police, three men riding an Apache motorcycle collided with another bike, triggering a heated argument between the two groups. The dispute soon escalated into a violent attack.

A minor bike collision in Kanpur turned fatal after a violent road rage clash left a father and his son dead and another son critically injured. The incident took place late Sunday night near Vrindavan Guest House on the Yashoda Nagar bypass under the Naubasta police station area.

According to police, three men riding an Apache motorcycle collided with another bike, triggering a heated argument between the two groups. The dispute soon escalated into a violent attack. Kanpur Police Commissioner said the accused have been identified. One of them reportedly works with Blinkit, while the other two are unemployed.

Zipline horror in Agra: 16-year-old plunges 45 feet to death before family's eyes

Srinagar. (Agency)

A 16-year-old boy fell 45 feet to his death during a zipline ride at Agra Chaupati, when the pulley lock allegedly snapped. Police said the zipline malfunctioned just moments after Kunal Agarwal had set off, causing him to fall barely 10 feet from the starting point.

Kunal, a resident of Firozabad, had travelled to Agra with his parents for a family outing. After visiting the Taj Mahal, the family was preparing to return home when Kunal repeatedly urged them to let him try the zipline attraction at Agra Chaupati, a popular hangout spot, in Tajnagri Phase-2.

Police said Kunal was excited as he stepped onto the zipline platform, while his parents and younger brother stood a short distance away watching him.

Seconds after he set off, the teenager suddenly plunged from the height, hitting a platform, before falling to the ground.

Panic spread through the area as bystanders and family members rushed to his aid before he was taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Based on a complaint by Kunal's father Pankaj Agarwal, a bangles trader, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Agra, Himanshu Gaurav said an FIR has been lodged against three people including the owner and the manager of the zipline operation in connection with the incident. He added that they found serious lapses in safety arrangements at the site.

Police said a technical inspection of the zipline equipment will be carried out as part of the investigation. Preliminary findings also suggested that the operators had failed to put adequate safety measures in place.

From tennis coach to online videos: Maharashtra ATS concludes 'lone wolf' attacker self-radicalised

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) investigating the "lone wolf" attack in Mira Road where Zaib Ansari (31), a US returned national, allegedly attacked two security guards last month has concluded that he was had been "self radicalised" from the internet and was not in touch with any else. The agency has found that he saw videos of some controversial preachers like Anwar Al-Awlaki, a radical American Muslim cleric of Yemeni descent linked to a series of terror globally.

The agency has also found that while in the US, he did tennis coaching for students and made money, he did not have a regular source of income in India. Apart from that he went through a divorce and staying alone and hence his landlord had asked him to leave as she did not want to give house



on rent to bachelors.

It was these factors coupled with the attacks on Palestine that drove him to some extreme content on the internet which radicalised him over the past six to eight months, an officer said.

The agency has found that apart from Al-Awlaki, Ansari would go through English videos of a London-based popular YouTuber, a Saudi-based Salafist preacher

and a Malaysia-based preacher in addition to literature from a Salafist website that they believe drove him to attack the two security guards.

"We were investigating if Zaib was in talks with any handlers from foreign countries. We have not found any evidence of that. Based on our probe, it appears he was self-radicalized after going through the online content," the officer said.

"In the US, he had seen lone wolf attacks being carried out at the behest of Islamic State (IS) and planned to do the same here. Hence following up in their steps, he left behind a note assuming he would be killed. When he survived, he came home and dressed in black waiting for the police to nab him," the officer said. He further told that he did not die by suicide as it was considered a sin.

Government to procure additional maize, jowar, sunflower

HYDERABAD. (Agency)

With the Centre yet to respond to its repeated requests to procure maize, jowar and sunflower, the Telangana government has decided to increase its purchase target to protect farmers from distress sales and announced enhanced fund allocation for the purpose.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has approved this move along with an additional allocation of Rs 1,867.77 crore, taking the total allocation for maize procurement to Rs 6,040.71 crore.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, Agriculture Minister Thummala Nageswara Rao said that maize cultivation had increased significantly during the 2025-26 Rabi season, pushing total production to 42.87 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) in the state. "To ensure farmers receive the minimum support



price (MSP), the government had already extended a guarantee of Rs 4,172.94 crore and has now approved an additional bank guarantee for procurement of another 6.53 LMT of maize," he said.

It may be mentioned here that Nageswara Rao recently met Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and urged the Centre to increase the crop procurement quota for the state. During their meeting, he highlighted the

challenges being faced by farmers in the state, including poor market prices, financial distress and procurement issues.

'Oppn enacting dramas'

In his press statement, Nageswara Rao said that 354 procurement centres had been established across the state and that 12.85 LMT of maize had already been procured from 2.33 lakh farmers. He pointed out that the previous BRS government spent only Rs 5,063 crore on maize procurement over 10 years, while the present government was spending nearly Rs 6,000 crore in a single season. Taking a swipe at opposition leaders, Nageswara Rao said some politicians were merely engaging in "political drama" by visiting farmers, while the Congress government was actually procuring.

Kadiyapulanka's famed nursery hub near Rajamahendravaram struggles with persistent garbage menace

Despite its international reputation for floriculture, waste dumping along highways, markets and canal stretches continues to mar the area, prompting calls for permanent beautification

RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM. (Agency)

Kadiyapulanka, internationally recognised for its sprawling nurseries and vibrant flower markets near Rajamahendravaram, continues to battle a decades-old garbage problem that is severely affecting its image as a premier horticulture destination.

Despite attracting visitors, traders and tourists from across the country, heaps of garbage along the four-lane national highway and canal stretches have become a major eyesore. The

foul smell emanating from waste dumps, especially near the village junction, flower market, bus stand and



canal ghats, has become a daily nuisance for commuters and pilgrims visiting the renowned Hari Hara

Maha Kshetram and nearby nurseries. Locals say the situation improves briefly whenever VIPs visit or media reports highlight the issue, but garbage piles soon return.

Areas near the statues of noted nursery farmer Palla Venkanna and former political leaders remain littered with waste, while stray pigs further worsen the unhygienic conditions.

Residents recalled that the area was once infamous for open defecation until strict sanitation measures introduced by former District Collector Satish Chandra brought significant improvement. However, indiscriminate dumping of garbage continues unchecked.

Citizens and environmental activists are now urging nursery farmers, donors and the Sir Arthur Cotton Nursery Farmers Association to take up permanent beautification initiatives. Proposals such as landscaped nursery stalls, canal-side greenery and selfie points are being suggested to transform the polluted stretches into attractive public spaces.

Ratnam Ayyappa, president of the Sir Arthur Cotton Nursery Farmers Association, said village elders and nursery farmers would jointly work towards finding a permanent solution to the garbage menace. He stressed the need for collective public cooperation to keep the identified areas free from waste dumping.

Securities Markets Code | Don't leave adjudication open to discretion

The proposed Securities Markets Code consolidates the three existing laws into a single legislative framework. There are good reasons for such a rationalisation. Consider this. The Securities and Exchange Board can initiate three types of proceedings—under Section 11B of the Sebi Act, resulting in preventive and remedial directions; enquiry proceedings, which could lead to suspension or cancellation of registration; and adjudication proceedings, which could culminate in the imposition of monetary penalties. Comparable provisions exist under the other two securities enactments as well. In practice, the same case often triggers parallel proceedings before different authorities within Sebi. Although these proceedings are legally independent, authorities lower in the institutional hierarchy generally tend to arrive at findings similar to those reached at higher levels. Conflicting findings remain possible, too. More fundamentally, the nature of the sanction is determined at the stage of initiating proceedings, before the gravity of the contravention is fully established. The SMC seeks to address these concerns by consolidating the multiple enforcement tracks into a single adjudicatory proceeding. An adjudicating officer, who may be anyone from a division chief or the chairperson, may determine the contravention first and then impose appropriate outcomes. The framework embeds proportionality and deterrence by requiring consideration of factors such as intent, duration and frequency of the contravention, unlawful gains, investor harm, impact on market integrity, conduct of the noticee before and after the contravention, precedents, and aggravating or mitigating circumstances. This is a significant improvement. Yet, the consolidation of proceedings also concentrates discretion in ways that may create new risks for consistency, predictability and credibility.

Under the earlier framework, monetary penalties could be imposed by a division chief, while more severe sanctions such as cancellation of registration or market restraints were generally imposed by a whole-time member. There was, thus, a broad correspondence between the seriousness of the contravention, the severity of the sanction and the rank of the authority imposing it. The SMC may enable subordinate legislation to prescribe the level of officer who may act as AO, depending on the case's gravity. Such calibration would strengthen institutional credibility and reinforce confidence in the outcomes. The SMC also departs from the earlier model under which adjudication procedures were prescribed through rules framed by the government. It instead proposes that procedures be specified through Sebi regulations. This risks collapsing the distinction between rule-making and enforcement, since the same authority would frame the norms, initiate proceedings, appoint AOs, and prescribe the adjudicatory process. Retaining government-made procedural rules would preserve a healthier institutional separation.

The more serious concern, however, lies in the architecture of enforcement discretion. Under Clause 20, the AO may impose one or more of five broad categories of measures: suspension or cancellation of registration, cease-and-desist directions, monetary penalties, disgorgement, and other appropriate directions. The code does not indicate when one remedy should be preferred over another, or when multiple remedies should be imposed.

India returns to its geopolitical centre

THE GREAT GAME: Challenges are enormous because the straying has accentuated fractures, distended relationships

REPORTS that Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin are coming to India in September to attend the BRICS summit are welcome — especially in the wake of the Quad foreign ministers' meeting this coming Monday, when US Secretary of State Marco Rubio plus the foreign ministers of Japan and Australia arrive in the capital. An India-Africa summit slated over the next few days has had to be unfortunately put off because the Ebola virus is rearing its head. At long last, India is returning to its own geopolitical centre. It may have taken Donald Trump's irrepressible fondness for Pakistan, the war in West Asia's knock on the economy and the potentially doomsday US-China cinch to focus the mind. At last it's happening — notwithstanding the lecturing by senior MEA official Sibi George about India's ancient civilisational heritage to a young Norwegian reporter because she asked a question that he entirely disapproved of. Fact is, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin and Lula da Silva and Cyril Ramaphosa and Narendra Modi are all going to be in the same room a few months from now — all leaders of China, Russia, Brazil, South Africa and India, the founder members of BRICS. The Quad foreign ministers' meeting is an indication that the long-delayed Quad summit could materialise soon.

It's a measure of how things have changed if only to remain the same, is the real story of India's foreign policy in the last 12 years, since PM Modi won power. India has deepened friendships with the US (these days on a bit of a roller-coaster), Israel and UAE, faced off with China on the cold, icy heights of Galwan, made friends with Pakistan and then punished it for continuing cross-border terrorism, sought to reinvent other parts of its neighbourhood (like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka) and gone Dutch in the Netherlands. As for Norway, we know by now that it's a six-letter Wordle you can rearrange nicely when you drop the 18th letter in the alphabet.

Not that a new international realignment is in the offing just because India is hosting the BRICS summit. The Trump visit to Beijing last week told us that China will continue to refuse to confront the Americans, because

America remains its largest trading partner. While Putin's visit to Beijing this week tells us that in the fourth year of his stalemated war with Ukraine, and with the help of leaky Western sanctions, Russia will continue to seek the stabilisation of key relationships, such as China and India. (Russia is keenly aware that China's economic ties with the US will limit Beijing's feelings for Moscow, no matter how much the two agree on other matters.) Let's call this the Age of Seeking New Friends and Influencing Peoples — even elites, who live on the right side of the railway track and are in the business of managing nations will understand the spirit that infuses multi-alignment. This is not a withdrawal from the world, like non-alignment was, but an even greater engagement. As India enters the 80th year of its



independence, it has understood that as a regional power that must make the best use of its circumstances, it is best suited to the pursuit of multiple relationships.

Not that India has not spoken its mind even when the tie with the former Soviet Union resembled an alliance. When Boris Pasternak won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1958 for Doctor Zhivago, it was Jawaharlal Nehru who led the charge for allowing him to travel to Sweden to receive the medal. (The Soviets didn't listen.) So many other examples come to mind. From Indira Gandhi's smiling retort to an American journalist who asked if India leant Left or Right, and she said "we stand

upright;" to Atal Bihari Vajpayee's invitation to Bill Clinton to India in 2000, only two years after the US had sanctioned India for going nuclear — the former US President spent five glorious days in India, being feted everywhere he went (and about five hours in Pakistan in a security bubble), enjoying himself so much that it didn't matter anymore who had punished whom and who had offered forgiveness. That's why the "coat-tail school of diplomacy", which proposes that you ally with a powerful power so that you avail of the benefits that come with being in its shadow — much like what Japan and ASEAN nations have done these past several decades — cannot work with India. The country is too vast, too different, too diverse, too messy to fit into one regimented framework. That's why the One District, One Cuisine policy in Uttar Pradesh (none of which are non-vegetarian), is bound to come a cropper. To take the food allegory a bit further, the BJP has understood that its beef bans in the North Indian states it rules cannot be imposed on its allies in North-East India.

That's why the return of PM Modi's foreign policy to its own geopolitical centre is welcome. The challenges are enormous because the straying has accentuated some fractures, distended some relationships and broken off others. It is equally true that the straying has taught us a valuable lesson, which is to trust, but verify. RSS leader Dattatreya Hosabale's exhortation to PM Modi to normalise ties with Pakistan — keep your borders stable, remain watchful, he is saying — is an essential part of the "trust, but verify" doctrine first enunciated by that all-time guru, Chanakya. (Like Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, stabilising borders was the first touchstone of Deng Xiaoping's foreign policy in the early 1980s; these gentlemen understood that a

calm periphery is a recipe for peace within.) The return of both BRICS and Quad is a good sign, because both are centres of stability. Sending a political player to Bangladesh is an expansion of that idea. Sweetening ties in Sonia Gandhi's mother country, Italy, was a tiny gesture worthy of that Italian philosopher, Machiavelli.

Now to restart the hard work of fixing the house within. Sending Sibi George home for an all-expenses-paid trip to Kerala to relook at how communities as different as Syrian Christians and Moplah Muslims and Malabar Hindu Nairs look at the same story might be a good beginning.

