

Khara Bath to vada: Siddaramaiah-Shivakumar meet features classic Karnataka menu

Siddaramaiah hosted a breakfast meeting with DK Shivakumar and senior Congress leaders at his residence. The traditional menu drew attention alongside intense political speculation around the huddle.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Amid intense political speculation surrounding Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's key breakfast meeting with senior Congress leaders, attention also turned to the elaborate traditional menu served during the gathering. The high-profile meeting, attended by Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and several ministers, featured a classic South Indian breakfast spread at Siddaramaiah's residence. Leaders were served idlis, vadas, dosas, khara bath and kesari bath, along with coconut chutney and sambar. Fresh fruits, tea and coffee were also part of the menu offered during the political huddle. Even as there has been no official confirmation of a leadership change in Karnataka, sources inside Congress claimed there is a "100 per cent possibility" of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar becoming the



next chief minister. In the latest development, Siddaramaiah told ministers during the breakfast meeting that he would resign from the post after lunch.

Hinting at major political developments, it is also speculated that a cabinet reshuffle is likely if the leadership transition takes place. Nearly 15 to 20 ministers from the existing cabinet could be replaced with new faces. Meanwhile, Karnataka governor Thaawarchand Gehlot reportedly left Bengaluru for his hometown in Madhya Pradesh late on Wednesday night due to a family emergency. Sources said the governor left the city around 10.30 pm on and boarded a flight at approximately 11.30 pm, with no return booking made so far. Despite the governor's absence from Bengaluru, reports quoting sources in the Karnataka Chief Minister's Office said there had been no change in plans regarding the political developments.

Misbehaves with women MPs: TMC's Kakoli Dastidar complains against Kalyan Banerjee

New Delhi.(Agency)

In yet another development that may not go down well with the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC), party MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar has written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to formally lodge a complaint against party colleague Kalyan Banerjee. Dastidar has accused the TMC chief whip in the Lok Sabha of misconduct, verbal abuse and derogatory behaviour towards women MPs inside the House.

In her letter dated May 28, 2026, the Barasat MP alleged that Banerjee repeatedly verbally abused her inside the Lok Sabha and routinely engaged in inappropriate conduct. She sought permission from the Speaker to formally register the complaint and demanded action and "punishment" in the matter.

"I seek your permission to lodge a formal complaint to you for redressal against Lok Sabha Member of AITC Kalyan Banerjee, who has repeatedly verbally abused me inside the Lok Sabha. This misogyny has been against many lady members and needs to be punished," she wrote in the letter. Following the TMC's crushing defeat in the Assembly elections, Mamata Banerjee removed Kakoli Ghosh from the post of party Chief Whip and appointed Kalyan Banerjee in her place. Since then, a phase of mutual recriminations has begun within the party's parliamentary group.

Dastidar, once considered among the closest aides of Mamata Banerjee and part of the party's old guard, has in recent weeks emerged as one of the most vocal critics of the TMC leadership and its organisational functioning. In the letter to Speaker Om Birla, Dastidar alleged that Kalyan Banerjee's behaviour was not limited to her alone and claimed that several other women MPs had also faced similar treatment from him.



Nadiad's Alleged Corruption Nexus: Political Patronage, Fake Visa Syndicates and Serious Questions Over Law Enforcement

Nadiad's Visa Fraud Nexus Exposed

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Makan

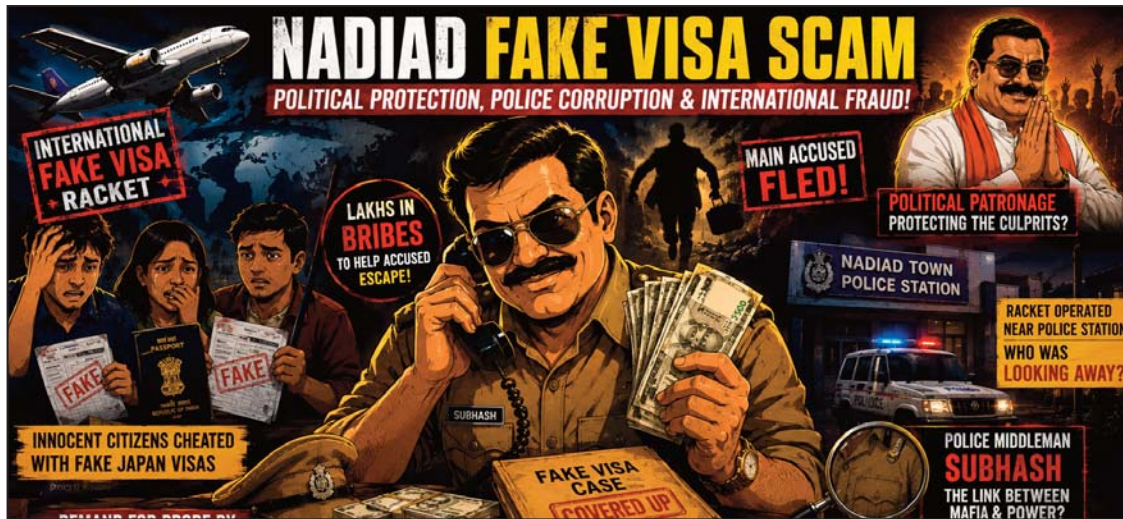
Nadiad. A controversial case involving an alleged fake visa racket in Gujarat's Charotar region has sparked serious questions about corruption, political influence, and the functioning of local law enforcement agencies. According to allegations and claims made by sources, a suspected intermediary linked to Nadiad Town Police Station, identified as Subhash, is accused of using his influence to shield individuals allegedly involved in a fake Japan visa scam that reportedly targeted unsuspecting citizens seeking employment opportunities abroad.

Allegations of Political Protection

Sources claim that the accused intermediary enjoys the backing of influential political figures, enabling him to operate with impunity despite repeated complaints regarding illegal activities and alleged extortion networks. The allegations suggest that individuals connected to the fake visa operation collected large sums of money from victims after providing allegedly forged travel documents and false assurances of overseas employment.

Fake Visa Network Operating Near Police Station

According to information



gathered from local sources, the alleged visa racket was operating openly from an office located near Nadiad Town Police Station. Victims reportedly paid substantial amounts in exchange for visas and overseas placement promises. However, suspicions arose when several documents were allegedly found to be fraudulent, exposing what sources describe as an organized international scam. Critics argue that such a serious case warranted immediate and stringent legal action. Instead, allegations have emerged that certain influential intermediaries interfered with the investigation process.

Claims of Financial Settlements

Sources further allege that representatives linked to the principal accused approached influential local intermediaries

following the exposure of the scam. The allegations suggest that financial settlements were arranged, allowing key suspects to evade immediate legal consequences. These claims have not been independently verified by authorities.

Questions Raised Over Internal Oversight

At the time of the alleged incidents, the police station was reportedly under the supervision of Police Inspector Sanjay Baldevbhai Desai. Sources claim that senior officials may not have been fully aware of the alleged activities being carried out behind the scenes. If true, the allegations raise concerns regarding internal monitoring mechanisms and accountability within the policing system.

Given the international implications of visa fraud and its potential impact on India's

reputation abroad, local observers and complainants are calling for an independent inquiry by specialized agencies. Demands include: A thorough investigation into the alleged fake visa network. Examination of the role of intermediaries and facilitators. Scrutiny of possible political influence in the handling of the case. Verification of alleged disproportionate assets and financial transactions linked to those accused. The central question being raised by complainants is whether influential individuals helped protect those allegedly involved in the visa fraud operation. Observers argue that only a transparent and impartial investigation can determine the truth behind the allegations and restore public confidence in law enforcement institutions.

Jaishankar, Ukrainian FM discuss war, peace push amid shifting battlefield dynamics

Calling it a "useful meeting", Jaishankar said the two sides "exchanged views on the Ukraine conflict" and reviewed bilateral cooperation.

New Delhi.(Agency)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha on Wednesday held talks on the Russia-Ukraine war, evolving battlefield dynamics and efforts to secure a "comprehensive and lasting peace", amid Kyiv's push for greater global backing. The discussions took place on the sidelines of the informal meeting of European Union foreign ministers, the Gymnich Forum in Cyprus. Calling it a "useful meeting", Jaishankar said the two sides "exchanged views on the Ukraine conflict" and reviewed bilateral cooperation.

Sybiha described the interaction as "meaningful", saying the conversation centred on Russia's continuing war against Ukraine and recent developments on the battlefield. Referring to Russia's intensified attacks, including a recent large-scale strike on Kyiv, the Ukrainian minister said Moscow's attempts "to intimidate our people through terror" had failed to weaken Ukraine's resolve.

"Our message is clear, we want to end this war and achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace," Sybiha said, adding that he and Jaishankar discussed diplomatic efforts and the need for wider international involvement. "As Europe steps up its responsibility, we would welcome India's strong voice and input," he said.

The two ministers also discussed ways to deepen bilateral engagement and agreed to remain in regular contact on issues of shared interest. e battlefield, "in particular, Ukraine's growing initiative". India has maintained a calibrated position on the conflict, repeatedly calling for dialogue and diplomacy while sustaining ties with both Moscow and Kyiv.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently maintained that "this is not an era of war" and expressed support for peace initiatives. Separately, Jaishankar met Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud to discuss the evolving situation in West Asia. He also held talks with EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas on India-EU cooperation and regional developments.

Jaishankar arrived in Cyprus earlier in the day to attend the Gymnich meeting, an informal gathering of EU foreign ministers that focuses on pressing geopolitical.



Dharmendra Pradhan reviews NEET-UG re-exam security measures ahead of June 21 test

NTA Director General Abhishek Singh briefed members on the additional measures undertaken to strengthen examination security and ensure smooth conduct of

New Delhi.(Agency)

A comprehensive assessment of the existing surveillance mechanisms for the upcoming re-exam of NEET-UG next month, along with steps proposed to strengthen them, was discussed during a high-level review meeting chaired by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan with K Radhakrishnan, chairman of the high-powered committee created to monitor implementation of recommendations proposed to the National Testing Agency (NTA). The National Testing Agency has been



conducting the NEET-UG examination since 2019. The exam held on May 3 was cancelled following leaks of multiple

scheduled for June 21.

Top officials from the NTA, the Education Ministry and other representatives from the ministry participated in the meeting.

According to an official release, NTA Director General Abhishek Singh briefed members on the additional measures undertaken to strengthen examination security and ensure smooth conduct of the examination.

Pradhan said ensuring security in all aspects related to the examination was of paramount importance. "He stressed that equal priority must be given to ensuring adequate facilities and a student-friendly

environment at examination centres across the country," the release stated.

A seven-member committee was formed under the chairmanship of former ISRO chief K. Radhakrishnan in the aftermath of the May 2024 paper leak controversy to recommend measures for conducting foolproof examinations in future.

Among its recommendations, the committee suggested taking the examination process completely online and hiring permanent staff within the NTA to ensure greater accountability. More than 22 lakh candidates are expected to appear for the rescheduled NEET examination on June 21 at over 5,400 centres across 550 cities in India and abroad.

News box

Illegal borewell sealed on Old Delhi Road

GURGAON.(Agency)

A joint team of MCG and Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) sealed an illegal borewell operating at Shiv Ashram on Old Delhi Road during an inspection against unauthorised groundwater extraction.

The action was carried out by a team led by MCG additional commissioner Yash Jaluka, executive engineer Praveen Raghav and HSPCB officials, along with staff from both departments.

During the inspection, officials found that groundwater was being extracted without the mandatory permission, violating environmental regulations. The borewell was immediately sealed.

Officials said the inquiry revealed that the borewell was allegedly being operated by Rajeev Yadav alias Sonu Yadav, a resident of Shiv Ashram. Taking serious note of the violation, the joint team shut the facility on the spot and directed the individual concerned to comply with legal requirements.

Authorities said unauthorised groundwater extraction adversely affects the city's groundwater levels and attracts strict action under environmental rules. Relevant facts were documented during the inspection and a detailed report was prepared.

The matter has also been referred to the Haryana Water Resources Department for further action at its level.

Officials said drives against illegal borewells and unauthorised groundwater extraction will continue across the city, warning that violators will face stringent action. MCG and HSPCB appealed to residents and institutions to obtain necessary approvals before undertaking groundwater extraction and cooperate in efforts to protect water resources and ensure their sustainable use.

Mule account holder held in Rs 2 crore 'digital arrest' scam

Noida.(Agency)

A 26-year-old man was arrested on Wednesday for letting cybercriminals use his bank account to park over Rs 2 lakh in a Rs 2 crore 'digital arrest' fraud case. Police said his bank account was used by a syndicate to transfer and route money. Two other men linked to the case have been arrested.

According to the officers from the cybercrime police station in Noida, the fraud took place on April 10 when fraudsters contacted a city resident posing as officers from the National Investigation Agency, Pune. They allegedly told the man that bank accounts linked to his Aadhaar card were being used to fund terror activities. They threatened him with immediate arrest and legal action.

Police said the scammers intensified the pressure by sending him fake RBI letters and forged arrest warrants through WhatsApp. Under fear and mental stress, he transferred Rs 2.10 crore into multiple bank accounts operated by the gang.

Following the victim's complaint, a case was registered at the Cyber Crime police station under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the IT Act. During the investigation, police analysed electronic evidence and banking transactions, which led them to Aman Kumar.

Investigators found that Rs 2.2 lakh connected to the fraud was transferred into Kumar's bank account.

City bus service to be launched on June 15, same day as first flight from Noida International Airport

Noida.(Agency)

The city e-bus service will begin operations from June 15, the same day the first commercial flights will take off from Noida International Airport. The announcement was made on Wednesday during a review meeting by Noida Authority and UPSRTC.

In a separate meeting in Lucknow, UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath directed officials to ensure the availability of sufficient buses in the first phase for connectivity to the airport. He said the public transport system should be fully strengthened before the proposed flight operations begin. The number of buses will be increased once the ridership and demands increase.

The bus service will connect Noida to areas around Greater Noida and Greater Noida West at a maximum fare of Rs 30. The fleet of 100 buses — 10 of which are double-deckers — will cover 200 km every day and ply on five routes. While all routes will originate at Botanical Garden, their destination will be Gaur Chowk and Ek Murti in Greater Noida West, Noida International Airport, Sector 62, Surajpur Collectorate, and Anand Vihar or Ghaziabad. Details of the fares have not been announced yet, an official said, but added that the maximum fare on all routes will not exceed Rs 30. A trial run of the buses will commence a week before the launch. The operation of the buses will be carried out by UPSRTC while the viability gap funding for the service will be borne by Noida Authority. The process for hiring 300 staff as drivers and conductors has begun.

Earlier, the Authority planned to run 50 buses, but the number has now been increased to 100.

A Noida Authority official said passengers will be able to purchase tickets through a mobile app as well as manually. "The plying of e-rickshaws will be banned on routes where the e-buses will operate," he said.

Although the city has around 4,548 buses, these largely cater to private company employees, leaving residents dependent on 19,800 cabs, 17,892 autorickshaws and 26,997 e-rickshaws for daily commuting and last-mile connectivity. The Authority is developing a depot in Sector 90 where the buses will be parked and charged. Facilities including a bus depot, e-charging points, bus service stations and workshops for drivers and conductors will be provided by Noida Authority.

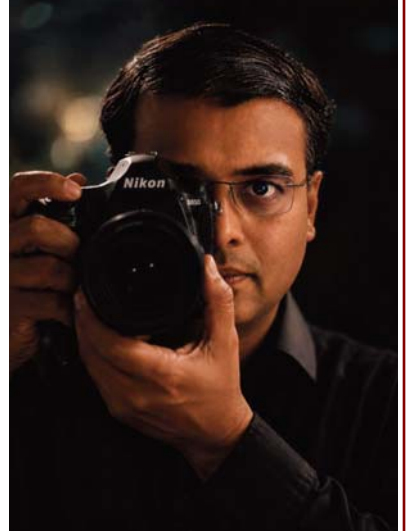
Simultaneously, the roadways have also collaborated with a private firm, Switch Mobility, to introduce eight double-decker air-conditioned buses in Noida. Under this arrangement, operations will be managed by UPSRTC while maintenance will be handled by Switch Mobility. These buses are stationed at the Morna depot in Sector 35. Rohitash Kumar, assistant regional manager, UPSRTC, said that a charging station for this facility is ready at the Morna Depot. "After completing the remaining formalities including registration of buses, these double-decker buses will also start plying on Noida roads in two-three weeks," he said.

Ahmedabad Professional Bags Prestigious Norwegian Grant; Brings Laurels to the Nation

Ahmedabad:In a matter of immense pride for India, renowned photographer and senior professional, Dr. Amit M. Patel (Ph.D), has been honored with the highly prestigious international photography recognition, the "Phillips Stanford Grant and Fellowship," awarded from Norway. The distinguished grant, valued at approximately USD 5,000 is globally conferred upon exceptionally talented artists, visual creators, and researchers to foster excellence and innovation in creative fields. By securing this global recognition, Dr. Patel has put Indian photography on the international map. Two Decades

of Visual Storytelling Dr. Amit Patel has actively pursued photography as a passionate hobby for more than two decades, carving out a distinctive identity for himself. His work reflects a unique artistic blend of: Human emotions and social sensitivity The sheer simplicity of rural life Diverse, complex perspectives of modern urban living His evocative photographs have been showcased at several prestigious national and international exhibitions. Over the years, he has also bagged numerous accolades in various international photography competitions, with his creative works and research

papers finding pride of place in renowned photography journals and art magazines. Photography as a Medium of Expression "Photography is not merely a visual art form, but a powerful medium of expression that reflects society," says Dr. Patel. His lenses artistically portray subtle, often overlooked aspects of life, inspiring viewers to think deeply and connect emotionally with the subject matter. This international grant will provide Dr. Patel with substantial financial support for his upcoming creative projects, offering him wider opportunities to present his work on global platforms and



enhance his participation in the international art community.

Quack held after raid on illegal clinic in Gurgaon's New Palam Vihar

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A man allegedly running an illegal medical practice from a clinic in New Palam Vihar was arrested after a raid on Tuesday night. The raid was jointly conducted by the health department, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the police. Officials said used syringes, IV glucose bottles, medical equipment and allopathic medicines were seized during the inspection.

The accused, Sukumar Biswas, a native of West Bengal, was operating "Dr Bengali Janta Sewa Clinic" at Yadav Market in New Palam Vihar, Sector 110. Officials said Biswas failed to produce any valid medical qualification, registration certificate, drug licence or other documents authorising him to practise medicine or stock allopathic drugs.

According to the complaint filed by medical officer Dr Om Parkash, a joint team comprising him, drugs control officer (FDA Gurgaon-II) Dr Suresh Kumar and the police conducted a surprise inspection at the clinic after receiving information about alleged illegal medical practice at

the premises. The complaint also stated that some medicines and medical material bearing the seal "VK" were separately taken into police possession. Officials alleged the accused could neither provide any purchase or sale records for the



medicines nor disclose their source.

According to officials, the accused had been operating the clinic for nearly six years despite not being a registered medical practitioner. Police said he later gave a written statement admitting that he did not possess valid qualifications to practise medicine. An FIR was registered at

Bajghera police station at 11.44pm on May 26 under Section 34 (related to unauthorised medical practice) of the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, 2019, and sections 318(4) (cheating), 336(3) (forgery for purpose of cheating) and 340 (using forged documents or electronic records as genuine) of BNS.

Officials said the seized medicines, medical instruments, blood test reports and related documents were handed over to police for further investigation.

Health officials said such clinics pose serious risks as unqualified practitioners often administer medicines, injections and IV fluids without proper diagnosis, hygiene standards or emergency protocols. This increases the chances of infection, wrong treatment, antibiotic misuse and medical complications. Officials added that the use of unlicensed allopathic drugs and reused or improperly disposed syringes can also create wider public health concerns.

Cold shoulder for 41 flooding spots in MCG area as another

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The city may again face widespread waterlogging this monsoon, as authorities are yet to begin work on 41 identified hotspots, according to a review report by MCG.

Of the 155 waterlogging-prone hotspots across 35 wards under the corporation, desilting work has been completed at 55 locations, while work at 59 sites is under way. Authorities have missed key deadlines, raising concerns over potential flooding very soon. The deadline for desilting work, which was earlier May 31, has now been extended to June 15. However, with monsoon not too far away, officials say the likelihood of finishing the remaining work is slim.



With permanent drainage upgrades far from completion, the corporation has begun making temporary arrangements. "To manage emergencies during the monsoon, authorities will deploy 35 large generator sets, water tankers and tractors across key points to pump out

accumulated rainwater," said an officer. A workforce of 44 supervisors and 270 staff will be stationed across the city to keep the drainage and sewer systems functional. However, experts caution that unless drainage lines are interconnected and fully cleaned, temporary pumps and generators will be largely ineffective during intense rainfall.

MCG's jurisdiction includes 607 km of stormwater drains. Of this, 408 km has been cleaned.

Officials claim they will extend the cleaning to 473.6 km, but 153 km of drains remain unattended. Additionally, 66 km of the drainage network has not yet been mapped.

Rescuers are rushing dehydrated and sick birds to hospital, via delivery apps

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Gurgaon: Every time there's a heatwave, Bird Charity Hospital knows what to expect -- dozens of dehydrated and injured avians that have collapsed from the sky. This summer, what has arriving vets by surprise is how they're arriving.