Limiting dams: Ecology finally shapes Himalayan policy

The Ganga, in particular, is an ecological, cultural and spiritual lifeline

INDIA's Himalayan policy may finally be catching up with geological reality. The Centre's decision to oppose new hydroelectric projects in the upper reaches of the Ganga basin marks a significant departure from the long-held belief that every river can be engineered into an energy asset. After years of ecological warnings and repeated disasters, the government has acknowledged that the fragile Alaknanda-Bhagirathi region cannot endlessly absorb the burden of aggressive infrastructure expansion. The shadow of the 2013 Kedarnath tragedy still looms large over Uttarakhand. Since then, the Himalayas have witnessed recurring landslides, glacial bursts, tunnel collapses and ground subsidence. Each calamity has reinforced what environmentalists and geologists have long argued: the young Himalayan ecosystem is inherently unstable and highly vulnerable to reckless construction activity. Hydropower may qualify as renewable energy, but in ecologically fragile mountains, it cannot automatically be called



sustainable. The Centre's affidavit before the Supreme Court reflects a welcome recognition that rivers are

more than channels of electricity generation. The Ganga, in particular, is an ecological, cultural and spiritual lifeline. Excessive damming disrupts sediment flow, biodiversity and the natural rhythm of the river, while tunnelling and blasting weaken already fragile slopes. The emphasis on maintaining environmental flows is therefore both scientifically sound and environmentally necessary.

This does not mean India can abandon its renewable energy ambitions. But climate goals cannot be pursued through projects that intensify ecological vulnerability and disaster risks. Uttarakhand's development model must move towards safer, decentralised and less intrusive alternatives rather than large-scale interventions that repeatedly test nature's limits. The Centre's shift offers an opportunity to redefine development in the Himalayas — as a commitment to balance energy needs with ecological survival. The mountains have issued enough warnings already.

The cockroach has spoken. India should listen

India's establishment has a habit of waiting for inconvenient energies to dissipate. But the cockroach is among the most resilient creatures

LET me tell you something about India that most people in positions of authority still refuse to accept: this country's youth is neither stupid nor silent. They are, in fact, ferociously, brilliantly, devastatingly articulate and when you insult them from the highest Benches of the land, they don't sulk. They organise. They satirise. And they may make you look like a fool in ways that no editorial, no press conference, and no prime-time debate ever could. Chief Justice Surya Kant, in an open court hearing, declared that "parasites" were attacking the system and then, with perhaps rightful and breathtaking condescension, compared unemployed youngsters to cockroaches — those who "don't get any employment or have any place in the profession" and who "start attacking everyone." Now, one presumes that a man who has presided over some of the most consequential constitutional matters in recent memory would possess, at minimum, the political instinct to avoid comparing an entire generation of struggling young Indians to insects.

The clarification that followed — that the CJI had been misquoted, that he was referring to those with fraudulent degrees, not the youth at large — landed with the grace of a courtroom adjournment that nobody asked for. The damage, as they say in South Delhi drawing rooms, had been done. But something rather magnificent had also begun.

Within six days of its launch on May 16, the Cockroach Janta Party had amassed over 16 million followers. Let

that number sit with you for a moment. Sixteen million. The CJP's founder Abhijeet Dipke told the Associated Press quite plainly: "It is the younger people who were actually very frustrated. They didn't have any outlet. They were really angry at the government." That sentence is worth printing on the front page of every newspaper in this country — not because it is revelatory,



but because it is so obvious and yet so consistently ignored by those who govern us.

India has a youth employment problem that is not a secret but is treated like one. Government data reveals an unemployment rate of nearly 10% among those aged 15

to 29, climbing to 13.6% in urban areas. More than half of Indian Gen Zs have reportedly postponed major life decisions — buying homes, starting families — because of economic anxiety. These are not abstract statistics. These are the young men and women who crammed for competitive exams only to discover that the papers had been leaked. Who graduated to find that the job market had moved on without them. Who scroll Instagram at midnight not for entertainment, but because there is genuinely nothing else to do.

And what did their Chief Justice call them? Cockroaches.

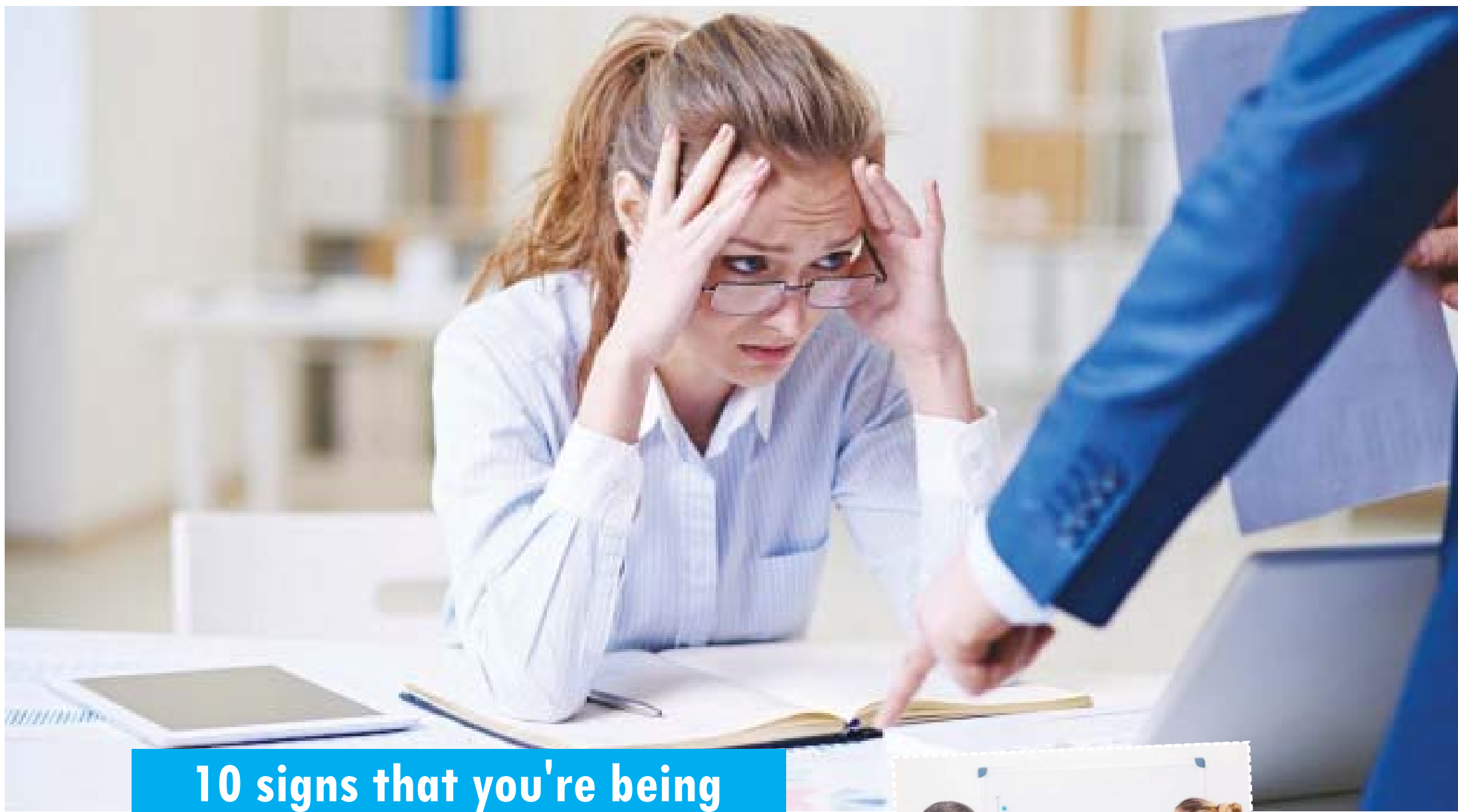
Well. You reap what you sow.

The genius of the Cockroach Janta Party is not merely that it is funny, though it undeniably is. Its genius lies in the alchemy of reclamation. The party calls itself the "Voice of the Lazy and Unemployed." Its satirical manifesto demands a ban on post-retirement Rajya Sabha seats for chief justices, 50% reservation for women in Parliament, and a 20-year ban on defecting legislators. These are not the demands of nihilists. These are the demands of people who have been paying attention — who understand the architecture of how power perpetuates itself in this country and who, in the language of memes and irony, are demanding accountability. Anurag Kashyap, Dia Mirza, Sonakshi Sinha, Kunal Kamra and the usual suspects have followed the CJP's Instagram page. You may roll your eyes at celebrity endorsement, and normally I would join you. But this is different. This is not brand

ambassadorship. This is a signal: that the sentiment animating the CJP resonates well beyond the campus and the hostel room. Predictably, the establishment's first instinct was suppression. The CJP's X account, which had gathered around 2,00,000 followers, was withheld in India. The response from Dipke? A new account, a poster reading "Cockroach is back," and the immortal line: "You thought you can get rid of us? Lol." If you needed any further evidence that this generation has absorbed India's political theatre and is now writing its own script, there it is. Now, before the usual brigade of credentialed commentators rushes to dismiss this as mere social media froth, let me offer a counter. Every significant political realignment in recent Indian history has had a cultural precursor. The Anna Hazare movement lived on social media before it hit the streets.

Movements do not arrive fully formed; they gather energy from precisely these kinds of cultural flashpoints.

The CJP may never file a nomination paper. It may never contest an election. But it has done something arguably more important: it has given a name, an identity, and a vocabulary to a generation's rage. Dipke — who is Dalit, and has faced casteist attacks online since that identity became public — has spoken of wanting the CJP to guide supporters towards concrete activism: filing RTIs, becoming politically engaged, refusing to be invisible. That is not the language of a meme page. That is the language of a movement. India's establishment has a well-practised habit of waiting for inconvenient energies to dissipate. Sometimes that strategy works. But the cockroach, as biology will confirm, is among the most resilient creatures on the planet. It survives conditions that would obliterate lesser species.



10 signs that you're being

Bullied at Work

Signs you are being bullied at your workplace and what you could do about it

While bullying is usually perpetrated by someone in a position of power and authority, peers and even subordinates are also known to engage in bullying. A bully (read: weak soul) is actually an insecure, paranoid, control freak. Their aim is to belittle and ultimately diminish their prey through persistent hostile and unnecessarily rude behaviour. Can you spot such a type at work? Here are 10 signs that you're being bullied at the office:

See obvious biasness

Others in your work group are receiving preferential treatment top projects, travel perks and free time. Meanwhile, you find that most of your requests along the same lines are denied without reasonable explanation.

Your progress goes unseen

Say you've been given a directive with certain objectives, an ultimate goal and a deadline. You work hard and with focus only to find out, that suddenly there's a change in direction on the project. Your progress is not celebrated or applied to the

new project, but not even taken into account.

All your decisions are questioned

So you are constantly bombarded by excessive micro-managing? You don't feel like your intuition or decisions are being trusted, and you can't explain why. Your boss and others hover over you much more than telling you what to do (and what not to do). You get the sense that you are wrongly perceived as incompetent and your decision-making capability is greatly reduced as a result.

You are socially alienated

All of a sudden, you're excluded from

meetings you once attended. Your colleagues tend to discuss work prior to your arrival and you are left with absolutely no clue what to do. Besides, you are not marked on important mails. Co-workers tend to avoid you and keep interaction to a minimum. You may also find that you're no longer invited to post work drinks with your teammates.

You often feel targeted

Often, when you make a comment, suggestion or disagree with someone's opinion, you're responded to with a plethora of responses by others. It doesn't matter whether you're right -the gang mentality is



Feedback is always provided in the form of criticism and delivered in a way to make you feel awful about yourself. There's no effort to provide guidance.

Presented unreasonable obstacles

So does the boss man purposely throw roadblocks in front of you to prevent you from successfully completing a project? Now, this is a major act of bullying.

How to deal?

Once you've come to the realisation that you're a victim of bullying -at work, or life - it's important to know what kind of recourse you have. Here are possible actions that you could take.

- Speak to a trusted authority in the organisation: A good start may be human resources. They should be able to help you understand, if you're actually being bullied. If it's determined that a bullying situation exists, they can also provide guidance on how to deal with it. Alternatively, you may feel more comfortable speaking with a higher authority senior colleague.
- Know your rights: If you feel that you're not being heard within your company, you might seek external counsel.
- Find another job: This should be a last resort. But sometimes it's not worth the fight -emotion ally and financially. Respect your self.
- Look for new employment with a company possessing a strong culture of integrity. Such companies have zero tolerance policies.

determined to prove you wrong.

Your health is failing

Mentally, you're drained and your energy is zapped. You're sleeping more and getting out of bed is a real task for you. Exercising and socialising with your folks is a chore. Bullying can lead to depression, anxiety, panic attacks and mood swings. There are physical symptoms such as increased blood pressure, rapid heart beat, and loss of appetite (or excessive eating).

Have experienced verbal spat

You're subjected to negative, abusive language -reprimanded often in front of the entire office. Verbal abuse can also be more subtle than loud insults. You may find that you are being joked around with in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable and small, and that too can be verbal bullying.

Your work is publicly diminished

Your dedication to your job is not acknowledged by your boss or they give credit to others (for your hard work) in a public setting such as a meeting.

Face unnecessary criticism

It seems that in the eyes of your boss, you are ineffective and unprofessional.

5 ways to break the ice at work

Making friends at work is good for you. Use these tips to start right when you join a new place or someone new joins you

According to years of research by the Gallup Organisation in Minneapolis, having an office friend results in the employee being seven times more likely to remain engaged in their job. It doesn't even have to be a best friend - Gallup found that even people who had a good friend at their workplace were more likely to be satisfied, increasing their productivity levels. Here are some ways to make sure you give yourself a chance to be a part of that world.

FIND THE MEETING POINT

Every office has a gathering point, where people hang out and chat, like at the coffee vending machine or water cooler. Figure out when the colleagues you'd like to break ice with hang out there, and make an effort to get there around the same time so that it gives you a chance to speak to them. Says IT professional Srilatha Bala, "I have two good friends at work because of those well-spent 4 pm coffee breaks, even though I am not fond of the drink."

OFFER A SNACK

The way to your colleague's heart is through his or her stomach. Akshit Paramasivam, HR manager at an IT firm in Chennai, says, "I paid



attention to my colleagues' dietary preferences - Jain, diabetic, etc, and offered them snacks I knew they'd like. It helped build camaraderie."