Residents spotting birds in distress are using app-based delivery services like Porter to send them for urgent medical care, turning personnel used to run errands into unexpected participants in the city's evidently growing bird rescue network. Seven to eight birds have been reaching the hospital every day on an average in perforated cardboard boxes that are handed over by delivery personnel.

Residents have been placing them in these boxes after lining them with soft cloth and punching holes for ventilation. They are then booking small parcel deliveries on apps like Porter to the hospital at Sadar Bazar.

The hospital is currently receiving over 30 birds every day, including pigeons, doves, parrots, bulbuls, mynas, kites, owls and peacocks. Parayni Madan recently used this method on finding a pigeon chick that had fallen out of its

nest. "It was on the road near our house. Since we could not immediately go to



the hospital, we sent the pigeon through Porter," Madan said. Hospital staff say many bird rescuers feel unable to travel long distances in the extreme heat, and app-based transport services have become a quick way to ensure they get the treatment required. App users tell the rider that the box contains an injured bird; in many cases, they call the

hospital beforehand to let them know it is arriving through Porter.

App policies only restrict dangerous, illegal or hazardous items. There are no specific rules against live cargo.

"Some common health issues are dehydration, diarrhoea, paralysis, loss of appetite, asthma, skin and eye infections, as well as coryza, which affects the lungs. These are all related to extreme heat," says Raj Kumar, a

veterinary physician at the hospital. He adds, "We receive calls every summer, but this time it has been particularly bad." Doctors say the birds are being treated with antibiotics, eye drops and rehydration support. Kumar advises residents to put water in bowls on their balconies and rooftops. "Those feeding birds should soak the grain in water for a few hours first," he says. Veterinarians say distressed birds should be put in shaded areas, offered water or ORS solution, and put in properly ventilated boxes if being transported.

India's laws regulate the handling and transport of wild birds, especially protected species covered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. DFO (Wildlife), Gurgaon, RK Jangra says, however, that in emergency rescue situations, "the priority is immediate care and survival". Jangra says, "In cases linked to heatwave distress, the first step should be medical attention. Injured or dehydrated birds can be transported to veterinarians or rescue facilities for treatment, and residents should inform the forest department afterwards."

In Your Neighbourhood: Inside one of Mumbai's last remaining old-world gun shops in Dhobi Talao

Bajrang Dal activists clashed with Muslim residents at a housing society after objections to goats being brought in for Eid ul Adha sacrifice; the animals have since been moved out.

Mumbai. (Agency)

As traffic rushes past Vasudev Balwant Phadke Chowk, it is easy to miss a place like this. Hidden in the lanes of Dhobi Talao, lined with ordinary grocery and stationery shops, stands Tahir Arms and Ammunition — a store quietly selling guns in the heart of Mumbai for nearly 90 years. Outside the locked entrance, a customer waits to be let in. Inside, rifles, pistols and machetes sit carefully displayed behind old wooden cabinets with glass panels. Quietly celebrating its 90th year in business, the shop feels suspended in another era.

Founded in 1935 by Tahir Bandukwala, the store originally catered to royal families and aristocrats. Today, it is run by brothers

Hakim Hatim Bandukwala and Suhail Hatim Bandukwala, who have managed the business together since 1975.

“Back in the days before Independence, royal families would come here and buy hundreds of guns in one go and leave for their private police fleets,” said Hakim. Originally located on Abdul Rehman Street, the business was once jointly owned by eight brothers of Tahir Bandukwala. Over the decades, both the city and the business have changed dramatically. “Today, we only sell guns suitable for sport shooting and only to people with valid licences,” shared Hakim.

The history of the shop offers a glimpse into a time when recreational shooting was



seen as a legitimate hobby rather than a heavily restricted activity. “Today, people barely have the time or space for it,” Hakim noted, adding, “Shooting as a hobby is expensive and requires patience. Every bullet costs money and can only be used once. With open spaces disappearing and wildlife becoming endangered, the

sport now comes with many restrictions.”

Now largely limited to shooting clubs, the sport has steadily become more niche over the years. That shift has also affected the business of shops like Tahir Arms and Ammunition.

Run more out of family pride than commercial ambition, the business has been quietly declining. “We still see children and grandchildren of our old royal clientele coming in as loyal customers,” said Suhail. “And whenever India performs well in shooting at events like the Olympics, mothers come in wanting to buy equipment for their children and invest in the sport.”

The brothers also recall a very different

Mumbai from decades ago. “We had celebrities like Raj Kapoor and Shammi Kapoor visiting often,” Hakim said. “They were loyal customers and would simply walk into theAfter Independence, however, changing government regulations around weapon ownership transformed the trade. “Earlier, Mumbai and other princely states were hubs for this business,” said Suhail. “If someone wanted good-quality guns, they had to come here. Today, shops have expanded into smaller towns and villages where shooting is practiced more widely.”According to the brothers, gun ownership in rural India is often tied to agriculture, with farmers using weapons to protect crops from animals.

Short news

2 held by Chandigarh Police for Rs 59.92 lakh immigration fraud

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Chandigarh Police has arrested two immigration consultants for allegedly duping a complainant and others of Rs 59.92 lakh on the pretext of arranging work permits and job placements in New Zealand, officials said on Wednesday.

Police have identified the arrested accused as Yuvraj Sobti (44) and Harneet Walia (41), both residents of Mohali.

A police team from Sector 26 Police Station arrested the accused following an FIR — dated May 23 — registered on the complaint of Babita, on behalf of her brother, Vivek Kumar, officials said.

The case was registered under BNS Sections 316(2), 318(4), 336(3) and 340(2), and Section 24 of the Immigration Act.

Police said the accused were operating a firm, M/s Truway Consultancy Pvt Ltd, from MY SOHO Workspace, Timber Market, Madhya Marg, in Chandigarh. They allegedly lured people by claiming that they would send them to New Zealand for jobs. They allegedly promised to arrange work permits, visa filing and documentation. After collecting the amounts from the victims, police said the accused closed the office and fled. The complainant and others were allegedly duped to the tune of Rs 59.92,000.

Police also said both the arrested accused were found involved in multiple FIRs related to cheating and immigration fraud dated February 25, 2025; November 19, 2025; December 9, 2025; and May 23, 2026 — at Police Station Sector 26.

India's first super pressure balloon launched in Vijayawada

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

Indian aerospace startup RaudraNex Space Technologies achieved a milestone on Wednesday with the STRATO-X1 mission, launched from Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium aboard India's first Super Pressure Balloon platform.

The mission served as a concept and operational validation exercise, designed to test system readiness and collect data for future aerospace applications. STRATO-X1 also carried REPS Mk-I, an experimental platform exploring air-breathing cold plasma propulsion.

Prakash Navadeep, co-founder of RaudraNex Space Technologies, said the mission was not intended for full propulsion qualification but focused on validating onboard systems in real flight conditions.

“Initial observations indicated that the payload completed its planned flight profile and functioned in line with mission objectives,” he said. A detailed post-flight analysis is under way to assess performance. By operating on Super Pressure Balloon platform, RaudraNex demonstrated how private aerospace firms can transition advanced technologies from laboratory research into operational environments.

Industry experts noted the mission highlights the growing capabilities of India's private space sector in propulsion and high-altitude systems. The mission marks a step in RaudraNex's roadmap toward advanced propulsion, near-space operations and next-generation aerospace platforms.

Ahmedabad Air India plane crash: Ahead of one-year anniversary, probe report may be ‘inconclusive’

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

With the June 12 anniversary of the Air India flight crash in Ahmedabad drawing close, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) will be releasing a report of its detailed probe into what triggered the deployment of the Ram Air Turbine (RAT) within nanoseconds of the plane taking off. However, it may be “inconclusive” on the cause of the crash, sources told The Indian Express.

The AI-171 flight headed to Gatwick in the UK crashed within 5 minutes of take-off from Sardar Vallabhbhai International Airport in Ahmedabad, killing all people on board barring one survivor. A total of 260 people died, including 19 on the ground. The trigger for the RAT deployment, indicating a “critical” failure on the plane, has been at the centre of the



year-long investigation into the chain of events that led to the disaster.

While Union Minister for Civil Aviation Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu recently said the AAIB was in “the final stages of the probe”, officials privy to the investigation said that its report will be subject to a “consensus discussion” with the Indian body's US counterpart, NTSB or National Transport Safety Board. The plane that crashed was a Dreamliner, made by the US

plane manufacturer Boeing. Sources said the AAIB probe could provide a definitive account of the systems failure on the flight causing the RAT to deploy within seconds of take-off, having undertaken a “thorough analysis” of a “specific” fault that appears to have originated in the aircraft's electrical system and caused a cascading disruption of power distribution and cockpit systems.

Apart from “potential technical failures”, the AAIB also probed “pilot actions”, sources said, adding that so far “incriminating circumstantial evidence” linking either pilot to the crash has been elusive. While Captain Sumeet Sabharwal was the pilot, Clive Kunder was the co-pilot, with Kunder giving the mayday call, an officer said.

Missing Saroops Probe: SGPC ‘withholding vital records’, police tells HC, day after Dhami said SIT exceeding jurisdiction

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Amid protests by candidates over alleged “technical disruptions”, the Staff Selection Commission (Central Region) on Tuesday cancelled the Constable (General Duty) Examination, 2026, at several centres in Uttar Pradesh.

In a series of posts on X, the SSC said that technical disruptions were reported at one centre each in Kanpur, Prayagraj, Lucknow, and Muzaffarpur during the forenoon shift on May 25 (Monday). “As a result, tests scheduled at these centres were cancelled and affected candidates were rescheduled for subsequent dates,” it added.

According to the SSC, disruptions continued at a part of the iTech centre in

Prayagraj, leading to some candidates advocating a boycott and affecting the ongoing examination at another part of the same venue.



“Accordingly, the examination at this Prayagraj venue has been cancelled for all remaining days.

Affected candidates will be rescheduled.

The SSC plans to complete the examination process for all candidates by May 31, 2026 (Sunday). “The SSC has been conducting the exam since April 27, 2026. According to the Commission, tests are being held in multiple shifts across the country at about 230 centres, and are scheduled to conclude on May 31. Earlier, candidates staged protests over alleged mismanagement at the Prayagraj examination centre. According to police, several candidates alleged that technical glitches had severely disrupted the examination process. The situation escalated after candidates, angered by the reported server failures and inadequate arrangements at the centre, allegedly vandalised property inside the premises and demanded cancellation of the examination.

‘First such incident, it has maligned image of our society’: Residents of Mira Road society in Mumbai fearful after communal tension ahead of Bakrid

Poonam Estate Cluster 1 has a long history of communal harmony and no member of the housing complex was involved in the clashes that took place outside the premises on Tuesday, say residents

Mumbai. (Agency)

Residents of Poonam Estate Cluster 1 in Mira Road said families remain traumatised after communal tension erupted outside the housing complex between Monday night and Tuesday afternoon, adding that the incident had damaged the image of a society known for communal harmony.