BE POSITIVE

No one likes to be around someone who is always serious, irritable or in a blue funk. Make sure you stay cheerful and communicate pleasantly with your colleagues whenever you can. Compliment them if they are looking nice, or if they have done a job well. But be genuine about it.

AVOID GOSSIP

You would not want to make friends with those interested simply in gossip and politics. Ashi Malik, career counsellor says, "Keep your interactions and conversations clean, and you'll attract the right kind of friends. Focus on saying something nice about the workspace, and spreading goodwill." Hannah Thangadurai*, a freelance proofreader, says, "I lost out on some really good friends and made a bad impression at my last workplace because I hung out with the wrong crowd. I'll be more careful the next time."

STEP OUT FOR A MEAL

"Suggesting new restaurants in the vicinity to try at lunch always works wonders," Malik says. Choose a restaurant that you know will be appealing, and take suggestions from your co-workers into consideration. Make your outing pleasant, use it well to get to know your colleagues, and give them the chance to get to know you as well. Work buddies we love These TV friendships trump romances any day

The Mindy Kaling Show: We love the humorous banter and loyal friendships that Mindy has with each of her co-workers.

The Office: This is human eccentricity and office politics at its harmless best.

Parks And Recreation: Leslie Knope and Ann Perkins are each other's biggest cheerleaders - it's adorable.

Grey's Anatomy: Meredith Grey's

close relationship with her co-residents/competitors is inspiring.

If you're an introvert...

If you're too shy to initiate conversation, start an email thread or Whatsapp group to break the ice. It'll make talking to people easier. Attend work events and outings,



which give you a chance to observe people outside the office and gauge who you are comfortable with.

Conquer your fear of rejection. Be prepared for the fact that some will like you, some won't, and some may not be polite about it either.

Tips to crack your job
Interview

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

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

The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self-assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question. Visualise yourself as a part of the organization: How confident do you feel about being there? Is the work in line with your interest and natural abilities? The inner call, backed up by research, is crucial before you choose to go for the interview. There is a job for everyone; they just need to home in on the right place. - A lot of engineers may actually do well in creative positions than technical roles. If technical expertise is your area of interest and prowess, go for it. Evaluate which subject or activity you are best at. It shows your interest and natural inclination. If the inner call says, 'choose an alternative career,' please do so. Do not succumb to social pressure. It is better to succeed than to 'ape' and remain mediocre. - The interviewer has been entrusted with the task of hiring the best in a competitive environment. It is thus your responsibility to convince him/her of your capabilities. Data and facts always help, so converge on tangible information rather than abstract points.



However, the statistics must be focused on competencies. - Provide information on your strengths with evidence of its practical application in real life. - Talk about your extracurricular activities and the difficult choices you made in life; it shows leadership attributes and job-fit skill sets. - Talk about facts that show you make

your choices and are not led by others alone. Highlight team activities you have undertaken - it shows your ability to collaborate. - Elaborate on situations that make you feel proud - it shows confidence and self-motivation. - Discuss instances when you have helped others - it is a sign of empathy. Finally, in a positive way, share instances of personal challenges that

brought you where you are today - it exhibits strength of character. - Speak about your career vision. When you know how the job fits in the grand picture of your career, the interviewer is most likely to choose you because it creates certainty. This is rare because many engineering graduates are disillusioned and openly talk about being explorers. Be clear where you wish to go. Employers would not like to waste time, money and effort on individuals who are continually

exploring. If that is the case, go for career advice or seek other professional help before interviews. In the case of engineers, interviewers' expectations are going to be specific. They look for thought leadership, precision in all you do, the ability to comprehend a problem and create solutions, an innovative mindset and critical thinking. As an engineer, your ability to lead a team will carry tremendous weight. Above all, one must "look and feel" like an engineer and not a casual person from nowhere. Lastly, understand that rejection has nothing to do with you personally. It is about an understanding that your abilities do not suit the job. So, gear up for the next opening.

Recruitment as a
Career
option after 40

Looking for a career post 40? Maybe you can turn to recruitment. You have been working for about 15-18 years. You have seen your role grow and expand and you have matured as an individual, but on the work front, there is a lot of operational maintenance and opportunities for growth may be getting limited both laterally and upwards. Even if you move to another company, after the initial months of being onboarded and throwing yourself into work, you may realise that there is nothing new being added to your experience. You are in a limbo as to where your career is heading. What can you do that will keep you engaged intellectually, put to best use your network and knowledge and at the same time, give you back your zest for risk taking and FINANCIAL rewards? Does this sound familiar? If yes, have you considered professional executive recruit



- As a candidate, how was your experience of working with recruiters? - Lastly, how many times did you meet work with a recruitment partner who came from a similar background and understood you and your need thoroughly and were able to meaningfully contribute to the discussions? The truth is that there is a dearth of professional executive recruitment service providers in a vast MARKET like India. And more than ever, with the war for talent brewing in many industries, this is the right time to get into the recruitment business and start mentoring the careers of people who

lack direction. You may ask, "I don't have a recruitment HR background, how will I recruit?" So, we will let you in a little secret recruitment begins as a science. It's highly methodical you learn it by the book and over a period of time, you hone it into a fine art. And here is another open secret anybody can recruit. Not convinced yet? Here are two great reasons why recruitment becomes a choice of vocation in your 40s: **Your experience:** By the time you are 40, you have gained enough experience in the MARKET - this gives you an edge over many recruiters who recruit with no industrial knowledge. You know the industry by its length and breadth, understand what talents and skills are required to fill a role, know how the remuneration cycle works within that industry and the kind of talent that is available in the market. **Your network:** During your tenure with a particular industry, you've probably met all the movers and shakers within your industry and that again gives you the edge over your competitors. Aside from the connections you already have, you're decades ahead of the competition in terms of interpersonal skills. There is also movement of employers preferring to work with niche recruiters. Niche recruiters are specialists they don't cater to all sectors; they cater to the industry market that they are familiar with and confident about; and this is what makes them successful. They know the needs of their clients and understand talent in their sector and hence are able to understand the best talent for their clients.



ment as a business opportunity? To help you understand why this could be a meaningful proposition for you, think back to your corporate life and ask yourself: - How did you find people talent for your team? - What were your expectations from your recruitment partners and how well were they met? - Have you ever wished you could recruit your team members yourself, but couldn't due to paucity of time?



Here's how to influence
People at work

Being authoritative is not the only way in which you can exercise power within a team or an organization. Here are a few simple tips to help you influence those around you in the workplace without coming across as too bossy.

Take a situation where you have just been promoted and are now in charge of leading and motivating others. You want to drive new initiatives and will need others to agree and cooperate with you. How will you inspire action? If you think formal authority alone is enough to be persuasive, think again. To quote Kate Blanchard, co-author of One Minute Manager, "In the past, a leader was a boss. Today's leaders must be partners with their people. They can no longer lead solely based on positional power." The authority that stems from your position as manager is just one of the many sources of power that you can rely on to get things done. Your knowledge, network, reputation, character and personal charm are other sources you can and should tap into in order to accomplish your mission. Here are some strategies to activate your other power bases that will allow you to make a difference in your organization: -GAIN CENTRALITY AND



African proverb When you become a manager, you don't just get formal authority but also new duties and responsibilities. You must learn to manage not only your team, but also the context within which it operates. Oftentimes, you will have far less time and autonomy than you might have imagined. This is why you need to rely on the cooperation of other people to get things done swiftly. These individuals could be people

within the organization (such as your peers, supervisors or direct reports) as well as people outside the organization (such as customers, vendors, and competitors). You cannot demand commitment from people; you have to earn it. One way to do this is by building networks and alliances to accomplish your goals. Create opportunities to spend time with your supervisor, peers or customers. You can do this at office as well as in less formal settings such as over lunch. Be open to being an active participant in your organization. Getting involved in community projects or other special organizational initiatives will allow you to get to know people from other divisions. -DEVELOP AND EMPLOY ELOQUENCE Studies have shown that people who are more expressive generally have a greater ability to lead and influence others. Why? Because they are more aware of their ideas, emotions and reactions; they, therefore, have a tendency to reach a greater audience than less expressive people. So, the final recommendation would be to develop your communication skills and eloquence. It will allow you to inspire and motivate people. However, remember, that if you don't walk your talk, an 'inspiration gap' will surface which will eventually cause you to lose credibility. In conclusion, it pays to remember that power is not about having absolute control, exploiting people in selfish ways or manipulating others. The proper attitude to have towards power is to see it as a tool to influence people in an ethical way to achieve desired organizational outcomes. Staying true to your core values and beliefs and engaging others when exercising power will allow you to use it in a more authentic and responsible manner.

Divorced daughter better than a dead one: MP government on Twisha Sharma case

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Supreme Court on Monday underscored the need for a "fair and impartial" probe into the death of former actor-model Twisha Sharma, while backing the Madhya Pradesh government's decision to recommend a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe amid allegations of institutional bias and mounting public scrutiny over the case. Hearing the matter suo motu, a three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said an "independent agency" should take over the investigation in the interest of all parties involved.

The top court also referred to an report published on May 18, saying it had raised concerns about alleged institutional bias and discrepancies in the investigation.

Twisha Sharma, 33, was found hanging at her matrimonial home in Bhopal on May 12. Her family has accused her in-laws of

dowry harassment and abetment to suicide, while the in-laws claimed she was battling drug addiction.

TOP QUOTES FROM SUPREME COURT

"A news article published by India Today on May 18 raised questions of institutional bias and discrepancies. The reason that was reported for the alleged lack of impartiality was that the husband of Twisha Sharma is a practising lawyer and the mother is a former district judge," the Chief Justice observed. The court noted that questions had been raised over whether "undue influence" could be exercised during the investigation because of the background of the accused family.

"A narrative was also created that fair investigation was denied due to the



involvement of the judiciary. That is why suo motu proceedings were initiated," the bench said, while noting that the High Court had meanwhile directed a second post-mortem.

Appreciating the state government's move to hand over the case to the CBI, the Chief Justice said, "We appreciate the state's decision to recommend a CBI

investigation". "At this stage, in the interest of all, an independent agency should take over," the bench observed, while adding that it had "no doubt" over the functioning of state agencies. "We have no doubt that agencies will investigate properly. But a narrative is being created, so an independent agency should take over," the Chief Justice noted. The Supreme Court repeatedly urged both sides and the media to avoid making public statements that could prejudice the investigation.

"We request media friends, don't give out statements about the families. Let the investigation go on," the bench said. Referring to the public discourse around the case, the Supreme Court observed, "Mother-in-law is a former district judge, so the media is unfortunately saying that the judiciary is not allowing a

fair trial". The court added that statements should be made "before the agency, not at other places".

"Whatever unfortunate incident has taken place, it should be ensured that a fair and impartial investigation is taking place," the court said.

"We request both sides don't make statements like this," the bench added.

The Supreme Court further said it did not need to pass any directions at this stage since the state government had already proposed transferring the case to the CBI.

Responding to the emotional dimension of the case, the court observed, "The kind of agony it causes for family, near and dear ones, we all have sympathy. But there is a procedure under law".

During the proceedings, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted Madhya Pradesh's government's side, saying that "a divorced daughter is better than a dead one".

From 'au revoir' to adieu: Delhi Gymkhana Club's uncertain fate

New Delhi.(Agency)

Amid the hustle and bustle of Partition, on a poignant evening on August 6, 1947, a large gathering of military officers who had fought side by side in the British Indian Army met one last time in New Delhi. Some among them were preparing to move on and serve in the armed forces of the newly created nation of Pakistan. The occasion was a farewell party hosted by "The Officers of the Armed Forces of the Dominion of India" and the venue was the Imperial Delhi Gymkhana Club on Safdarjung Road—now known as the Delhi Gymkhana Club (DGC), the property is now on the verge of extinction.

Narrating details of the send-off party in their book "Freedom at Midnight", American historian Larry Collins and French author Dominique Lapierre described the event as the "most touching farewell".

Invitation was by engraved cards sent by "The Officers of the Armed Forces of the Dominion of India" inviting guests to a "Farewell to Old Comrades Reception in honour of the Officers of the Armed Forces of the Dominion of Pakistan", they wrote. "The most touching farewell of all took place on the lawns and in the grand ballroom of an institution that once had been one of the most privileged sanctuaries of India's British rulers, the Imperial Delhi Gymkhana Club...An air of 'overwhelming sadness and unreality' overlaid the evening, one Indian remembered...In the ballroom the flashing rainbow colours of their women's saris sparkled through the dim lights," the author duo noted.

Their book chronicles in detail the series of events surrounding the Partition of India during the final years of British rule. The military officers reminisced about the ordeals and joys of careers spent together in uniform. Field Marshal Cariappa at the farewell. As the evening drew to a close, then Brigadier Kodandera Madappa Cariappa, who later became the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) of the Indian Army, addressed the gathering. According to the book, Field Marshal Cariappa, who was the first Indian officer to command a battalion—the 1st Battalion of the 7th Rajput Regiment—climbed to the raised.

36 families in Harsh Vihar get power connections after eight-year wait

New Delhi.(Agency)

After waiting nearly eight years for regular electricity supply, 36 families living in Harsh Vihar's A-3 block in northeast Delhi's Gokulpuri area have finally started receiving power connections following the intervention of CM Rekha Gupta, officials said.

The issue was raised by residents during a public grievance hearing, where they informed the CM that several families had been awaiting regular power connections since 2018. Taking note of the matter, Gupta directed the concerned officials to act immediately and ensure coordination among all agencies to resolve the issue at the earliest.

Officials said around 50 to 60 houses had been constructed in the locality by 2018 and many families had already moved in. However, regular electricity supply could not be provided as land was not available for the Electric Sub-Station (ESS) required for power infrastructure. As a result, most residents lived without electricity connections, while some depended on temporary arrangements.

Following the CM's intervention, the required land for installation of a transformer was made available and coordination was established among all stakeholders. The power distribution company subsequently installed the transformer and expanded the electricity network across the area on a mission mode. Electrification work has now been completed and electricity meters are being installed for eligible applicants. Most demand notes have already been issued, officials said.

On Sunday, Gupta met the 36 beneficiary families at Jan Seva Sadan. The residents thanked her, saying the resolution of the long-pending issue had brought relief and renewed hope to their lives.