Police personnel continued to remain deployed at the gates of the complex on Tuesday to prevent any escalation. Residents said people from all communities had lived peacefully in the society and maintained that no member of the housing complex was involved in the clashes that took place outside the premises.

“Everyone inside the society was scared and remained indoors because of the heavy police bandobast,” a resident said, praising the police for restricting entry to outsiders after tensions escalated. The controversy stemmed from complaints by some

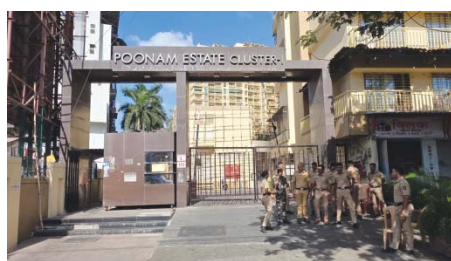
residents of D-Wing over temporary goat sheds erected during Bakrid in the society premises. “There was a strong smell throughout the day and late into the night, along with noise from goats and handlers,” a resident claimed.

According to residents, they initially approached the Kashmirira police, who informed them that the matter fell under the jurisdiction of the municipal corporation.

Residents later contacted local members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), following which civic officials visited the society and demolished the temporary shed after allegedly finding violations of fire safety norms.

Some residents also blamed authorities for the confusion surrounding the issue. “There is no clarity from the municipal corporation or police. If clear instructions had been issued that goats are not allowed inside residential complexes, people would

not have brought them in,” a resident said. Hemanshree Joshi, a resident of D-Wing, said that on Monday night, four members — including three from the Muslim



community and one from the managing committee — visited her residence to assure residents that hygiene concerns would be addressed. “They assured us that the area would be cleaned three times a day and that there would be no disturbance. The issue had largely been resolved,” Joshi said. Joshi alleged that tensions escalated

after an altercation broke out outside the building following the meeting.

Residents repeatedly stressed that the society had a long history of communal harmony and joint celebrations across communities. “There are 650 flats and no one fights in our society. This is the first such incident and it has maligned the image of our society,” another resident said. Imran Ali Charania, one of the volunteers involved in organising festivities in the society, said an annual general meeting held a few years ago had approved celebrations of both Hindu and Muslim festivals within the complex. “Residents from both communities participate in each other's festivals,” Charania said. Charania said goats were permitted only in the open parking area near Gate No. 3, where a temporary shed was erected for seven to 10 days during Bakrid. “Slaughtering is strictly prohibited inside the society premises.



Gadhada and Babariya areas. So far, no symptoms of any other disease have been detected among the monitored lions. It may be noted that forest minister Arjun Modhwadia on Tuesday said two lion cubs had died of suspected infection caused by the Babesia parasite in Gir.

“The forest department is also conducting extensive surveillance of lions in the revenue areas of Amreli and Bhavnagar districts, with daily health status reports being compiled and reviewed...” officials present in the meeting informed the CM, as per the release.

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha member Parimal Nathwani, who is also a lion enthusiast, has expressed concerns about Asiatic Lion. Terming the development ‘disturbing’, Nathwani, who is the director (Corporate Affairs) at Reliance Industries Limited, has written to the forest ministers in the Centre and state, Bhupender Yadav and Modhwadia, appealing that emergency healthcare facilities be provided to the affected lions, as per a note from his office.

India's response to heat crisis will define its future

Let's start with two numbers—48.2°C in Banda, Uttar Pradesh and 46.5°C in Sirpur, Telangana. Nearly 850 km apart, but bound by brutal, extreme heat. In Bundelkhand, hot winds blowing in from Pakistan's Balochistan and the Thar Desert turned Banda into India's hottest city for four days, with the temperatures edging towards 50°C on cracked black-cotton soil with barely a tree in sight. In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, over 40 heatstroke-related deaths were reported over just two days. This is not a story about two states or one season. It is a national emergency running from the Himalayas to the shoreline. And it has been building for years.

The India Meteorological Department's (IMD) seasonal outlook for April-June 2026 warned us plainly: above-normal heatwave days were coming for east, central, northwest India, and the southeast of the peninsula. Red and orange alerts were flying across Telangana before summer officially began. The Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology in Pune, which has been tracking this for decades, said heatwave frequency in India's core zone has risen by 2.5 days every decade since 1961, and the trend is getting steeper. This year, there's a double blow. While long-term warming has raised India's temperature floor year after year, a super El Niño is developing this year in the equatorial Pacific, a phenomenon that has historically made Indian summers worse. It weakens monsoon winds, strips cloud cover, bakes the soil dry. The chance of a deficient monsoon this year sits at 35 percent, more than double the long-term average. For a country where nearly half of all farmland depends on rain, not pipes, that figure isn't just a weather stat. It is a food security warning. Here is what the headlines often miss: the same summer is killing people in completely different ways depending on where they live and how much money they have. In landlocked Bundelkhand, it is the raw, scorching dry heat. Cities like Banda, Jhansi, and Hamirpur have no sea breeze, no relief. Entire agricultural divisions are recording temperatures 5°C above the seasonal norm. Farmers, who cannot afford to stop working, are out there in it from sunrise. For them, heatstroke is not an abstract risk—it's a Tuesday. On the coasts, the story is quieter but in some ways more dangerous. Kerala, Odisha, coastal Andhra Pradesh—the thermometers here read lower than Banda. But the humidity changes everything. What scientists call the 'wet-bulb temperature'—the measure that combines heat and moisture—can push coastal conditions beyond what the human body can safely handle, even when the raw number on the thermometer looks manageable. An IMD study spanning four decades confirmed that wet-bulb temperatures have been steadily rising across India's coasts, accelerating sharply since the early 2000s.

The reason is physics. When the air is saturated with moisture, sweat simply cannot evaporate. That's the body's only real cooling mechanism, and in high humidity, it stops working. Researchers at Penn State found that even healthy young people start losing the ability to regulate body temperature at around 31°C wet-bulb. Anjal Prakash, an author of a UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, has put it starkly: a 40°C day with high humidity can feel like 50°C. For an elderly person in a poorly ventilated home, a fisher returning from sea, or a construction worker in a coastal city, that is not a figure of speech. It is a physiological reality. In Alappuzha, fishers talk about nights that no longer cool down. In Odisha's coastal districts, labourers say they are dehydrated within an hour of starting work. Moist heat kills quietly, without the drama of a north Indian heatwave, and so it goes largely unguarded.

Time to stop slipping on oil

Renewable energy can make India resilient to oil price shocks

THE whole world, India included, will have breathed easier following the announcement that the United States and Iran have come close to an initial agreement. Hopefully, that should extend the ceasefire and open the Strait of Hormuz for shipping. No details are available at the time of writing, and one cannot be certain that there won't be more blips on the way to a deal — or deals, since a preliminary one is likely to need follow-up agreements with difficult details. So, the release of tension is probably accompanied by people also holding their breath! Sunday's announcement should help to lower the prices of oil, gas and other critical commodities like urea. But even if a deal is actually reached, it will take months for the situation to return to the pre-war normal. Still, the world economy will have avoided the sharp slowdown that seemed a real prospect last week. India, hugely dependent on the imports of both oil and gas, as well as urea and other commodities produced in the Gulf area, will be particularly relieved.

The country has had a crisis-prone history associated with oil price shocks, one that is worth a brief recount in order to underline the need to avoid repeating that history. For, every oil price spurt so far has led to an economic crisis that in turn has provoked political change. This was true of the first oil shock of 1973 which quadrupled oil prices almost overnight, from \$3 per barrel to \$12. Inflation soared to 30 per cent, and the Opposition was able to force Indira Gandhi on to the back foot. The chain of events led to India's only experience with dictatorial "Emergency" rule. The second oil shock, in 1979, saw oil prices double to \$23.50 per barrel, with prices in the spot market surging to \$40. India's shell-shocked economy shrank by an unprecedented 5 per cent. The government fell, and Mrs Gandhi returned to power. The third oil shock, caused by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, was less severe and lasted barely six months, yet it provoked a foreign exchange crisis. That triggered a positive outcome: widespread economic reforms by (you guessed it) a new government.

Finally, the oil shock of 2012 saw oil prices reach \$125 per barrel and stay above \$100 till 2014. That led to a surging current account deficit, and the rupee getting famously

grouped with the "Fragile Five". That more or less sank an already embattled Manmohan Singh government, and (along with other factors) helped bring Narendra Modi to power. His government began on a lucky note. Oil prices halved to \$50 by 2015 and fell further to an average of \$44 per barrel in 2016. That boosted economic growth to over 8 per cent for a couple of years. It is this historical vulnerability to oil shocks that caused the US-Iran war to provoke worries among Indian consumers and policy-makers, not just about oil prices (up 50 per cent and more) but also about the



assured supply of gas and urea. The grim prospect was of higher inflation, lower growth, a higher current account deficit and a bigger fiscal deficit. Those four horsemen may still show up, but it won't be the crisis that some had feared. The averted crisis should provoke thought about the steps required to insulate the economy from external shocks. Past attempts have focused on finding domestic oil and gas, with very modest results; import dependence has increased to 90 per cent for oil and about 50 per cent for gas. Now, for the first time in our history, solar and wind energy offer an alternative solution, not just because of their enormous generation potential, but also because they are now competitive when compared to new coal-based power plants. Indeed, solar energy may be competitive even after considering storage costs, thereby reducing the need for back-up power.

Renewable energy generation has already grown by leaps and bounds, and now accounts for about a quarter of

electricity generation. The ambitious target is to raise that share to 50 per cent by 2030. Even that should be only a mid-term goal, for non-fossil-based electrification has the potential to grow even further.

In broad terms, India should aim to become an electro-state. The railways have already electrified virtually all their traction. But the electrification of road transport (though competitive, compared to petrol and diesel) has made slow progress compared to other countries, with relatively few public charging stations installed. Domestic cooking should be electrified too, reversing the

push for gas-based cooking.

Many industrial processes that currently rely on hydrocarbons could also switch to electricity, as China has done on a massive scale. The need for oil and gas will not disappear, but the dependence can be reduced by enough to make the economy resilient to West Asian tremors. Such a drive is likely to have much greater potential, and meet with greater success, than the government's renewed stress on coal. For instance, coal-based fertiliser plants have been tried in the past, didn't do well and had to be shut down. And coal gasification, another policy thrust, will require massive quantities of water at a time when the country is already water-stressed. A renewable energy drive will have a critical impact on India's external balances. The country's large and growing deficit in trade in goods (a massive 8 per cent of GDP in 2025-26) has been covered for the most part by the surplus on trade in services (5 per cent of GDP). The composite trade deficit of 3 per cent of GDP is almost entirely on account of oil and gas, and would more or less disappear if their imports could be sharply reduced.

The country would then be less dependent on capital inflows, which so far have been a reliable feature and helped to double foreign exchange reserves over the past decade to some \$730 billion at peak. But foreign portfolio investors, once enthusiastic about the Indian stock market, have pulled out as much as \$45 billion in the last 18 months, while net foreign direct investment has shrunk dramatically. The rupee reflects this external weakness, even as the Reserve Bank's foreign exchange reserves have fallen by \$40 billion to \$688 billion.

The currency weakness has further affected India's appeal to foreign investors. India needs to be made a more attractive destination. A more hydrocarbon-proof economy will take the country a big step to that goal.

Illegal immigration: Bengal govt must strike a cautious balance

By institutionalising the 'detect, delete and deport' mechanism, the Suwendu Adhikari-led dispensation is transforming a poll plank into state policy

UPPING the ante against illegal immigration, the BJP government in West Bengal has directed district authorities to set up "holding centres" for apprehended foreigners and released foreign prisoners. The move comes amid an aggressive push against people from neighbouring countries — particularly Bangladesh — who are accused of entering India without valid documents or overstaying, especially in BJP-ruled states. Framed as an administrative measure aligned with Home Ministry guidelines, the Bengal government's step is also unmistakably political. By institutionalising the "detect, delete and deport" mechanism, the Suwendu Adhikari-led dispensation is transforming a poll plank into state policy. Bengal shares a long and porous border with Bangladesh, and concerns over undocumented migrants have persisted for decades. The state government contends that illegal immigration strains public resources, alters the demographic balance in sensitive districts and raises

security concerns. The creation of holding centres



appears to be aimed at streamlining deportation and reducing delays. The state's endeavour is also linked to

the Centre's Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, which imposes stricter penalties on offenders.

However, the new policy raises troubling legal and humanitarian questions. The most contentious aspect is the order to hand over suspected illegal migrants directly to the Border Security Force without first producing them before courts. Bypassing legal scrutiny can lead to arbitrary detention and wrongful deportation. There is also the danger of conflating illegal immigration with religious or ethnic identity. While the government insists that communities protected under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act will remain exempt, the rhetoric revolving around "infiltrators" (ghuspathiye) can deepen social polarisation in a politically charged state. The long-term legitimacy of Bengal's initiative will depend on whether it can balance national security with the constitutional promise of justice and due process.

India's strategic dilemma: from non-alignment to multi-alignment

—The lawless acts and events of the Trump 2.0 era have become a testbed of strategic autonomy.

DURING his recent tour of Europe, PM Narendra Modi upgraded bilateral relations to strategic partnerships with the Netherlands as the Dutch produce a critical component of chips; with Norway as Oslo is a source of green oil and gas; and with Italy for its innovation and high-tech. India is an observer state of the Arctic Council since 2013. Earlier this month, Modi said India would not bow to anyone, recalling the nuclear tests in defiance of US sanctions in 1998, signifying the birth of India's strategic autonomy. A galaxy of diplomats gathered this month in New Delhi to celebrate what many describe as India's crown jewel: strategic autonomy, whose fragility the Trump 2.0 era has exposed. Strategic is the most overused adjective in diplomatic lexicon. It is attached to restraint, patience, sovereignty and national interest. The word 'partnership' is variable, dynamic and transactional. But strategic autonomy — hedging or balancing relationships by making sovereign choices — has prospered. The concept originates in India's policy of non-alignment, adopted after Independence when New Delhi punched above its weight. As adversarial relations with US increased, India was pulled towards the Soviet Union. Even as it confronted triple threats from Pakistan, China and US in 1971, it was forced to sign the first formal Treaty of Peace and Friendship with USSR. The then PM, Indira Gandhi, insisted that "India is a non-aligned country" be inserted in the treaty, which was de facto an alliance. It enabled India to build conditions for the creation of Bangladesh from East Pakistan.

India has graduated from non-alignment to multi-alignment and multi-engagement to multi-polarity, culminating in strategic autonomy, whose utility has been diminishing in a disrupted world order. Since

national security policy and strategy documents have not been produced, strategic autonomy is an immaculate conception, though six draft policy documents have been gathering dust. With India's oldest ally Russia, the partnership is special, privileged and strategic. The partnership with the US has transformed from 'estranged democracy' to 'comprehensive, global and strategic'.



Relations with China have fluctuated from 'developmental' and 'civilisational' to 'strategic and cooperative', and from 'peace and prosperity' to 'stable, but abnormal' after Doklam and Galwan. India and France are 'strategic and reliable' partners, both coveting their autonomy. The EU is a recent entrant to the strategic club, though it is more in the category of trade and commerce. A China adversary, Vietnam was elevated to 'enhanced comprehensive strategic partnership' during the visit of its President To Lam to India earlier this month. At a recent seminar, Foreign

Minister S Jaishankar outlined the neighbourhood first policy, with India positioning itself as the 'go-to option' for regional infrastructure support of neighbouring countries. He added that the purpose of India's policy (strategic autonomy) "is not to solve problems but manage relationships to national advantage", including neighbours "respecting India's red lines." The ground reality in the neighbourhood, though, is different despite India calling itself "the first responder and net security provider" as the recent sinking of an Iranian ship returning from Indian Fleet Review 2026 by a US submarine in the IOR proved. The lawless acts and events of the Trump 2.0 era have become a testbed of strategic autonomy. These have baffled the international community, especially the UN and affiliated organisations. India's less-than-successful record in protecting its international image results from a lack of strategic leverage and independent capacities; due to excessive external dependencies. The special and privileged strategic partnership with Russia, civilisational relationship with Iran and membership of BRICS have all been targeted by the US. India's lead role in the Quad, three-decade old multi-layered defence ties with the US and pivotal position in countering China have been undermined by the US' dramatic policy shifts towards China — with whom it seeks respectful relations — "as reflected in Trump's recent visit to China. The astonishingly blunt statement of US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau at the Raisina Dialogue: "US will not make the same mistake as it made with China and Japan, with India" was merely a warning. India is one of the most US-sanctioned countries: on Russian and Iranian oil, having been pressured to switch to Venezuelan oil; on Chabahar Port

and Russian military platforms, though waivers were provided. In addition, the US has imposed penal tariffs on transactions with Russia. India has yielded mainly to US sanctions, except the \$400 AD system whose fourth battery arrived this month. Had India not complied with sanctions on Chabahar port, it would have been able to construct infrastructure, leading to the development of the International North South Transport Corridor through Iran's Bandar Abbas Port and reduced dependencies through the double-blockaded Strait of Hormuz. Further, it would have enhanced its image among the Global South and credibility of strategic autonomy. Where token appeasement and diplomatic finesse would have helped is in recognising Trump's claim in facilitating the ceasefire during Operation Sindoor, which is a reality. This would not have undermined strategic autonomy, but New Delhi's persistent contradiction of Trump's claims led to avoidable diplomatic friction. Pakistan played its cards well, transforming its image from a state sponsor of terrorism to a responsible mediator in conflict resolution and as the go-between during the negotiations between the US and Iran, in which Israel is conspicuously missing. Pakistan's international profile has risen and instead of re-hyphenation with India, it is now in a different class. At the Delhi seminar, Ambassador Javed Ashraf said: "Silence is not strategic autonomy", hinting at India's maun vrat (strategic silence) over illegitimate actions of the US and Israel against Iran and others. Elsewhere, former NSA Shivshankar Menon, former FS Nirupama Rao have said India has lost its voice, maintaining strategic silence; also its credibility among Global South and neighbourhood. The disrupted world order requires proactive strategic autonomy.



Female pet

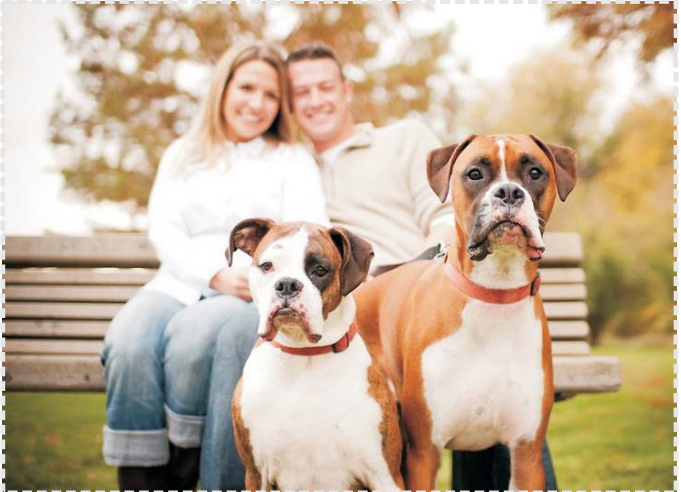
owners may be less likely to die of stroke

Can pets be good for your health? Possibly yes, a study suggests. U.S. women over age 50 and generally healthy were less likely to die of

cardiovascular events like stroke if they had a cat or dog, the researchers found. After accounting for the increase in physical activity required of dog owners, owning a cat

instead of a dog was still tied to a lower risk of death from stroke. The researchers studied almost 4,000 adults age 50 and older without major illnesses who

participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) in 1988 to 1994 and who reported their pet ownership. Participants also answered questions about physical activity, weight and height, cigarette smoking and other health risk factors. More than half were overweight or obese. About 35 percent of people owned a pet, most often a dog. Pet owners tended to be younger, more often were married, and more often were white. According to the National Death Index, as of 2006, 11 of every 1,000 non-pet owners had died of cardiovascular disease, compared to about 7 of every 1,000 pet owners. Specifically for stroke, male pet owners were just as likely to have died, but female pet owners were about 40 percent less likely to



blood pressure as well," said senior author Jian Zhang of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University in the U.S. "I strongly believe that putative benefits of keeping a dog have not yet fully translated into reality, and we found that pet owners did not walk pets, certainly, dogs, more often than others," Zhang said. "This explains why owning a dog did not reduce CVD mortality among dog owners." Cat owners may have a personality that protects their hearts, rather than cats actually having a concrete effect on heart health, he said. "We are short of overall assessment of the associations of companion animals with human health, and our study should not be interpreted to encourage more people to own pets, either dog or cat," Zhang said. "Pets are good, but have to be kept responsibly." "In my study, there was a tendency for pet owners to have a higher risk of dying," said Dr. Richard F. Gillum of Howard University College of Medicine in Washington D.C., who was not part of the new study but did study the same NHANES surveys. Most findings show no association between pets and survival, he said. "Data from NHANES are really inadequate to settle the question, since one can only determine there was a pet in the household, but not the number of pets or whether the study participant was the owner, cared for it or interacted with it," Gillum said. "So we need to wait for better studies before making any firm conclusions about pets and survival among their owners." "Even if there were a reduction of death from stroke among women with cats, of what importance is that in public health terms if they are just as likely to die as other women, just from another cause," he said.

have died of stroke. Most of this association was driven by cat ownership, according to results in High Blood Pressure and Cardiovascular Prevention. "Anecdotally, we believe that walking a dog is good for heart, reducing life pressure and

Pamper your pets with these pro tips

Our pets are an integral part of our families and deserve all the special care that we can provide. And that is the primary reason why we need to take our pets for regular check-ups at veterinary clinics that are qualified and equipped to give them all that they need. We spoke to pet-care professionals in the city, to list out some special pro tips that can help your four-legged friends...