Provide electricity to remaining eligible families: CM

The CM reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring that basic services, including electricity, water, roads and sewerage, reach every resident and directed officials to provide connections to the remaining eligible families within the stipulated timeframe.

Was this toughest UPSC Prelims ever? Even bureaucrats struggled to solve GS 1 paper

New Delhi.(Agency)

It's a question Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Civil Services aspirant Anubhav Gupta posed on X, right after walking out of his Preliminary Examination centre on Sunday. Having prepared for the exam since 2022, with four attempts behind him, Gupta says he is wondering whether it was finally time to give up on the dream. Gupta is not alone. Candidates coming out of their examination centres on Sunday described the paper as one of the most confusing, exhausting and unpredictable Civil Services preliminary examinations in recent memory. Many said the General Studies (GS) Paper I was too tough.

"One of the toughest UPSC Prelims ever," Chandigarh-based UPSC

mentor and Sleepy Classes founder Shekhar Dutt posted on X.

Speaking to India Today Digital, Dutt said, "The challenge was not just knowing the facts, but also



understanding how they were connected to one another and applying that understanding under severe time pressure."

Raipur-based IAS officer Awanish Sharan on X said, "UPSC Prelims 2026: The toughest ever." Even as

toughness is subjective, Dutt told India Today Digital that "even some selected candidates (rank-holders) told him the paper was one of the toughest they had ever seen".

Unpredictability has always been part of the UPSC's identity. Every year, candidates enter examination halls knowing that the commission is capable of springing surprises. Yet many aspirants felt that this year's General Studies paper pushed that unpredictability to a different level altogether. Though unpredictability has been a constant, the UPSC has outdone itself this year. "Unprecedented Public Service Commission," Dutt said on X, substituting the Union in UPSC with unprecedented.

India moves closer to mega Rafale fighter jet deal, finalises request letter

New Delhi.(Agency)

India has finalised the Letter of Request (LoR) for the acquisition of 114 Rafale fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force and is expected to send it to France within the next few weeks, sources said.

Under the proposed deal, nearly 90 of the 114 fighter jets are planned to be manufactured in India through a partnership between French aerospace company Dassault Aviation and an Indian firm. The remaining aircraft are expected to be delivered in fly-away condition.

Sources told that once France responds to the LoR, India will move ahead with issuing the formal Request for Proposal (RFP) for the procurement.

The LoR is a formal government-to-government communication used to

initiate defence procurement under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) or Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) framework.

The Defence Acquisition Council



(DAC) has already cleared the procurement proposal for the Indian Air Force. After the LoR is sent, France is expected to respond with details related to pricing, availability and logistical support, following

which negotiations between the two sides will begin.

The final contract will require approval from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) before it can be signed.

The Indian Air Force already has 36 Rafale fighter jets in service, while the Navy is preparing to induct 26 Rafale M aircraft for carrier-based operations in the coming years. Acquiring more Rafales is also expected to reduce logistics, maintenance and training expenses due to the existing operational ecosystem. Meanwhile, New

Delhi has also pressed the French side to expand the role of Indian companies in the Rafale production ecosystem, seeking up to 50 per cent indigenous content in the fighter jets proposed for India.

Tribal groups rally in Delhi, seek removal of converted tribals from ST list

Lakhs of tribal community members gathered in Delhi for the Janjati Sanskritik Sangam and called for converted tribals to be delisted from the Scheduled Tribe category. The event paired cultural celebrations marking Birs Munda's 150th birth anniversary with demands to review constitutional safeguards linked to tribal identity.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Lakhs of tribal community members from across India gathered in the national capital for the Janjati Sanskritik Sangam, where participants celebrated indigenous culture and raised demands for the "delisting" of converted tribals from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category.

The event, organised by the Janjati Suraksha Manch affiliated to the RSS, marked the 150th birth anniversary of tribal icon Birs Munda. Representatives from more than 550 tribal groups from different states took part in the gathering near Delhi Gate.

Participants dressed in traditional attire performed cultural programmes, marches and public demonstrations highlighting issues related to tribal identity, constitutional rights and preservation of indigenous customs.

A key demand raised during the event was the amendment of Article 342 of the Constitution to remove ST status from individuals who convert to religions other than traditional tribal faiths. Protesters argued that converted tribals continue to avail reservation benefits meant for Scheduled Tribes while also receiving benefits available to minority communities.

Several speakers at the gathering said religious conversion leads to a gradual loss of tribal traditions, customs and cultural identity, and called for a review of the existing constitutional framework governing ST status.

Organisers and participants maintained that the demand was linked to the protection of tribal heritage, community rights and preservation of indigenous culture rather than targeting any particular religion. The event combined cultural celebrations with political messaging as tribal groups from across the country came together to press for policy changes concerning tribal identity and constitutional safeguards.

Delhi Gymkhana goes to High Court against government's eviction order, hearing today

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi Gymkhana Club has moved the Delhi High Court challenging a central government directive asking it to vacate its 27.3-acre premises in Lutyens' Delhi by June 5. The matter was mentioned before Justice Avneesh Jhingan by Senior Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who sought an urgent hearing in the case. The court agreed to hear the matter on May 26.

On May 22, the Land and Development Office (L&DO) directed the Delhi Gymkhana Club to vacate and hand over its 27.3-acre property at 2, Safdarjung Road. The order cited Clause 4 of the original lease agreement, which empowers the government to reclaim the land if it is required for a "public purpose".

According to the government, the land, situated close to the Prime Minister's residence and several high-security

establishments in Lutyens' Delhi, is needed for strengthening defence infrastructure, governance-related facilities and other critical public security requirements.

"Upon such re-entry, the entire plot of land measuring 27.3 acres, along with all buildings, standing erections, structures, lawns, and fittings thereon, shall vest absolutely in the Lessor, i.e., the President of India, through the Land & Development Office," the government notice read. It had further added that the premises shall be taken over by the Land & Development Office on June 5.

CLUB SOUGHT CLARITY AFTER REVIEW MEETING

Following the Centre's directive, the General Committee of the Delhi

Gymkhana Club convened an emergency review meeting and resolved to seek urgent clarification from the government on multiple concerns



related to its members and staff.

In a statement, the Delhi Gymkhana Club said its General Committee met on an urgent basis and, after detailed discussions, decided to immediately

write to the Land and Development Office (L&DO) seeking clarity on several issues concerning the interests of the club's members and employees.

The club further stated that the committee had requested an urgent meeting with officials of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to discuss the matter. It added that the immediate priority of the General Committee was to ensure that the functioning and operations of the club continue without disruption. Established on July 3, 1913 as the Imperial Delhi Gymkhana Club, the institution primarily served British civil servants and military officials during the colonial era. After India gained Independence in 1947, the word "Imperial" was dropped from its name, while a majority.

Oil prices fall over 5% on hopes for Iran deal

TOKYO, Japan.,(Agency)

Oil prices plunged over five percent and Asian markets ticked up early on Monday on hopes of a deal to end to the US-Iran war despite President Donald Trump downplaying its imminence.

As of around 2300 GMT Sunday, the price of North Sea Brent crude slipped 5.1 percent to \$98.22 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate fell 5.2 percent to \$91.57 a barrel before recovering slightly. Japan's Nikkei share index rose more than 2.5 percent as of around 0030 GMT. Sydney crept slightly higher, while Hong Kong and Seoul were closed for public holidays. Trump tempered expectations of an agreement to end the war, saying in a Sunday social media post that he had "informed my representatives not to rush into a deal in that time is on our side". The conflict erupted after the United States and Israel attacked Iran on February 28, and the Islamic republic responded with missile and drone attacks across the region. The United States and Iran have observed a ceasefire since April 8 while mediators push for a negotiated settlement, although Tehran has imposed controls on Gulf shipping and Washington has blockaded Iran's ports.

Stock markets rally in early trade as crude oil drops below USD 100 per barrel

Kolkata.(Agency)

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surged in early trade on Monday supported by a sharp correction in crude oil prices and arally in global markets amid improving sentiment surrounding the US-Iran negotiations. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 908.98 points to 76,317.85 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty surged 262.65 points to 23,977.70. From the 30-Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, and InterGlobe Aviation were among the biggest winners.

Tata Consultancy Services and Sun Pharma were the laggards. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, tanked 5.58 per cent to trade at USD 97.76 per barrel. "We are starting the week on a positive note.

Crude has dipped USD 5 to below USD 100 on expectations that US and Iran are close to a deal. The market will wait and watch for clarity and certainty since many similar expectations have been belied since the start of the war.

If this expected deal holds and crude drifts down, that can turn out to be turning point for the market," V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index were trading higher. Markets were closed in South Korea and Hong Kong due to holidays. US markets ended in positive territory on Friday.

Crude oil prices have corrected sharply, marking a significant pullback from recent highs above the USD 100-105 zone, Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.

"The decline in oil prices is being viewed as a meaningful positive for India's macroeconomic outlook, as softer energy prices help ease concerns around inflation, import costs and corporate profitability," he added. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,440.47 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. On Friday, the Sensex climbed 231.99 points, or 0.31 per cent, to settle at 75,415.35. The Nifty edged higher by 64.60 points, or 0.27 per cent, to end at 23,719.30.

Rupee on recovery track: Currency jumps 40 paise to 95.2 against US dollar amid Middle East peace hopes

New Delhi.(Agency)

Rupee began the week in green, gaining 40 paise to 95.20 against the US dollar in early Monday trade. The currency was driven by optimism in global markets over hopes of a potential peace deal between the United States and Iran. In the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.36 against the US dollar before strengthening to 95.20 in early deals, marking a gain of 40 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the domestic currency had already gained momentum, rising 75 paise to settle at 95.60 against the US dollar. The recovery comes after rupee had fallen 6% since the Middle East crisis began on February 28, when US and Israel launched joint strikes on Iran. "The trade deal will be beneficial to both the US and India," said Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP. He added that as Monday is a US holiday, dollar cash demand is expected to remain lower, although month-end demand could emerge, while the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to remain watchful of dollar movements. The currency strengthened after signs that the US and Iran have "largely negotiated" a peace pact aimed at ending the nearly three-month-long conflict. However, uncertainty persists at the leadership level. US President Donald Trump told negotiators "not to rush into a deal" and that "both sides must take their time and get it right". In parallel developments on the trade front, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the US and India are close to finalising an interim trade agreement, following progress in discussions with the US Trade Representative, who is expected to visit India soon. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.20% at 99.04. In commodities, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 5.43% to \$97.92 per barrel in futures trade. Dalal Street also reflected the positive sentiments, with benchmark indices surging over 1% in early trade. BSE Sensex jumped 908.98 points to 76,317.85, while the Nifty rose 262.65 points to 23,977.70.

India's ethanol success story may be heading for an oversupply crisis

India's ethanol boom helped the country hit E20 early. Now distilleries, oil companies and policymakers are confronting a new question. Has India already built more ethanol capacity than it needs?

New Delhi.,(Agency)

For years, India's ethanol push was projected as one of the country's biggest clean-energy success stories. The goal was to cut crude oil imports, support farmers, boost sugar mills and reduce vulnerability to global oil shocks.

The government pushed aggressively. The industry expanded even faster. Distilleries came up rapidly across states. Sugar companies diverted more cane toward ethanol production. Grain-based plants scaled up as India accelerated its ethanol blending programme and raced toward its E20 target. Now the industry is

starting to worry about something else: whether the country may have already built more ethanol capacity than it currently needs. A recent industry outlook report by Infomeries Ratings estimated that India could soon have nearly 24 billion litres of ethanol production capacity against annual demand of roughly 11-12 billion litres under the current E20 blending regime. That is nearly double the current blending requirement.

The report itself warned that the industry could face "suboptimal capacity utilisation", potentially hurting the financial viability of recently commissioned distilleries.

Which may also explain why, even before India has fully settled into the E20 era, the conversation inside the industry has already started shifting toward E30, E85 and even E100.

INDIA'S ETHANOL GOLD RUSH

India's ethanol blending programme accelerated sharply after the government advanced the E20 target from 2030 to

2025-26. The policy transformed ethanol from a relatively small blending exercise into one of India's biggest clean-energy projects. According to the report, ethanol procurement rose from 67.4 crore litres in



ethanol supply year (ESY) 2014-15 to 707.4 crore litres in ESY 2023-24, while blending levels climbed from 2.33% to 14.6%. The government backed the expansion with fixed procurement prices, interest-subvention schemes and long-term procurement agreements through oil marketing companies (OMCs).

The larger geopolitical backdrop also

helped drive the push.

India imports nearly 85% of its crude oil requirements and remains heavily exposed to global oil price swings and supply disruptions. Ethanol blending was projected as both an energy-security strategy and a rural-income programme.

The industry responded accordingly.

Sugar companies invested heavily in distilleries. Grain-based ethanol production surged. New plants came up rapidly across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The entire ethanol boom was built on one expectation: blending targets would keep rising and oil companies would keep buying more ethanol. But even as blending levels rose, another trend quietly started appearing in the numbers.

THE PROCUREMENT SLOWDOWN

Blending levels rose to 18.36% in 2024-25. But ethanol procurement itself slowed sharply to 391 crore litres up to March 2025, down from 707.4 crore litres in ESY 2023-24.

Who could become billionaires after SpaceX IPO? Meet Musk's inner circle

New Delhi.(Agency)

Elon Musk may already be the world's richest man, but SpaceX's expected stock market debut could create a fresh group of billionaires around him. As the rocket company prepares for what could be one of the biggest public offerings in history, some of Musk's closest allies stand to see their fortunes soar. If SpaceX reaches a valuation of around \$2 trillion during its much-awaited IPO, several senior executives and early backers could join the billionaire club or see their wealth multiply dramatically, reported Bloomberg. While Musk would remain far ahead of everyone else, the company's top insiders are also likely to enjoy massive gains. According to reports, SpaceX is expected to go public in June and could be valued at nearly \$2 trillion. Such a valuation would make Musk even wealthier, potentially pushing his fortune closer to the trillion-dollar mark. However, Musk will not be the only winner. A small group of executives, investors and long-time supporters who helped build

SpaceX from its early days could also see life-changing wealth.

GWYNNE SHOTWELL: THE WOMAN BEHIND SPACEX OPERATIONS



One of the biggest beneficiaries could be Gwynne Shotwell, SpaceX's President and Chief Operating Officer.

Shotwell joined the company in 2002, shortly after it was founded. At a time when SpaceX was still a risky idea, she helped build the business and managed

sales for the company's early rockets.

Over the years, she became one of the most important faces of SpaceX, especially while Musk focused on his other companies. At present, her stake in SpaceX is estimated to be worth around \$1 billion. If the company reaches a \$2 trillion valuation, that figure could jump to nearly \$2 billion. Shotwell studied mechanical engineering and applied mathematics before working in the aerospace industry. She has often spoken positively about working with Musk, describing him as someone who gives her the freedom to do her job. BRET JOHNSEN: THE FINANCE MAN BEHIND SPACEX

Another executive expected to cross the billionaire mark is Bret Johnsen, SpaceX's Chief Financial Officer.

Johnsen joined the company in 2011 after working in finance roles at major technology firms. Since then, he has played a major role in handling SpaceX's finances and maintaining relationships with investors.

Not sure how to e-verify your ITR? Here are 5 easy ways to do it

New Delhi.,(Agency)

The filing process for Assessment Year (AY) 2026-27 is now underway, and many taxpayers are getting ready to submit their Income Tax Returns (ITRs). But while most people focus on filing their return before the deadline, not everyone realises that the process does not end there. After filing an ITR, taxpayers must also e-verify it for the return to be treated as complete. The good part is that there is not just one way to do it. In fact, there are five different ways to e-verify your ITR, allowing taxpayers to choose whichever option feels easiest and most convenient. For salaried taxpayers who are not required to undergo an audit, the deadline to file returns for the financial year 2025-26 is generally July 31, 2026, though timelines may differ depending on the category of taxpayer. Why E-Verification Is

Important

Many people believe that once the 'submit' button is clicked, the tax filing process is over. However, the Income



Tax Department requires taxpayers to verify their returns after filing. Without e-verification, the ITR may be treated as incomplete, which could delay refunds or even create compliance-related issues later. In simple terms, filing the return is only half the work — verification is what completes the process.

AADHAAR OTP: A QUICK AND POPULAR OPTION

One of the easiest ways to e-verify an ITR is through Aadhaar OTP. Taxpayers can choose this option if their Aadhaar is linked with their PAN and registered mobile number. After selecting the Aadhaar OTP option on the income tax portal, a one-time password is sent to the Aadhaar-linked mobile number. Entering the OTP completes the verification in just a few minutes.

VERIFICATION THROUGH BANK OR DEMAT ACCOUNT

Taxpayers can also choose to verify their return through a bank account or demat account. For this, the account must first be pre-validated on the income tax portal. Once selected, an OTP is sent to the registered mobile number or email linked to the account, helping complete the verification smoothly.

What kept India's petrol and diesel price hike lower than many nations?

As fuel prices surged across several countries during the global oil crisis, India saw relatively smaller increases in petrol and diesel rates. So, what helped keep prices in check despite rising crude oil costs? Let's have a look.

New Delhi.(Agency)

As fuel prices shot up in several countries during the recent global oil crisis, India saw a relatively smaller increase in petrol and diesel rates. While prices did go up, government sources say a mix of delayed hikes, tax cuts and financial support measures helped keep the increase lower than in many parts of the world. Petrol and diesel prices in India remained mostly unchanged for 78 days despite rising tensions in global oil markets. A phased increase started later, with prices revised on May 15, 19, 23 and 25, taking the overall rise to nearly Rs 7 per litre.

INDIA COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

Government sources said many countries witnessed much steeper fuel price rises during the crisis. According to the comparison shared by sources, petrol prices in Myanmar increased by as much as 89%, while diesel prices rose by 112%. Countries such as Pakistan, the UAE, the US and the Philippines reportedly saw fuel prices climb by more than 40-50%. In Europe, petrol prices were said to be in the range of Rs 180 to Rs 235 per litre. In comparison, petrol in Delhi is priced at around Rs 102 per litre, while diesel costs nearly Rs 95 per litre. Sources claimed that among countries where fuel is not subsidised, India remains one of the lowest-priced markets.

CENTRE AND STATES TRADE BLAME OVER TAXES

The fuel price debate has also turned political, with government sources pointing to state taxes as a major reason for price differences across India. According to sources, the Centre charges a uniform excise duty across the country, while states impose their own



Value Added Tax (VAT), leading to different fuel prices in different regions.

Government sources alleged that some opposition-ruled states have imposed higher VAT, adding to the burden on consumers. As per the figures shared by sources, Telangana has some of the highest petrol prices at around Rs 118 per litre, followed by Kerala at Rs 114, Karnataka at Rs 110 and Tamil Nadu at Rs 107 per litre. Meanwhile, BJP-ruled states such as Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Assam, along with Delhi, were said to have relatively lower petrol prices, ranging between Rs 101 and Rs 104 per litre.

DIESEL PRICES ALSO UNDER POLITICAL SPOTLIGHT

Diesel prices have also become part of the political debate.

Government sources claimed that some opposition-ruled states levy higher taxes on diesel, pushing prices above Rs 100 per litre in states such as Telangana and Kerala. In comparison, BJP-ruled states were said to have relatively lower diesel prices. Meanwhile, sources said the Centre has reduced excise duty several times since 2021 to offer relief to consumers.

In March 2026, the government reportedly provided relief of up to Rs 10 per litre. Officials also claimed that fuel prices were kept under control during major global disruptions, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Hormuz crisis.

OIL BONDS AND FINANCIAL BURDEN

Government sources also targeted the previous UPA government, alleging that oil bonds were issued during its tenure to manage fuel subsidies. According to the current government, the financial burden is now directly borne through the Budget. Sources claimed that more than Rs 1.3 lakh crore has been paid towards oil bond liabilities since 2021.

Short news

Ahmedabad: Valsad man held at IGI for tampered passport, fake Russian visa**Ahmedabad.(Agency)**

A Gujarat resident from Valsad was detained at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport after immigration officials allegedly detected a tampered passport and evidence of a forged Russian visa during his arrival from Moscow on May 11. Delhi Police have registered a case in the matter and are now in touch with Gujarat Police as part of the ongoing investigation, officials said on Sunday.

According to officials, the passenger had arrived at Terminal-3 of IGI Airport on an Etihad Airways flight from Moscow via Abu Dhabi when immigration officers noticed suspicious alterations in his passport during routine clearance. Authorities found that a visa sticker affixed on one of the passport pages had allegedly been removed.

During further verification, officials discovered that the traveller had allegedly used a fake Russian visa with validity from Jan 2026 to Jan 2029. Police also recovered a video clip of the suspected fake visa from the passenger's mobile phone, sources said.

Following a complaint filed by an immigration officer posted at IGI Airport, Delhi Police registered an FIR under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita related to forgery, cheating and use of fraudulent documents, along with provisions of the Passport Act. Police said the case was registered at IGI Airport police station after a preliminary enquiry confirmed signs of document tampering. The original passport, photocopies, travel logs, and immigration records have been seized as evidence.

Ahmedabad: Shahpur man loses Rs 3.3 lakh in fake bank call scam**Ahmedabad. (Agency)**

A 48-year-old Shahpur resident was allegedly defrauded of Rs 3.3 lakh by cyber criminals posing as Punjab National Bank officials who enticed him with promises of enhanced credit card benefits and higher spending limits.

According to a complaint lodged with Shahpur police, the complainant Yash Shah (48) received a call on April 16 from a man claiming to be a bank representative. The caller allegedly informed him about a "special offer" on his credit cards and asked him to keep photographs of the cards saved in his mobile gallery for verification purposes.

Later in the evening, the caller again contacted the victim and claimed that his credit card limits could be enhanced. The fraudster then sent a link through SMS and a file via WhatsApp, asking the victim to open them while keeping the phone call active for nearly 30 minutes.

Police said during this period, the accused allegedly gained access to the victim's credit card details and carried out several unauthorized online transactions. The fraudsters siphoned off Rs 1.05 lakh from an ICICI Bank credit card, Rs 82,037 from an RBL Bank card and Rs 1.39 lakh from an HDFC Bank credit card, taking the total amount to Rs 3.27 lakh. Following the complaint, Shahpur police on Saturday registered a case of cheating and criminal breach of trust under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita along with provisions of the Information Technology Act.

Eight dead after SUV plunge into gorge in Raigad district of Maharashtra**Maharashtra.(Agency)**

In a tragic accident, eight people were killed after the SUV they were travelling in plunged into a gorge in Maharashtra's Raigad district, the police said on Monday. According to the police, the incident happened on Sunday night in the Ambenali Ghat area on Poladpur-Mahabaleshwar road. They were on their way from Dapoli to Satara when the vehicle fell into the gorge.

The vehicle was found in the gorge on Monday morning, a senior police official said. The victims have been identified as Ritesh Lokhande (22), Suhas Lokhande (20), Utkarsh Shingte (21), Nikhil Shingte (25), Mahesh Pawar (25), Aditya Salunkhe (21), Rajesh Katkar (35), all the residents of Satara, and Ansh Chavan (19), belonging to Ratnagiri.

The victims left from Harne in Dapoli at around 2 am in the SUV. When they did not reach Satara, their relatives launched a search in the afternoon and later approached the police.

During the investigation, the victims' last location was traced through a mobile tower near Poladpur. During a search operation, the police spotted the SUV about 800 feet deep in the gorge on Monday morning, the official said. The police said that they have recovered two bodies so far, with the help of the local disaster management team, while three more have been traced, the official said, adding that the search operation was underway.

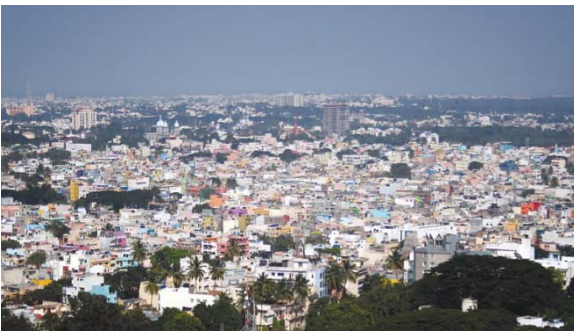
The Khata conundrum: Criticism mounts over Bengaluru Bhoo Guarantee scheme**Bengaluru.(Agency)**

As the sixth guarantee, the Congress government announced the 'Bhoo Guarantee Scheme' that enables B khata property holders to convert their properties into A khata in the five corporations falling under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

Though the government announced the conversion scheme last year, there was hardly any response from property owners. This time, the government has given a new nomenclature to the old scheme, and to encourage people to come forward and avail the conversion, it has cut the fee from 5% of the guidance value to just 2%, giving a whopping 60 per cent discount.

According to the data shared by the government at the recent launch of the scheme, the city has 23 lakh properties -- 16 lakh A khata and seven lakh B khata. The property details were in over 7,000 manual

registers that have been scanned and digitised. As per experts, the scheme, if successful, is expected to generate a revenue of over Rs 10,000 crore.

**Civic body's failure led to creation of B khata**

Thousands of Bengalureans had the option of buying B khata properties decades ago when prices were low, but chose not to fearing that they would be demolished by the

government. But now, the government is legalising that transaction asking people to convert their properties by paying a fee. Civic experts say the concept of B khata is nowhere else in India and it is the result of civic body's failure in preventing it in the first place.

"First of all, the government created a problem by giving clearance to projects with deviations and also creating a B khata system, which is completely wrong.

Now, they charge an amount for the conversion, which means they are regularising by taking some more money," said Srikanth Narasimhan, Founder and General Secretary of Bengaluru NavaNirman Party (BNP), a city-focused political party.

He demanded that the government first set right the process where no new illegal structures are given permissions or any type of khata, and that is the only way to solve the problem in the long-term.

Assam government tables UCC bill in state assembly; seeks to ban polygamy, register live-in relationships**Assam . (Agency)**

The Assam government on Monday introduced the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), Assam, 2026 Bill in the state assembly, proposing a ban on polygamy and making registration of live-in relationships mandatory. However, the proposed law will not apply to Scheduled Tribes residing in Assam.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Atul Bora tabled the Bill on behalf of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The move triggered protests from opposition parties, including the Indian National Congress, Rajgor Dal and All India Trinamool Congress, which demanded wider consultations with stakeholders before the legislation is taken up. "The Bill aims to consolidate and simplify laws governing marriage, divorce, succession, and live-in relationships," Sarma said in the 'Statement of Object and Reasons' in the



Bill.

For marriage, the Bill sets 21 years and 18 years as minimum age for men and women respectively, and prohibits polygamy, he added. "Importantly, it protects Assam's cultural diversity by allowing marriages to be performed according to existing religious and customary rites," Sarma said.

To safeguard legal rights, the Bill proposes to make marriage and divorce registration

compulsory, which will be vital for securing maintenance, inheritance and other legal protection for spouses.

"For the first time, the Bill provides a legal framework for live-in relationships. By requiring registration, the law ensures that the rights of partners, and any children born from such unions, are formally recognised and protected," the CM said in the Bill. He further said that UCC aims to modernise succession laws to ensure a fair and equal distribution of property. "It introduces uniform rules for inheritance, ensuring that the transfer of assets is handled justly for all residents of the state," Sarma stated. It also proposed to establish necessary administrative machinery, including the appointment of registrars, to implement the reforms. "This ensures that the code is not just a policy but a practical tool for social justice and equality in Assam," Sarma said.

NRI Lake flamingo surge prompts call to restore DPS and TS Chanakya wetlands, visitors flock in large numbers**Mumbai.(Agency)**

Environmentalists called for urgent restoration of the neighbouring DPS and TS Chanakya wetlands as hundreds of bird enthusiasts swarmed the narrow stretch at NRI Lake to watch flamingo gatherings, increasing visitor pressure on a single habitat in Navi Mumbai. Greens said visitors arrived from neighbouring cities and NRI Lake emerged as an unofficial eco-tourism hotspot. The group urged the state govt to revive all three wetlands to benefit migratory birds and nature enthusiasts.

Environmentalists said the DPS and TS Chanakya wetlands turned toxic due to stagnant water and blue-green algae accumulation. They said a portion of NRI Lake turned the main destination for flamingos flying out of the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary during high tide. The sanctuary, a Ramsar site of global importance, hosted migratory flamingos during the winter-summer months before they

returned to Kutch ahead of the monsoon.