Ensure they stay well-hydrated
Pratapsinh Gaekwad, who is extremely passionate about animals and also owns a specialty pet-care clinic, says, "Ensure that your dog stays hydrated by adding extra water to some meals, in order to increase the



water content. Flavouring their water with some chicken broth may encourage them to drink more as well.

Give them ice-cubes to snack on
Ice cubes make tasty zero calorie snacks for dogs, and you can always jazz them up by making flavoured ones by freezing some chicken broth in an ice cube rack, suggests Gaekwad.

Deal with osteoarthritis
Hannah Victoria Myburgh, head nurse at a South Mumbai veterinary hospital says, "For the older patients who suffer from osteoarthritis and creaky joints, green lipp mussel extract is a fantastic natural analgesic. Adding glucosamine chondroitin supplements into the diet really helps with the maintenance of healthy joints and bones."

Be consistent with feeding regime
It is important to try and be consistent with your feeding regime — two meals a day, at the same time every day, with no snacks, should be sufficient.

Use palatable probiotics
Avoid curd as many patients can be slightly lactose intolerant and this can actually irritate the gut when had in large quantities, suggests Hannah. She adds, "A couple of teaspoons a day can be used as a probiotic but actually goat's yogurt or kefir are better and more palatable."

Get a dental check-up done
Opt for a full dental scale and polish to make gnashers sparkle. Gaekwad adds, "This is not just a cosmetic procedure, a full examination of all the teeth is undertaken, assessing all the gum margins. Removing plaque which is basically bacteria and sugar will help reduce systemic disease."

Give them supplements
"Supplements such as coconut oil are fantastic for your pet's coat and joints. They have a good ratio of omegas so really help nourish the skin, heart muscle and joints as well," says Hannah.

Dealing with heat stroke
Exercise is very important for pets but it is essential to not overdo it in the summer months. Heat strokes can be serious. Keep walks early in the morning before 8 am and late in the evening after 7 pm. Signs of heat stroke include lethargy, vomiting, disorientation and in extreme cases, collapse. The first thing to do is cool down with towels soaked in room temperature water. Immediately after, pay a visit to the vet.

Keep in mind
Take personal grooming seriously. Get a mani-pedi for your pets — get their nails clipped. Get a de-worming done prior to a vacation. Vaccinating against infectious diseases such as rabies, leptospirosis and canine distemper not only protects yourself but also your fellow canine companions.

A typical Indian wedding has day-long ceremonies and even longer guestlists running into hundreds

-Mind you, they are people who are close to the family and cannot be ignored. However, things are changing now as couples are choosing to have intimate celebrations with only a chosen few present on their special day. These millennials prefer to curb the unnecessary costs to avoid burdening their families. Instead, the money saved is spent on more constructive investments like a house or travelling together to their dream destination. If you are one of those planning to have a wedding celebration that is private, here are a few things to keep in mind...

BOOK A SMALL VENUE
When you have a small venue and people come to know about it, they will understand that you want to avoid a crowd. It is a subtle hint to those who expect to be invited for it, that you are not ready to host a big wedding. **KEEP THE RITUALS SIMPLE**
Most Indian weddings have elaborate rituals - sangeet, mehendi, haldi among other thing. It is better to keep things simple by focusing only on the main wedding rituals or else design them as per the size of the venue as you don't want to make your guests feel uncomfortable.

HOME IS THE BEST
The most comfortable option is to get married in a cosy home. If your house is not big enough, you can always ask a friend who has a bigger house to help you out. An attached terrace always works best. This also makes sure that you're not in a situation where you have to explain about restricting the celebration to immediate family and close friends. After the wedding rituals, make sure to take everyone out for an elaborate lunch or dinner to avoid unnecessary speculation.

HAVE MULTIPLE CELEBRATIONS
Everyone expects a huge reception after the wedding, but if you don't want to have that either, opt for small multiple celebrations. You and your spouse can have separate office parties, while you can also plan one each with extended families from both the sides.

Millennials prefer intimate Weddings to grand bashes



Friends can be combined or given separate parties depending on how you both want it. However, ensure that both of you attend all these parties. **G** **O** **UNCONVENTIONAL**
However, if you cannot

see a large number attending it. Avoid that and half the crowd goes out of the list. Go for a destination wedding, which invariably means that the celebration is a small, intimate affair; it also limits the number of guests you want to invite. This kind of wedding allows you to give personal attention to all your guests, as well as provide you with enough me-time.

having a wedding in the same town, try to hire a stand-alone bungalow instead of the typical hall or hotel set-up. Look for a farmhouse located on the outskirts of the town you stay in. It will give you lots of space and at the same time be a close-knit affair. **PLAN AN OUT-OF-TOWN WEDDING**
Sometimes having a wedding at the place you reside in, will



Pros and cons of Working abroad

Working in a foreign country is a unique experience filled with new learnings, four professionals from diverse fields, who took up stints abroad before moving back to India, share their experience of working overseas

Aasit Shah

I don't consider any of my experiences in the US particularly appalling. In fact, the US proved to be a great training ground for me. I was working in the Silicon Valley and that favoured me in terms of weather since we had a good number of sunshine days. Dignity of labour is extremely high in the US. Even though there is hierarchy in terms of designations, I loved the personal connect one can have with their seniors. You can walk in and out of your senior's cabin any time. Work-life balance is excellent so much so that sending professional emails on a weekend is frowned upon. Organisations are extremely flexible. There were days when I could work from home. Since the US is considered to be the melting-pot of the world, I got the opportunity to work with people from different migrant communities there. And that was a great learning experience. I didn't miss India much because there are too many Indians around in the valley. So, for me, it was a home away from home!

Pan kaj Khot

Working in the UAE had its own upside and downside. The biggest benefit for me was to receive a tax-free salary, which is very rare. Companies in Dubai ensure that their employees have a perfect work-life balance. A major benefit of working in Dubai is that a number of international organisations have their offices there. So apart from helping you mingle with professionals from different cultures, it also enables you to understand the working styles of different countries. The city is strategically located and has great infrastructure. Restaurants in Dubai offer cuisines from all over the world making the place a gastronomic delight. On the flip side, house rents are too steep. Furthermore, if you don't have any family or friends, it can get boring and

difficult.

Kavita Gupta

When I think about my working stint in the UK, I am filled with mixed feelings. First, I worked for Nokia. The environment there was professional, yet friendly. Flexibility was granted, when required. What I particularly liked was the blurring of hierarchy in terms of accessibility. One could approach one's bosses anytime. Being able to interact with people from different countries was a great advantage too. Work-life balance was perfect and working beyond clocking hours was not appreciated. However, when I moved to another company and got pregnant six months into the job, it didn't go well down with my boss. My profile was changed and I didn't find that fair.

Guatam Parekh

The first thing that really impressed me about Singapore was the minimalistic bureaucracy. Be it taxes of work permit or anything, government authorities are very co-operative.

Every job or labour is treated with respect and this takes professionalism in the country to another level. Singapore being a first world country, infrastructure and connectivity are highly developed; both railways and roadways are well connected making travel hassle-free.

I was part of the event industry there and the best thing was that clients treated me as their associate and not merely a vendor. It was a ritual for us to take our clients out for dinners post events. Professionally, it was a great bonding exercise.

Technology is highly evolved in Singapore, so during events, each department knew their job to the T and that made our work easy. Since the country had professionals from all over the world, I got to learn a lot from people from varied cultures. Finally, Singapore is a welcoming country and doesn't let you feel homesick. My stint there was amazing.



The struggles of a single mother

Mirror writer and single mom Anjana Vaswani chats with three others of her tribe on raising kids alone with one eye on blood pressure.

Two months ago, just days before the final round of admissions to kindergarten and Grade 1 under the Right to Education quota, panicking single mothers flocked to BMC help centres. Their applications had been rejected because the fathers' income certificates were missing. The mothers' certificates weren't acceptable as substitutes.

It made newspaper copy, but ask a single mother, and she'll tell you niggles like these are a regular part of her life. Official paperwork that can be a nightmare in our patriarchal system is just the garnish on a gâteau of stress, guilt, feelings of isolation, stigma and self-doubt. Is her health likely to be impacted negatively in the long run?

The answer though obvious is now confirmed by a study published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health which assessed over 25,000 women across 15 countries. It focused on women who had children before the age of 18 and also examined, "whether doing it alone is worse in countries with relatively weak social and safety nets."

Vital point, because our social structure may just be our redeemer. Not only does it alleviate the guilt when you leave your child with a grandparent, it allows us time for a fitness routine which, together, may render studies such as these altogether inapposite. This means you don't get to write us off yet. As I see friends, many, a lot younger than me, negotiating around the rose garden of marriage with aching backs and knees, and thyroid problems (frequently also treating the headaches of family politics), I feel confident that we have at least as good a shot at health and longevity as any of them.

'Suddenly, health became top priority' Anita Khiera, stay-at-home mum My daughters are now 14 and 11, but when I separated, they were nine and six. Since we had lived abroad for a while, moving to Mumbai postdivorce made it more challenging. We were grappling with a whole different culture, for one, I didn't even realise my health was headed downward. At the time, it appeared like a bout of illness. In the first three months, I lost enough weight to drop to an unhealthy size zero. It was only when I ended up fracturing my arm that I



realised my health was crying out for attention. The consistent aches and pains, I realised, arose partly due to the stress that accompanies moving home, and of course, separating from someone you've been with for 12 years; 14 in my case if I count the courtship. No matter what anyone says, it's scary to be on your own after all those years. You wonder, will I be able to provide for us? Will my children be all right? Seeing my father cry, I remember, was very hard for me - the hurt that the divorce had caused him. That I returned to a city where my siblings lived meant I could blend easily into their social circle. I found comfort in pouring my heart out to old friends. I sought out self-help literature. Carolyn Myss' Why People Don't Heal and How They Can helped me. There's a comprehensive table in the book that connects ailments to emotional issues. Interestingly, after the split, since I was aware that I was the only one around for my kids, I began taking my health very seriously. I never missed an annual check-up and exercised regularly. That's a habit that has stayed with me. 'I made a career out of the split' Nivedita Rawal, behavioural psychotherapist Twenty six and pregnant with my second child when my husband sought divorce in 1991, I had hoped then for a reconciliation. It wasn't until 2004 that I finally gathered the courage to confide in extended

family and friends about my single status. Single parenting is the toughest thing I have known, more so in the absence of family support. It was tough being mum and dad. The children's education, wellbeing, happiness. These became priority. Although I had worked in corporate jobs in Singapore, I was uncomfortable with the idea of leaving the kids in the care of a maid. I was petrified of child molestation and other possibilities. So, I decided to pursue psychology and set up a private practice after acquiring a Master's degree and then a Doctorate while the children were still in senior school. I'd be driving them back and forth from tuitions, I'd supervise their homework, and put up with the occasional last minute requests: 'Mommy, I need 20 buttons for art work. Now.' I remember running to JW Marriott at 9 pm once to ask if I could buy the needle-and-thread home-kits they offer in guestrooms. I got 10 packets. The rest of the buttons the kids needed came off my shirts. At one point, I supplemented my income by offering therapy to call centre employees during the graveyard shift. Social life was naturally sacrificed. In the last 23 years, I'd estimate that I must have attended about 10 social events. I did get into a relationship but ended it when I realised that he was not father material. Diwali, Christmas and Easter holidays were spent alone since the kids holidayed with their father.