Environmentalists said this season witnessed a remarkable increase in lesser flamingos across the Mumbai



region, while greater flamingos preferred freshwater wetlands such as Bhigwan. "Yes, we are seeing over a thousand greater flamingos here," bird trail guide Nitin Nagre from Bhigwan informed. Lesser flamingos thrived mainly on microscopic food sources found in shallow alkaline and saline waters, feeding on blue-green algae, diatoms, plankton, tiny crustaceans

and other microorganisms filtered through their specialised beaks.

Carotenoid pigments present in the algae contributed to their striking pink colouration. Experts warned that

dependence on a limited section of the NRI wetland could increase pressure on microscopic food sources. They said restoration of the DPS and TS Chanakya wetlands became essential to provide alternative feeding grounds, according to Jyoti Nadkarni, member of the Raigad district wetland documentation committee. She said flamingos were key indicators of healthy wetlands and helped maintain ecological balance. "Bird lovers now seem to have mastered the art of tracking flamingo flights by closely monitoring high-tide charts and arriving equipped with cameras and telephoto lenses," said Sandeep Sareen of the Navi Mumbai Environment Preservation Society, which fought a legal battle to protect the lake.

Odisha's electricity demand surges to an all-time high of 6,739 MW**BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)**

Amid an intense heatwave sweeping across the state, the power demand has surged to an all-time high of 6,739 MW. The current peak load has gone up to nearly 300 MW, higher than last year's peak demand of 6,447 MW. In Bhubaneswar alone, demand has increased by 17 per cent to 750 MW this summer from 641 MW during last season, officials said on Sunday.

To tackle the unprecedented load and weather-related disruptions, the Tata Power-led distribution companies (discoms) have activated a large-scale emergency response mechanism for ensuring uninterrupted electricity supply and faster restoration services.

The discoms have deployed more than 26,000 field personnel, including maintenance crews, fault repair teams, supervisors and safety officers, across the state for round-the-clock operations, said Tata Power.

The utilities have also positioned critical restoration infrastructure, including 67 power transformers, nearly 5,000 distribution transformers, over 60,000 electric poles and around 9,000 km of conductors and cables. Emergency equipment such as tower wagons, hydraulic machines, mobile substations, dewatering pumps and tree-pruning machinery have been kept on standby for rapid deployment during outages caused by Kalbaisakhi storms, lightning and strong winds. A centralised power distribution technology centre (PDT), supported by circle- and division-level control rooms, is monitoring the distribution network

Mumbai Coastal Road: 60,000 trees planned, 15k to be planted before monsoon**Mumbai.(Agency)**

Tree plantation has finally begun along open space sections created as part of the Coastal Road project. Work has begun in pockets of Worli and is expected to begin soon at Breach Candy.

Civic officials said soil testing and land preparation are underway to determine which tree species can sustainably survive on the reclaimed land. A pre-monsoon target has been set to plant around 15,000 trees, while the broader landscaping plan envisages nearly 60,000 trees and over two lakh shrubs to be introduced in phases over the next couple of years. The 10.6-km Coastal Road



(south) project involved reclaiming nearly 111 hectares from the sea, of which around 40 hectares has been utilised for the road, interchanges, bridge approaches and related infrastructure. The remaining area is proposed to be developed into public

open spaces featuring promenades, gardens, cycling and walking tracks, urban forests and recreational zones.

Officials said two nurseries are being developed to support the plantation drive -- one already operational at Worli, opposite Piramal House, and another coming up at Breach Candy, behind the L&T site office near Amarsons Garden. At the Worli nursery, a mix of trees, shrubs and plants is currently being acclimatised to study how they respond to saline coastal conditions.

"As this is reclaimed land, layers of murum soil and earth filling are being carried out before landscaping begins. Around 900 mm below the earth level had been kept for filling and soil treatment works," said an

official associated with the project. He said the reclamation material was earlier topped with around 400 mm of murum filling, and additional soil is now being brought in for plantation. "The idea is to first test how the plants fare in this environment before taking up large-scale plantation," the official said.

Landscaping and development of open spaces has been undertaken by Reliance Foundation under a CSR initiative, at no cost to BMC. In Feb, a draft concept plan for Coastal Road Gardens was presented to a group of south Mumbai residents in the presence of former civic chief Bhushan Gagrani. The proposal included forested areas, Miyawaki micro-forest pockets, urban woodland spaces, promenades and recreational facilities.

NEWS BOX

Vidit Gujrathi storms into Esports Chess World Cup Qualifier final

CHENNAI. (Agency)

TIndian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi has booked his place in the grand final of the "India Rising: Road to EWC" qualifiers, moving one step closer to securing a coveted spot at the 2026 Esports World Cup chess event. The tournament, which serves as an official pathway to the Esports World Cup (EWC), has emerged as one of the biggest online chess qualification events for Indian players. Vidit's run in the qualifiers once again showed his strength in rapid and online formats. The Indian star, known for his calm approach and sharp tactical play, produced a series of impressive performances to reach the summit clash of the tournament. Vidit will face Dutch Grandmaster Benjamin Bok in the grand final, with the winner earning direct qualification to the Esports World Cup. After the win, Vidit also shared a video confirming his qualification for the final. He captioned the post: "Made it to the finals of the Esports World Cup Qualifier! Finals in Mumbai in July." The India Rising event has



attracted major attention from the chess community because of its massive prize pool and the growing connection between chess and esports. Organisers announced a prize pool of 27.5 lakh, underlining the rapid rise of chess in the esports ecosystem. Vidit remains one of India's most accomplished chess players in recent years. The Nashik-born Grandmaster has represented India at several elite international tournaments and was also part of the historic Indian team that won gold at the Online Chess Olympiad in 2020.

The Esports World Cup has become a major platform for competitive chess after the game's inclusion in the global esports structure. Top players from around the world are competing through multiple qualification routes for a place in the main event scheduled to be held in Riyadh later this year.

Earlier this month, Indian Grandmaster Aravindh Chithambaram became the first Indian player to qualify for the Esports World Cup chess event after winning the Road to EWC qualifier at DreamHack Atlanta.

Axar Patel backs SRH to win IPL 2026 title: That top 3 is formidable



NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Delhi Capitals captain Axar Patel has backed SunRisers Hyderabad to win the Indian Premier League title this year. Speaking after the team's final league-stage match of the season, Axar said SRH's explosive top order makes them one of the most dangerous teams in the competition and warned that they would be difficult to stop if their batters fire in the playoffs. SunRisers Hyderabad sealed their playoffs qualification with a commanding 55-run win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru in their final league-stage game. Playing against the table-toppers at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad, SRH produced one of their most complete performances of the season to finish third in the standings.

SRH will now face Rajasthan Royals in the Eliminator on May 27 at the Mullanpur Stadium in New Chandigarh. "I think SRH is a strong team. When their top three score runs, they look like a formidable unit," Axar Patel told the broadcaster after Delhi Capitals' match against Kolkata Knight Riders.

A SEASON OF LEARNINGS FOR AXAR PATEL

Delhi Capitals finished IPL 2026 in sixth place with 14 points from 14 matches. The side suffered a major slump midway through the tournament and failed to recover in time to stay alive in the playoffs race. Although Delhi won their final three matches of the season to finish on a positive note, it was not enough to break into the top four, extending their playoffs drought to five consecutive years. Reflecting on the campaign, Axar admitted that Delhi failed to capitalise on key moments during the tournament.

"You have to accept your mistakes and then you can realise what else you can do. One match here or there is fine. We have played good cricket, but had we grabbed the key moments in one or two games, things would be different," Axar said. Delhi struggled particularly in the middle phase of the tournament, losing back-to-back games against Punjab Kings and Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Their fielding lapses and inability to close out crunch moments repeatedly cost them valuable points.

Lionel Messi picks up injury, leaves Argentina and fans worried for FIFA World Cup

Lionel Messi left Inter Miami's match against Philadelphia Union after appearing to hurt his hamstring. The scare overshadowed Miami's 6-4 win and left Argentina fans concerned.

New Delhi. (Agency)

If you are waking up and reading this first thing in the morning, this is probably the exact nightmare scenario you were hoping to avoid. Argentine superstar Lionel Messi has sent shockwaves through the football world after abruptly walking off the pitch during Inter Miami's match on Monday, May 25.

With the highly anticipated FIFA World Cup 2026 just 18 days away, the timing could not be worse for Argentina as fans across the globe hold their collective breath.

LIONEL MESSI'S HAMSTRING SCARE

The drama unfolded in the 73rd minute of a thrilling clash against the Philadelphia Union. The 38-year-old maestro was seen

holding onto his left hamstring in noticeable discomfort. Shortly after, he was substituted for Mateo Silvetti. However, it was his post-substitution behaviour that truly sounded the alarm bells. Instead of taking a seat on the Inter Miami bench to watch the remainder of the game, Messi bypassed his teammates entirely and headed straight down the tunnel to the dressing room.

Inter Miami has yet to provide an official medical update regarding the severity of the issue, leaving an anxious void of information. While a dark cloud formed over Messi's health, Inter Miami managed to secure an absolute goal-fest of a 6-4 victory over Philadelphia. The frantic win, which successfully propelled them to second place in the Eastern Conference standings, was fueled by a spectacular hat-trick from Luis Suarez, a brace by German Berterame, and a dramatic stoppage-time strike from Argentina national teammate Rodrigo de Paul.

ARGENTINA'S TITLE DEFENCE HANGS IN THE BALANCE



This developing injury scare comes at a critical juncture for the reigning world champions. Head coach Lionel Scaloni has yet to announce Argentina's final official squad for the tournament, and any potential threat to Messi's fitness completely rewrites their tactical playbook.

The upcoming tournament in North America is widely expected to be Messi's final World Cup appearance. Having famously led his country to glory in Qatar in 2022 and

subsequently defending their Copa America title, the legendary number 10 remains the undeniable focal point around whom the entire national team is built.

Messi has previously stated that he would try his best to be ready for the World Cup but emphasised he would not force his participation if it put the team's collective success at risk. He famously battled through an injury in the 2024 Copa America final as well, proving his immense dedication to the badge. Domestic league success will do little to calm the nerves of an entire nation. Argentina has been slotted into Group J for the upcoming tournament, where they are scheduled to begin their title defence against Algeria, Jordan, and Austria. The matches are highly anticipated blockbusters set to be played across iconic venues in Arlington, Texas, and Kansas City. Now, an uneasy countdown begins. Football enthusiasts worldwide must wait to see if their captain will be physically fit to lead La Albiceleste onto the pitch to defend their crown, or if this hamstring niggle will derail his final World Cup dream.

Australia pace legend set to retire from ICC events after Women's T20 World Cup

New Delhi. (Agency)

Australian fast-bowling legend Megan Schutt has confirmed that the Women's T20 World Cup 2026 in England and Wales will be her final major ICC tournament. The veteran pacer revealed that she is preparing to gradually pass the baton to the next generation after more than a decade at the highest level of international cricket.

Schutt, who made her international debut in 2012, has established herself as one of the greatest fast bowlers in women's cricket history. The 33-year-old has taken more than 300 international wickets across formats and has played a key role in Australia's dominance over the last decade. Schutt admitted that Australia's recent semi-final exits at ICC events have continued to hurt, especially after being part of so many successful campaigns in the past. However, she also said the setbacks have motivated her to help the younger players experience World Cup success. "I'm competitive in everything I do, which is a good and a bad thing, the last two have stung and, after being part of a lot of success, it stings even



more. But then you think of the kids that haven't won a World Cup; it's a good reminder I've been lucky and want to restart that with the next generation," Schutt told AAP. Over the years, Schutt has earned a

reputation for swinging the new ball and thriving under pressure. She also holds the record for the most wickets in Women's T20 World Cup history, with 48 scalps in 29 matches at an economy rate of 5.65. SCHUTT NOT PLANNING OVERALL RETIREMENT YET

Despite announcing that the T20 World Cup will be her final ICC campaign, Schutt clarified that she is not yet planning a complete retirement from cricket. The Australian quick said she has not mapped out a fixed timeline for stepping away from the game entirely. "I'm not much of a planner; I like to go with the flow. But with how often World Cups are, and everything in between, there's always a carrot that gets dangled and eventually you have to make a decision," Schutt added.

Australia will head into the Women's T20 World Cup aiming for a record-extending seventh title. The tournament begins on June 12, with Australia opening their campaign against South Africa in Manchester on June 13.

After Virat Kohli spat, Travis Head's wife reveals facing hate, brutal online abuse

Kolkata. (Agency)

Australian cricketer Travis Head's wife, Jessica, has spoken out about facing renewed online abuse following a heated on-field incident involving Head and Virat Kohli during the IPL 2026 clash between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bengaluru on May 22.

Jessica revealed that she has once again been targeted with abusive messages and trolling across social media platforms after Head was involved in an on-field spat with Kohli. She said the situation has been emotionally draining and distressing for her and her family. She added that the nature of the abuse felt like a repeat of what she experienced after the ICC ODI World Cup 2023. Head had rattled India with his match-winning 137-run knock in the final in Ahmedabad. "THEY ARE ATTACKING FRIENDS AND FAMILY"

Jessica said she woke up to abusive social media messages targeting her friends and family, urging better mental health

awareness, perspective, and kindness, reminding fans players and families are real people. "It feels like a repeat of the abuse that happened after the World Cup. I woke up to my socials blasting... we are fine but



they are attacking my friends and family," Jessica told Australian media outlet The Advertiser. I think across all sports at the moment there's an important conversation around mental health, perspective and the way we speak to one another. Passion will always be part of sport, but so is remembering there are real people and

families behind the game. Hopefully, this encourages more kindness, and support for one another," Jessica added.

WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN HEAD AND KOHLI?

The flashpoint unfolded during Shivang Kumar's opening over as Venkatesh Iyer launched an aggressive attack, finding boundaries with ease. Amid the onslaught, Kohli appeared to gesture towards Travis Head, who was stationed at mid-wicket, seemingly inviting him to take over the bowling duties. At another moment, Kohli was also seen motioning the Australian away. Head eventually entered the attack in the 18th over and made an instant impact, removing RCB skipper Rajat Patidar with just his second ball. However, that was not the only tense exchange between the two stars. Later in the innings, Head crossed paths with Kohli while shifting fielding positions, with the former India captain once again appearing to exchange words with him.

Novak Djokovic challenges Aryna Sabalenka with special dance move: You can't beat that



New Delhi. (Agency)

24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic revived his viral battle dance celebration at the 2026 French Open and even challenged Aryna Sabalenka with a playful message after his first-round win at Roland Garros.

Following his comeback victory over Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard, Djokovic recreated the same dance that became popular alongside Sabalenka during last year's tournament. The Serbian star was seen dancing on the Roland Garros stairs before sending a cheeky challenge to the women's World No. 1. Roland Garros later shared a video on social media in which Djokovic said: "Check this out. You can't beat that, Aryna. I challenge you." The fun exchange quickly caught attention online, with fans enjoying the light-hearted rivalry between the two tennis stars. Sabalenka and Djokovic had also exchanged similar dance celebrations during the 2025 Roland Garros campaign, turning it into one of the tournament's viral off-court moments.

DJOKOVIC ESCAPES FIRST-ROUND SCARE

Djokovic survived a stern first-round test against Mpetshi Perricard as he battled past the Frenchman in four sets to reach the second round of the men's singles event. The 39-year-old recovered from a slow start to secure a 5-7, 7-5, 6-1, 6-4 victory on Court Philippe-Chatrier. Djokovic initially struggled against Perricard's booming serve and the strong home support behind the young Frenchman. Perricard became the first French player in 14 years to take a set off Djokovic in the opening round at Roland Garros after breaking serve at 5-5 in the first set. However, the Serbian great showed his trademark resilience in the second set. After missing several break-point opportunities, Djokovic finally converted at 6-5 following a thrilling 17-shot rally to level the match. From there, momentum shifted completely in his favour as he dominated the next two sets with his superior experience and consistency.

Doping Olympics' sprinters miss Usain Bolt's record, clean athletes win despite odds

The inaugural Enhanced Games in Las Vegas promised a superhuman, drug-fuelled show. Instead, clean athletes gatecrashed the party, leaving doping advocates with an awkward reality check.

Las Vegas. (Agency)

The inaugural, highly controversial Enhanced Games wrapped up in Las Vegas, delivering a beautifully awkward reality check for the multi-million dollar "doped Olympics" experiment. Organizers threw millions at the event, practically begging science to humiliate natural human limits. Instead, the night's biggest winners were clean, un-enhanced athletes who gatecrashed the

pharma party and walked away with the loot. Turns out, freeing science from regulatory limits does not instantly produce superhumans.

RESULTS ON THE TRACK

The main hook of the Enhanced Games was the promise of shattering track records by freeing athletes from pesky anti-doping regulations. Instead, the night just proved that Usain Bolt's legendary 9.58-second 100m record remains completely untouchable, even when the competition is chemically supercharged. In a massive twist for the organisers, clean athletes completely swept the flagship sprint events. Fred Kerley claimed the title of "World's Fastest Man" at the event, capturing a hefty 250,000 US Dollars grand prize. Running entirely clean and un-enhanced, Kerley clocked a solid 9.97 seconds. While it was an excellent performance for a natural athlete, the fact that a non-enhanced runner claimed the flagship crown was an awkward result for a showcase built around the power of chemical

enhancement. The irony deepened in the Women's 100m sprint. The crown went to



Tristan Evelyn, an explicitly non-enhanced, completely drug-free athlete. Evelyn clocked an 11.14-second run, completely outclassing her chemically enhanced peers. She snatched the 250,000 US Dollars first-place check and headed to the bank, leaving a stadium full of scientifically optimised sprinters wondering where their money went.

NEW WATER BENCHMARKS

While the track felt like a bit of a dud for the pro-doping crowd, the pool saw a massive financial and athletic explosion. Mind you, this explosion happened because the Enhanced Games allowed both performance-enhancing drugs and the high-tech polyurethane "super-suits" that the Olympics banned back in 2010 for being literal cheat codes. Greece's Kristian Gkolomeev absolutely tore through the Men's 50m Freestyle. He touched the wall in a blistering 20.81 seconds, technically clipping the official, drug-free world record mark of 20.88 seconds.

Because he broke the barrier under the event's wildcard rules, Gkolomeev earned a ridiculous 1,000,000 US Dollars world record bonus on top of his 250,000 US Dollars winner's purse. International swimming governing bodies won't touch this record with a ten-foot pole, but Gkolomeev likely won't care while cashing a 1.25 million US Dollars pay cheque.



Bhumi Pednekar

Reacts To Viral Obscene Video, Demands Stricter Laws: 'We Are In A Pandemic'

Actor Bhumi Pednekar has reacted strongly to a viral video showing some men allegedly making obscene gestures towards a woman's wall painting near a swimming pool. The actor shared the clip on social media and demanded stricter laws against crimes targeting women and children. The video, originally shared by the Instagram account Tube Indian, sparked outrage online. Bhumi reposted it on her Instagram Stories and spoke about what she described as a disturbing mindset among young people.

Bhumi Pednekar Calls Out 'Disturbing Mentality'

Sharing the viral clip, Bhumi wrote, "This is the mentality of our youth. These are the same people who are going to sexually assault children and women. We are in a pandemic. Just words and showing shame isn't enough. Stricter laws, stricter laws, stricter laws."

Her reaction comes at a time when several incidents involving women's safety have triggered nationwide conversations. In recent days, reports related to alleged dowry harassment and mental torture cases have shocked people across the country.

One such case that recently drew attention involved the alleged dowry death of a 33-year-old woman in Bhopal.

Bhumi Earlier Reacted To Delhi Assault Case

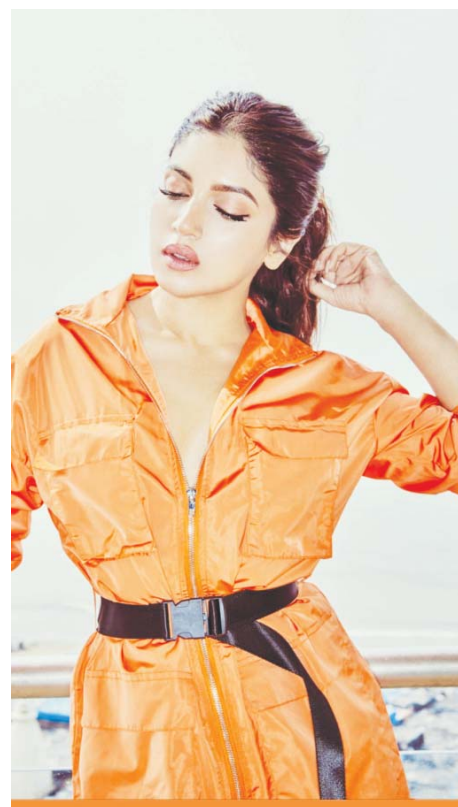
This is not the first time Bhumi has publicly expressed anger over crimes against women and children. In January, the actor had reacted to reports about a six-year-old girl allegedly gang-raped by three boys aged 10, 13 and 14 in Delhi. Bhumi had then spoken about the environment children are growing up in and questioned society's response to such incidents.

The actor said, "Breaks my heart to see under age boys go through with something so heinous. Imagine the environments they are growing up in. We are punishing the voiceless in our country, and have sensationalised, dogs being a threat."

Debate Around Women's Safety Continues: Actors Kangana Ranaut and Ridhi Dogra have also recently spoken about women valuing their independence and raising concerns around marriage-related pressures.

Bhumi Pednekar's Recent Work

On the work front, Bhumi was last seen in Prime Video's series Daldal. Directed by Amrit Raj Gupta, the show is based on Vish Dhamija's bestselling book Bhendi Bazaar. In the series, Bhumi played DCP Rita Ferreria, a police officer investigating a serial killer who slits the wrists of victims.



Aayush Sharma Turns Trainer For Kids Ahil And Ayat, Shares Adorable Gym



Fitness and celebrity parenting came together on social media after Aayush Sharma shared a set of adorable workout videos featuring his children, Ahil and Ayat. The actor, who is married to Salman Khan's sister Arpita Khan Sharma, gave fans a peek into his family fitness time, with the clips quickly drawing attention online.

Aayush Sharma Turns Fitness Trainer For His Kids

In the videos, Aayush is seen guiding Ahil and Ayat through simple gym movements in a playful and patient manner. The clips capture him as a hands-on father, turning the workout session into a fun bonding activity with his children.

From basic movements to small exercise drills, the videos showed the kids enthusiastically following their father's instructions. Sharing the clips on social media, Aayush wrote, "Teach them young.. Watch them grow into Healthy and Wise." Aayush also appeared to have just finished an intense workout himself. The actor was seen shirtless in white boxers, flaunting his toned physique while helping his children with their exercises.

Internet Reacts To Aayush Sharma's Workout Videos With Ahil And Ayat

The videos sparked mixed reactions online. Many users praised Aayush for encouraging discipline, fitness and an active lifestyle from a young age. Others, however, questioned whether children should be introduced to gym-based training so early.

One user wrote, "♥ ♥ like father.. like daughter.. " Another commented, "Dear sir & ayat baby & ahil baba work hard with his lovely father ♥ ♥." A fan also praised the father-daughter moment and wrote, "BE strong daughter always bhai ♥ ♥."

Did Poonam Pandey Just Soft-Launch Her Boyfriend? Actress Shares Cosy Pictures With Mystery Man



Poonam Pandey has often grabbed headlines for her controversial posts, but this time she is in the news for rather happy news. Taking to her Instagram, Poonam Pandey shared a series of pictures with an evil eye emoji as the caption. The post looks like she is soft-launching the man in her life.

In the social media post that Poonam Pandey shared, she was seen with a guy whose face isn't visible in the pictures. The first picture in the post has Poonam looking away from the camera as a guy hugs her while she hides his face with her hands. Another picture in the carousel has Poonam Pandey clicking a mirror selfie as the guy holds her from behind, while Poonam hides his face with her phone.

About Poonam Pandey's previous marriage

Poonam Pandey was previously married to her longtime beau Sam Bombay. Reportedly, they met for the first time in 2019 and began dating. Their relationship gained attention through social media posts and public appearances. Sam, a filmmaker and ad director, often collaborated with Poonam professionally as well. In July 2020, the couple announced their engagement on Instagram. They shared romantic pictures, confirming they were ready to take the next step. On September 1 of the same year, the duo tied the knot in a private ceremony. However, their life took a drastic turn soon after their marriage. The then-couple was in Goa for their honeymoon when Poonam filed an FIR against Sam and accused him of molesting, threatening, and assaulting her. The Goa Police also arrested Bombay but was later released on bail.

Shortly after the incident, Poonam Pandey withdrew her complaint and decided to give another chance to Sam. She publicly stated that they had resolved their differences and were back together. Even though the couple continued their relationship, they remained in the news for frequent disputes. However, in 2021, Poonam Pandey once again accused Sam Bombay of physical assault. She filed a complaint against him after he allegedly hit her. Following this, Poonam decided to end her relationship with Sam.

Eva Longoria Hugs

Aishwarya Rai

Says 'Cannes Can Start Now'

One hug, one shout-out, and Cannes had its moment. After days of waiting for Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's appearance at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival, the actor finally stepped onto the red carpet and immediately became one of the biggest highlights of the evening. While her looks drew plenty of attention, it was her heartwarming reunion with longtime friend Eva Longoria that truly took over social media. Videos from the red carpet went viral soon after, showing Eva visibly thrilled on spotting Aishwarya. The two actors, who have shared a long friendship through their association as L'Oréal ambassadors, greeted each other warmly before posing together for the cameras.

Eva Longoria Hugs Aishwarya Rai At Cannes



In one of the viral clips, Eva can be seen excitedly walking towards Aishwarya and cheering for her in front of the photographers. "That's my best friend! We have arrived, Cannes can start now," Eva exclaimed before hugging Aishwarya on the red carpet. Aishwarya greeted her with equal warmth, and the two posed together as photographers captured the reunion. Another video, later shared on Eva Longoria's Instagram Stories, showed the two exchanging cheek-kisses and chatting happily on the red carpet. The clip, originally posted by Galaft, reflected the easy bond the two stars have shared for years.

Netizens React To Aishwarya And Eva's Reunion

The reunion quickly became one of the most talked-about moments from Cannes. Fans flooded social media with comments celebrating their friendship and red carpet chemistry.

One user wrote, "Eva Longoria + Aishwarya Rai friendship+ Timeless IT'S WORTH IT." Another commented, "OMG @aishwaryarai Bachchan_arb is looking Breathtaking. And here the Two Sweethearts meet again Aish and Eva."



NEWS BOX

Truck overturns in central Bangladesh, killing at least 15 people

DHAKA. (Agency)

A truck carrying iron rods and extra passengers overturned on a major highway early Monday in central Bangladesh, leaving at least 15 people dead and 10 others injured, police said. The crash happened after the driver lost control around 5 am at Soratol area in Tangail district, 83 kilometers (52 miles) northwest of the nation's capital, Dhaka, said local police chief Fuad Hossain. Hossain said the truck was carrying hitchhiking passengers and travelling from Dhaka to the northern region as vacationers began traveling ahead of the Islamic festival Eid al-Adha on Thursday. The truck overturned and killed them at the scene, he said. The official said most of the passengers were day laborers and were traveling to join their families for the festival. Witnesses told TV stations that they rushed to the scene after hearing noise and started rescuing passengers who got trapped.

Road accidents kill thousands every year in the nation of more than 170 million people because of lax oversight of traffic rules, bad road conditions and unskilled driving.

Jet2 Pilot Suffers "Heart Attack" At 30,000 Ft, Plane Makes Emergency Landing In Portugal

world.(Agency)

A Jet2 flight from Tenerife to Birmingham was forced to divert to Portugal after the captain suffered a suspected heart attack while the aircraft was cruising at 30,000ft, Metro.UK reported. The incident occurred on Flight LS1266 in the early hours of Friday (May 22). The plane, carrying 220 passengers, suddenly descended and made an unscheduled landing at Porto's Francisco Sa Carneiro Airport. Passengers described a tense scene as cabin crew rushed down the aisle, asking if anyone onboard had medical training. The report also mentioned that lights flickered during the rapid descent, and several children began crying as the plane lost altitude quickly for the unscheduled landing.

The aircraft touched down in Porto at 2:11 am (local time), with the emergency services boarding immediately, and medical staff attended to the pilot in the cockpit before he was taken to the hospital.