But, having worked with single mothers who tend to develop acute depression, insomnia, even cancers and metabolic syndrome illnesses linked to diabetes, high blood pressure and heart conditions, I recognised my loneliness. I knew that I had to make a concerted effort to stay fit. I pursued Mallakhambh, yoga and swimming with dedication. It set the tone for the challenges that every day would bring. Yes, I still continue to combat insomnia and some food intolerances. Today, I'm a step-parent too, blessed with four children and two puppies, and have a successful practice that boasts celebrity clientele. 'It's tough to stay fit as a sandwich generation member' Ragashree Porecha, sales professional I kicked off my career with a monthly pay cheque of Rs 3,500 when I got divorced in 1995. It was a huge support to know that my family was there for my daughter. Still, there were heartbreaking moments when she'd complain that, unlike her, other kids always had mommy around. But by the time she got to the third

grade, she began to feel pride in the fact that her mother was a successful professional.

Working had other advantages too. My first boss, with whom I worked for 15 years, was a bit of a health nut. She'd insist that I walk to work and back. Having been a juvenile diabetic, this helped me because otherwise, health would not have been priority. I know that, back then, I avoided visiting the doctor as far as possible. Health check-ups were erratic, but the walking kept my blood pressure and cholesterol levels in check.

Over the last two years, however, after the demise of my mother, I'm now responsible not just for my daughter but my father too. And with that, my fitness has taken a beating. My blood pressure shot up over the last nine months, and sugar levels were erratic. I've developed hypothyroidism and my shoulders freeze up sometimes. But I know this is temporary. With years of work experience at luxury brands, I hope to have a job waiting for me when I'm able to take it, and I am working on rebuilding my immunity.

Is loneliness making your pets depressed?

Owners of two-and-a-half-year-old Brownie, whose habit of chasing her tail turned into a 24X7 obsession, panicked and took her to a veterinarian. The vet directed them to an animal behaviourist who diagnosed Brownie with boredom and separation anxiety. After months of treatment Brownie's behaviour has turned normal.

Leaving your pets alone at home for long periods, ignoring them or spending insufficient time with them can take a toll on them and cause serious health issues. In recent times many pets have been facing issues of separation anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorders and in extreme cases even self destructive behaviour, say city based pet psychologists and pet behaviourists.

Priti Chauhan, a pet behaviourist and therapist for the last 10 years, said, "Every week I get two to three similar cases. Along with treating the pets, we also counsel the owners so that they do not repeat the same mistakes. In most of these cases the pets get affected due to suffering caused by their owners leaving them alone at home for long durations. Some people even tie them up, confining them to one place and don't keep sufficient drinking water among other things."

Anagha Mali, another pet behaviourist informed, "There are various ways to know if a pet is suffering from these issues. Separation anxiety includes pets refusing to stay indoors, barking

continuously, being destructive including chewing on furniture, soiling the house. In extreme cases pets start hurting themselves by either licking and creating a wound, shadow chasing or tail chasing etc." At times pets can also suffer due to other reasons, explained Priti. "Ensure that the pet is well fed, is done with his daily ablutions and



has continuous access to water. Tying the pet is a no-no but if you have to, then make sure the place doesn't get direct sunlight. Also, it is important to stimulate the pet physically and mentally. Apart from regular exercises like walks, running or playing the ball which will drain him physically, ensure you take your pet to a nearby park, hill or any place outdoors where he can get

to smell flowers, leaves, roads etc. That will stimulate his brain," she said.

Housewife Aarti Pednekar's case is an example of pets suffering due to other reasons. Aarti, who owns a six-year-old Labrador, Honey, narrated, "Though we are a family of four, Honey is most attached to me and becomes restless if I go out anywhere. Recently when I had gone out of town for a fortnight, she almost injured her front paw by licking it continuously. On consulting a behaviourist we realised she was suffering from separation anxiety. The behaviourist explained how important it is to engage other members of the family in taking care of the pet so that it feels attached to all."

Veterinary surgeon and behaviour counsellor Dr Shivshankar Chikodi, said, "It is good to train your pet if you are going to leave him alone for long hours. The training can ideally start at two years of age. Initially one should start keeping the pet alone for a period of 15 minutes which can gradually be increased to two hours and longer.

How greed brought down Byju Raveendran's empire from 22 billion to zero

New Delhi.(Agency)

Once hailed as India's most valuable startup, Byju's soared to a \$22-billion valuation in 2022. Its growth was fuelled by demand for online learning driven by the Covid pandemic, massive venture capital inflows, and an ambitious founder. Today, the EdTech giant's valuation is not even zero. It's minus Rs 8,245 crore, given the money and incentives it still owes to its employees. Its founder, Byju Raveendran, was sentenced to six months in prison in Singapore. The trial was conducted in absentia with Ravindran reportedly in Dubai. The spectacular collapse of Byju's, an EdTech pioneer in India, is a tale of caution for start-ups. After its collapse, while some Byju's employees have moved on to greener pastures, many others were forced to accept substantial pay cuts in their next jobs, which rarely matched the lucrative compensation Byju's had offered

at its peak. Several former employees are still coming to terms with the sudden reversal of fortunes. Parents of millions of students who bought education packages from Byju's have lost money.

The company faces debt worth billions, and is mired in dozens of lawsuits. The recent sentencing of founder Byju Raveendran to six months in jail for contempt of court in Singapore is a stark reminder of how unchecked ambition and poor governance can kill even the brightest success stories.

We will return to how greed and unchecked ambition led to the collapse of Byju's but after looking at the latest case in Singapore.

WHY HAS BYJU RAVEENDRAN BEEN SENTENCED TO JAIL IN SINGAPORE?

The trigger for this latest chapter came on Wednesday, when a Singapore court ordered Raveendran to serve six months in jail for non-compliance with disclosure

orders related to his assets. The ruling, initiated by a subsidiary of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), stems from disputes over document disclosure in ongoing financial proceedings. Raveendran must surrender to authorities, pay legal costs of 90,000 Singapore dollar, or about Rs 67 lakh, and provide proof of ownership of Beeaar Investco Pte, a corporate entity linked to the company.

In a statement, Raveendran described the order as "procedural contempt" tied to document disputes, not a finding of fraud or dishonesty on the merits. He emphasised that settlement discussions with lenders and investors, including GLAS Trust and QIA, were nearing conclusion and expressed disappointment that the matter was being pursued at this stage.

"The parties have also acknowledged that

there has been no wrongdoing on my part or on the part of the other founders," he said in a statement, adding that he prioritises resolution over confrontation and plans to



appeal. It must be noted that Byju Raveendran still harbours hopes of reviving his EdTech empire.

"Byju Ravindran firmly believes the company can be turned around. Despite the

fall, he plans to return to India and is convinced that one strong turnaround moment could help restore the business. I don't know exactly how he intends to do it, but he remains remarkably positive," a top associate and close confidant of the founder told India Today Digital.

A LOOK AT THE RISE AND EXPANSION OF BYJU'S

Byju Raveendran, a former maths tutor, built Byju's from a simple learning app into a global EdTech powerhouse. The Covid-19 pandemic supercharged its growth as schools shut and parents turned to online education. The company raised billions of dollars from top investors, expanded aggressively, and signed high-profile brand ambassadors, like Shah Rukh Khan and Lionel Messi, while sponsoring major events like the Indian Premier League (IPL).

MCD postpones Standing Committee and ward committee elections, cites no reason

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has cancelled the election process for six vacant seats of its Standing Committee and for the posts of chairperson and deputy chairperson in 12 ward committees until further orders, officials said on Wednesday. According to an official notice, the civic body stated that the elections, scheduled to be held on June 3, have been postponed indefinitely. The nomination process has also been scrapped. Earlier, May 29 had been fixed as the last date for obtaining nomination forms.

Though the notice did not specify any reason for the cancellation, civic body officials said the move was likely due to political differences and lack of consensus over the selection of candidates for various ward committees and Standing Committee seats. Leader of Opposition in the MCD, Ankush Narang, alleged that the elections had been postponed without following due procedure under the Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC) Act.

"Section 53(2) of the DMC Act clearly states that no election of a ward committee can have its date fixed or deferred without the chairman's approval," Narang said, questioning how the municipal secretary deferred the elections. He further alleged that the BJP postponed the elections due to internal differences and fear of losing control in certain zones. The BJP has not yet responded to the allegations.

Officials, however, indicated that the elections are likely to be rescheduled later in June. Earlier this month, the MCD had announced that elections for ward committee chairpersons, deputy chairpersons and Standing Committee members would be held on May 23. The schedule was later revised, postponing the elections to June 3, while nomination-related proceedings were shifted from May 19 to May 29.

Metro stations, hospitals in Delhi given new names in heritage push

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi government has approved the renaming of various metro stations, hospitals and other public places in the Capital to honour the city's identity and public sentiments. A meeting of the State Names Authority (SNA), chaired by Chief Minister and SNA Chairperson Rekha Gupta, was recently held at the Delhi Secretariat, where all proposals in this regard were approved unanimously.

Senior officials, including the Chief Secretary of Delhi, the Secretary of the Urban Development Department, the Managing Director of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and the Director of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), were also present.

Among the proposals approved in the meet was a proposal for naming the under-construction sports complex located in Begampur—Rohini's Sector-33—after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. A proposal to install a statue of the former Prime Minister at the complex also got the nod.

The meeting also cleared the proposal to rename the Rohini West Metro Station as the Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital Metro Station. Further, in order to make the station's identity clearer and improve convenience for commuters, an approval was granted to rename the Rohini East Metro Station as the Rohini Metro Station. Further, the under-construction hospital in Jwalapuri will be named the Baba Ramdevji Maharaj Hospital. The meeting also considered a proposal to incorporate the area's local identity into the name of Dwarka Metro Station.