"My partner and I were asleep when we were woken by chaos," a passenger told The Sun on Sunday. "Lights began flashing and hostesses who were visibly upset, seeking a doctor. Our two-year-old began crying like many other children on board because the aircraft was dropping so quickly for an emergency landing." Airline said pilot had suffered a "heart attack" The passengers reportedly remained onboard for over an hour before disembarking. They then spent around 13 hours in the terminal while Jet2 arranged a replacement crew. The airline flew in a new pilot from Manchester, and travellers continued to Birmingham later on a different aircraft.

"We were stranded in Portugal for over 13 hours without accommodation. They wouldn't let us off the plane itself for over an hour," a passenger said as quoted. "Then we were just left to wander around. There was nowhere to stay. They said accommodation was too expensive."

China Launches 3-Crew Space Flight As Part Of Moon Ambitions

World.(Agency)

China launched its Shenzhou-23 mission on Sunday, which will see a Chinese astronaut spend a full year in orbit for the first time, a crucial step in Beijing's ambition to send humans to the Moon by 2030.

The Long March 2-F rocket blasted off in a cloud of flames and smoke on time at 11:08 pm (1508 GMT) from the Jiuquan launch centre in China's northwestern Gobi Desert, video from state broadcaster CCTV showed. The spacecraft separated from the rocket around 10 minutes later and entered orbit, the Chinese space agency (CMSA) said on social media. "The astronauts are in good condition, and the launch has been a complete success," it added. The mission marks the first spaceflight ever undertaken by an astronaut from Hong Kong: 43-year-old Li Jiaying (Lai Ka-ying in Cantonese), who previously worked for the Hong Kong police. Other crew members include 39-year-old space engineer Zhu Yangzhu and 39-year-old Zhang Zhiyuan, a former air force pilot, who is travelling into space for the first time. Cheering crowds waved Chinese flags at a farewell ceremony ahead of the launch, while a band played and the three astronauts saluted on stage.

The crew is set to carry out numerous scientific projects in life sciences, materials science, fluid physics and medicine. A key experiment of Shenzhou-23 will be the full-year stay in orbit by one of the crew in order to study the effects of a long stay in microgravity.

Year-Long Experiment The experiment is part of China's preparations for future lunar missions, as well as missions to Mars. The astronaut selected for this one-year mission will be named at a later date, depending on the progress of the Shenzhou-23 mission, a spokesperson for the CMSA said on Saturday. The main challenges will be long-term effects on humans, including bone density loss, muscle wasting, radiation exposure, sleep disturbances, behavioural and psychological fatigue, said Richard de Grijis, an astrophysicist and professor at Macquarie University in Australia. He also underlined the importance of reliable water and air recycling systems, as well as the ability to manage potential medical emergencies far from Earth. China is "steadily" building operational experience for "sustained occupation" of its Tiangong space station, and year-long missions are an important step towards future lunar and potentially deep-space ambitions, de Grijis told AFP.

Southern California officials trying to prevent explosion or leak from damaged chemical tank

World.(Agency)

A damaged chemical tank in Southern California cracked over the weekend but the interior temperature rose as authorities worked to reduce the risks of a powerful explosion that has led to the evacuation of some 50,000 residents.

The tank overheated Thursday and began venting vapors, leaving local and state officials scrambling to evade a worst possible scenario at a company site in Garden Grove, a city of roughly 170,000 about 40 miles (60 kilometers) south of downtown Los Angeles. No injuries have been reported. Firefighters have repeatedly sprayed the tank with water in an attempt to cool the chemicals. The tank's interior reached 100 degrees (37.7 Celsius) Sunday, an increase of 10 degrees Fahrenheit (5.5 Celsius) since Saturday, according to Democratic state Sen. Tom Umberg.

Fire officials over the weekend discovered the tank had cracked, lowering the potential for a devastating blast, and it did not appear any of the highly volatile chemicals had

leaked, Orange County Fire Authority Capt. Wayhowe Huang said. "There's still the danger of a possible explosion," he said. Officials working to prevent a disaster

Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency Saturday and said he asked President Donald Trump to issue an emergency declaration to bolster federal support for local and state officials.

The tank at GKN Aerospace Transparency Systems, which makes parts for commercial and military aircraft, holds 6,000 to 7,000 gallons (22,700 to 26,500 liters) of methyl methacrylate used to make plastic parts. Monitoring tests found air pollution around the evacuation zone was within normal limits and specialized equipment is being used to ensure gas is not released, state and federal environmental officials said Saturday. The first goal of firefighters is to cool off the chemical inside the tank to prevent a leak or explosion. Drones were monitoring temperatures at 10-minute

intervals to watch for any spikes. Containment barriers have been set up to prevent the chemical from getting into storm drains or reaching creeks or the



nearby ocean in the event of a spill, Orange County Fire Authority division chief Craig Covey said on social media. As the interior temperature rises, methyl methacrylate converts from a liquid to a gas and increases the pressure, according to Purdue University engineering professor Andrew Whelton, who said the crack could mean product or pressure is being released,

reducing the chance of explosion.

"Think of a soda can. If you leave it in a hot car it can explode," Whelton said. "But if you put a hole in the can, the product is released and the can itself doesn't explode."

Firefighters are unlikely to consider making a hole in the tank, fearing a spark that might ignite the volatile and flammable gas. An explosion that could spread the chemical over a broad area and send shrapnel flying would be the worst-case scenario, he said. Dealing with displacement and health concerns

Aerial photos taken by The Associated Press showed streets in the area were empty Sunday, while several evacuation shelters were open. At a high school in neighboring La Palma, people slept in cars or on mats and sleeping bags on the asphalt.

Garden Grove is next to Anaheim, home to Disneyland's two theme parks, which were not under evacuation orders. Park officials said they were monitoring the situation.

US says Iran deal still possible, as Trump tempers expectations

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said a deal to end the war with Iran could materialise on Monday, as President Donald Trump tempered expectations.

The United States and Iran have observed a ceasefire since April 8 while mediators push for a negotiated settlement, although Iran has imposed controls on Gulf shipping and the US has blockaded Iran's ports. "We thought we might have some news last night, maybe today, I wouldn't read too much into it," Rubio said in New Delhi, referring to the potential agreement.

"We have what I think is a pretty solid thing on the table in terms of their ability to open up the straits, get the straits open," he told reporters in the Indian capital, where he has been on an official visit. Rubio's remarks come after Trump said Sunday that he had told his negotiators not to "rush" the deal, while both Washington and Tehran signalled progress towards an agreement. "I have informed my representatives not to rush into a deal

in that time is on our side," a Truth Social posted to the US president's official account said Sunday. "The Blockade will remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified and signed." In a separate post to Trump's Truth Social it read that the



deal "has been largely negotiated, subject to finalization between the United States of America, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the various other Countries." Iran's Tasnim news agency said Sunday its information was that key clauses of a possible agreement remained "unresolved at this time," including the issue of frozen Iranian

assets. The war, which erupted after the United States and Israel attacked the Islamic republic on February 28 and saw Iran respond with missile and drone attacks across the region, has caused fluctuations in the market. But the hint of optimism caused oil prices to plunge close to five percent on Monday. The price of North Sea Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate slipped to USD 99.41 and USD 92.49 a barrel respectively. Nuclear issue Rubio told The New York Times that an agreement with Iran had gained regional support but a nuclear deal couldn't be achieved "in 72 hours on the back of a napkin." "Right now, we have seven or eight countries in the region that are endorsing this approach, and we're prepared to move forward on this approach," he said. Earlier, Rubio had said a bargain could be struck to end the regional war as early as Sunday, but Trump again reined in expectations. A post on Trump's Truth Social read: "If I make a deal with Iran, it will be a good and proper one."

Hezbollah chief Qassem says he hopes for Iran-US deal and that it includes Lebanon

TEGUCIGALPA.(Agency)

Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem expressed hope Sunday for an agreement between Iran and the United States and that Lebanon, where Israel and the Iran-backed group are at war, would be part of its terms. Hezbollah and Israel have clashed since the militants drew Lebanon into the Middle East war on March 2 by firing rockets at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader in US-Israeli strikes. Iranian officials have said an understanding with Washington to halt the regional war will include Lebanon. But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday that US President Donald Trump had reaffirmed his support for Israel's right "to defend itself against threats on all fronts, including in Lebanon". "God willing, this agreement will be finalised and there

are signs of its completion, and accordingly that we too will be among those included in this agreement -- an agreement of a full cessation of hostilities," Qassem said in a televised address broadcast on Hezbollah's Al-Manar television channel. The speech marked the anniversary of Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000 after around two decades of occupation and following persistent pressure from Hezbollah. Qassem said that Iran, which has provided Hezbollah with funding and weapons for decades, "is on top" and would emerge from the regional war "with its head high". Expectations of a Middle East deal come as Lebanon prepares for a fourth round of direct talks with Israel in Washington on June 2 and 3, preceded by a meeting between military delegations at the Pentagon on May 29. Existential threat'

Qassem again repeated his group's rejection of direct talks, charging that key Israel ally Washington "is not an honest broker". "Direct negotiations are completely unacceptable and are a pure gain for Israel," he said, addressing Lebanese authorities who last year committed to disarming Hezbollah and then banned its military activities after the latest war erupted.

"Abandon the direct negotiations and do not give to America so that it gives to Israel... Return to the national understanding," he added. Don't be with them and stab us in the back. You won't gain anything, and it's better for you to stand with your country."

Despite heavy losses in 2023-2024 hostilities with Israel and the current war, Hezbollah refuses to disarm, arguing that its weapons are an internal Lebanese matter and not up for discussion in Washington.

Three dead, 17 workers still missing in collapse of unfinished hotel in Philippines

ANGELES.(Agency)

Rescuers pulled out two workers early Monday from an immense pile of rubble that was a nine-story hotel which collapsed while under construction in a northern Philippine city, bringing the death toll to three with 17 others still missing, officials said.

One of the workers emerged dead while emergency personnel struggled in the early morning hours to revive the other one in an ambulance near the pile of concrete slabs, twisted iron bars and aluminum scaffolding that was all that remained of the building in Angeles City of Pampanga Province. They eventually gave up and drove away.

The poignant scene was witnessed by a small group of journalists, including from The Associated Press, who stood by as hundreds of rescuers led by firefighters and police scrambled for hours to extricate the two workers, who were at the time alive but trapped under concrete slabs and iron bars. Rescuers tried to provide water and medicine intravenously to one of the trapped workers in the rubble in a desperate effort to keep him alive in the scorching summer heat, regional police chief Brig. Gen. Jess Mendez told the AP. "He never made it despite all the efforts," he said.

The third dead victim was a Malaysian tourist trapped in a budget inn that was partly hit by the avalanche of debris from the collapsed building. Another guest at the inn was injured but managed to dash out, officials said. A day after the unfinished building collapse with a loud crashing sound after a fierce thunderstorm, Angeles City Mayor Carmelo Lazatin said rescue efforts would still not be shifted to a body retrieval operation. "My best hope is that we can rescue more people alive," Lazatin told the AP. "We don't want to give the families of the trapped workers any bad news." Anxiety and fear among relatives of the trapped workers, who are waiting in sheds near the rubble, have deepened. I'm losing hope because of what I see—slow rescue work," said Lea Mendoza Casilao, a 47-year-old sardine factory worker whose boyfriend, a mason, was among those still trapped in the rubble.

She brought a week's supply of rice and sardines for him at the construction site, but she said they would never meet as scheduled over the weekend after the building where he was sleeping crumbled before dawn on Sunday. Lazatin said rescuers were moving carefully because huge slabs of concrete were being held up precariously by a tangle of aluminum scaffolding and could crash down on rescuers. Twenty-six workers were either rescued or managed to run out of the collapsing building, where they slept on pieces of plywood on the ground floor. Of the 17 workers still missing, one has been located but has yet to be extricated from the rubble, officials said.

National police chief Gen. Jose Melencio Nartatez Jr. said his force will support an "ongoing investigation to determine the cause of the incident and possible violations of safety and building regulations."

When wars destroy heritage, women lose more than monuments — new research

The women we interviewed connected heritage destruction to fear, displacement and mistrust. One woman explained seeing heritage destroyed made her feel unsafe in her own hometown.

World.(Agency)

As conflict continues in Ukraine, Gaza, Iran and elsewhere, the cost is being recorded not only in deaths and displacement, but also in ruined libraries, mosques, churches, museums, archives and historic neighbourhoods. UNESCO has verified damage to 527 cultural sites in Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion; 164 sites in Gaza since October 7 2023; and damage to the World Heritage-listed Golestan Palace in Tehran following a nearby

airstrike. These losses are usually described as attacks on "history", "civilisation" or "the past" and sometimes as a "loss for all humanity". But as our new research details, such destruction can also negatively affect communities' sense of belonging and identity — and erode women's sense of safety and security amid conflict.

Islamic State's campaign

Islamic State's campaign across Syria and Iraq from 2013 involved mass violence, human rights abuses and forced displacement. The Islamic State committed genocide against the Yazidi minority, including systematic killings and sexual slavery. At the same time, Islamic State methodically targeted cultural and religious heritage, including museums, archaeological sites, churches, shrines, cemeteries, mosques and other historically significant and sacred places. UNESCO called this "cultural cleansing". There was an intentional strategy to destroy cultural diversity through attacks on people

identified by their cultural, ethnic or religious background, combined with attacks on their key cultural and religious centres. We spoke with Syrian and Iraqi women affected by the Islamic State's heritage destruction. We found such



destruction was experienced not only as cultural loss, but as a form of gendered harm. For the women we spoke to, heritage destruction was part of a wider campaign of domination: an attack on their memories, identities and personal safety.

Response to heritage destruction

Since Islamic State's attacks, international responses to heritage destruction have become more extensive.

In 2016, the UN Human Rights Council called on states to protect the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, including the ability to access and enjoy cultural heritage. That same year the International Criminal Court convicted a terrorist leader of the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against historic and religious buildings in Timbuktu, Mali. In 2017, the UN Security Council condemned the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, recognising it as a threat to global security.

These developments helped to shift heritage destruction from a specialist conservation issue to a matter of human rights, criminal accountability and international security.

But they say almost nothing about how women experience heritage destruction in distinctly gendered ways.