Approving the proposal, the Authority decided to rename the station as Dwarka-Kakrola Metro Station. The objective of this decision is to establish the geographical and social identity of the area more clearly. The meeting also unanimously approved the proposal to rechristen the Britannia Chowk in Shakurpur as the Ashwini Chopra (Minna) Chowk.

Dwelling on the significance of the move, CM Gupta said, "Honouring personalities who have made significant contributions to society and public life is among the government's priorities. Such decisions help strengthen collective public memory.

Collegium recommends 4 chief justices, V Mohana for elevation to Supreme Court

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Supreme Court Collegium has proposed the elevation of five individuals to the apex court, including four sitting High Court Chief Justices and senior advocate V Mohana, who is the only woman and the sole direct recommendation from the Bar among the names proposed for appointment.

The Collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, recommended the names during meetings held on May 22 and May 27. The judges recommended for elevation are Justice Sheel Nagu of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Justice Shree Chandrashekhar of the Bombay High Court, Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva of the Madhya Pradesh High Court and Justice Arun Palli of the High Court of



Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Mohana's recommendation is being viewed as significant for women's representation in the higher judiciary. If approved by the Centre, she would join Justice B V Nagarathna as the only sitting women judges in the Supreme Court. A first-generation lawyer with no legal lineage, Mohana was part of the inaugural batch of India's first five-year integrated law

programme introduced after higher secondary education in 1983. She graduated from Coimbatore Law College—now Government Law College, Coimbatore—in 1988 and began practice under civil lawyer M. Panchapakesan in Coimbatore.

She later moved to Delhi in 1992 and worked in the office of future Supreme Court judge Indu Malhotra, who was then practising as an Advocate-on-Record. She subsequently trained in the chambers of senior advocate CS Vaidyanathan. Over the years, Mohana built a diverse legal practice covering constitutional, civil and service law matters and was designated as a Senior Advocate by the Supreme Court in 2015, becoming one of the few women to receive the honour.

DDA to identify 3,000 vacant vacant land parcels for surface parking: Delhi L-G

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a major push to tackle Delhi's growing parking crisis and traffic congestion, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) will identify more than 3,000 vacant land parcels across the city over the next one year to create new surface parking spaces.

The move emerged as a key point of discussion during the first-ever high-level meeting chaired by Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu with all seven Lok Sabha MPs from the city on Wednesday.

Parking shortages, worsening traffic congestion, encroachments, use of vacant DDA land and maintenance and accessibility of DDA parks figured prominently in the discussions. Officials informed the

meeting that, out of the proposed 3,000 vacant land parcels, 232 DDA plots are already ready for tender for surface parking. These plots are



expected to accommodate nearly one lakh vehicles and are likely to significantly ease parking pressure in several parts of the capital.

According to officials, 98 of these plots are located in Dwarka Zone, 53 in North Zone, 30 in Rohini

Zone, 28 in East Zone and 23 in South Zone.

The L-G stressed that the initiative would go a long way in reducing illegal roadside parking and improving traffic movement in congested areas.

Another issue discussed was encroachment and unauthorised occupation, with all MPs identifying it as one of the biggest civic challenges facing Delhi. The MPs assured full cooperation to authorities in taking action against encroachments.

Parks must stay open from 6 am to 10 am

The L-G said all DDA parks must remain open daily from 6 am to 10 am, and parks that normally charge an entry fee must allow free public access during the time.

Delhi draft B&B policy allows homes with up to 8 rooms and 16 beds under new categories

New Delhi.(Agency)

Residential properties with up to eight rooms and 16 beds may soon operate as Bed and Breakfast (B&B) units in Delhi under a draft policy. The policy proposes silver and gold categories with classification based on the room size, furnishings, sanitation standards, guest amenities and safety arrangements. It will also mandate CCTV cameras, police verification and compliance with the relevant safety and hygiene norms.

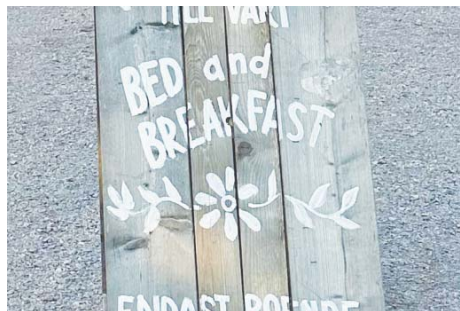
Under the gold category, guest rooms must have a minimum area of 120 sq ft and include facilities such as wardrobes, study tables, televisions, filtered drinking water, proper ventilation and cooling arrangements, including fans or air-conditioners wherever necessary, an official said.

Additionally, bathrooms in the gold

category would require Western-style toilets, running hot and cold water, ventilation systems, and proper drainage and enhanced toiletries, an official privy to the matter shared.

On the other hand, establishments falling in the silver category would have comparatively relaxed standards, including a minimum room size of 100 sq ft with clean bedding, cooling facilities, filtered water and dedicated or attached bathrooms. The official also mentioned that the draft Delhi Bed and Breakfast Policy 2026, put up for public feedback by the Department of Tourism, seeks to overhaul the existing framework for neighbourhood-based accommodation by simplifying registration rules and introducing detailed standards for hygiene, infrastructure, safety and guest

services. Guest safety and operational standards were also highlighted in the draft policy. All registered B&B units



would be required to maintain guest registers, conduct police verification and comply with foreign guest reporting norms.

Safety measures such as fire

extinguishers, first-aid kits, emergency contact displays and functional door locks have also been made mandatory.

CCTV cameras, where installed, would only be permitted at entrances and common areas, he explained.

The proposed rules further require daily cleaning of guest rooms, bathrooms and common areas, proper waste segregation, adequate ventilation and hygienic preparation of food wherever meals are provided.

The policy also seeks to preserve the residential character of neighbourhoods by prohibiting commercial restaurants, banquet activities, bars, etc. As of 2023, more than 2,200 rooms at 432 houses across the Capital were registered under the 'Bed and Breakfast' scheme since its launch.

India's external shock is an economic opportunity

New Delhi, (Agency)

Austerity is typically associated with economies that have weak fundamentals or otherwise lack options for achieving fiscal sustainability. But the Indian economy's fundamentals are relatively strong. Real GDP growth is expected to reach 7.4% this fiscal year, with medium-term potential growth hovering around 7%. Moreover, private consumption now accounts for 61.5% of GDP, the highest share since 2011–12.

India's vulnerability lies in its external account: the country runs a persistent merchandise-trade deficit of roughly \$280–300 billion annually, which is only partly offset by services, and which is financed largely by capital inflows (including remittances). While this is not a problem during times of relative stability, it generates acute risks when energy prices surge and global capital becomes more risk-averse.

The United States and Israel's war on Iran has produced precisely this combination, and Indian equity investing is compounding the risks. This is exemplified by the recent rally in the South Korean and Taiwanese equity markets—a reflection of the global AI and semiconductor boom—with foreign-capital outflows from the Indian stock market, which lacks AI offerings, totaling \$37 billion since January 2025. Modi's government sees the writing on the wall, so it is taking steps to prevent a sudden terms-of-trade shock from triggering shortages, fueling inflation, destabilizing financial markets, and eroding India's strategic autonomy. To this end, purchasing power in dollars must be sustained as energy imports, shipping insurance, and freight costs rise. Gold is one of India's largest discretionary import lines, paid for in foreign exchange. But according to the State Bank of India, the value of gold imports rose from \$57.9 billion in fiscal year 2025 to \$72.4 billion in 2026, even as volumes fell. Likewise, crude prices jumped from \$62–70 per barrel in February 2026 to above \$100 today, while import volumes declined. Every \$10 increase in Brent crude adds an estimated \$13–14 billion to India's import bill and widens the current-account deficit by about 0.3% of GDP.

Measures such as raising effective import duties on gold and silver to 15% and stabilizing the supply of staple goods are intended to limit avoidable dollar outflows.

Attempts by Sunil Mittal to raise stake in BT will be resisted by UK govt, says report

Kolkata, (Agency)

The British government will resist attempts by Sunil Bharti Mittal to raise his stake in BT (British telecom), reports have stated. A Financial Times report has said the British government is keen to maintain sovereign control over what was described as “critical national infrastructure”. There was no comment from Sunil Mittal though a spokesperson of the Bharti group was quoted in the media as saying that the group is satisfied with current shareholding and “currently has no plans to increase its stake.” Sunil Mittal's companies command 24.95% stake in BT. Significantly, Sunil Mittal's Airtel is now the second largest telecom operator in the world.

Last week, Reuters reported that Bharti Enterprises was keen to raise its stake in BT to an extent when it will be below the threshold level required for a full takeover offer for the British telecoms group. In September last year, Sunil Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, and Gopal Vittal, vice-chairman and MD of Bharti Airtel, joined the BT board as non-independent non-executive directors.

British brands under Indian control

A number of high profile British brands have come under Indian control in the past few decades. In 2000, the iconic British tea brand Tetley was bought over by Tata Tea (which is now known as Tata Consumer Products). The Tatas have also taken over Jaguar Land Rover, which were once symbols of British engineering and pride. These brands are now subsidiaries of Tata Motors.

Hindalco shares in focus: Hits 52-week high but Morgan Stanley sniffs another 20% upside

Kolkata, (Agency)

Hindalco Industries is one of the major metals scrips in the Indian stock market. It has witnessed a remarkable surge on Wednesday, May 27. On Wednesday, the stock closed at Rs 1,150.50, up Rs 46.70 or 4.23%. Global brokerage major Morgan Stanley has assigning it “Overweight” rating. According to Morgan Stanley, there will be a tight balance between the demand and supply of aluminum, which can ensure that prices remain robust for an extended period. Following the release of this report, Hindalco shares hit a 52-week high of Rs 1,154. It gained 6% in 1 week and over 7% in 1 month. The returns in 2026 so far are about 29%. The share has appreciated about 77% over the past 1 year, 178% over 3 years, and 197% over 5 years.

Target price, upside opportunity

Morgan Stanley has set a target price of Rs 1,325 for Hindalco. This represents a potential upside of about 20%. According to the brokerage, the company possesses the capacity to generate strong Free Cash Flow (FCF) in the medium term, creating an excellent opportunity for value unlocking for investors. Morgan Stanley has mentioned the following strengths about Hindalco: Global support: Aluminum supply remains constrained due to limits on smelter capacity in China and slow capacity expansion elsewhere. But to work to the advantage of the company demand remains robust.

Low risk of weakness: Aluminum prices are expected to remain firm, supported by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, high energy costs.

Remote work is back in focus: Will it redefine how India chooses homes?

Flexible work is again influencing how Indian homebuyers assess where to live. The shift could move demand beyond office hubs towards space, practicality and quality of life.

New Delhi, (Agency)

The next big shift in India's housing market may not come from prices, policy, or supply. It may come from something far more routine: the daily commute.

As flexible work and remote-first thinking return to the conversation, alongside a broader push toward reducing unnecessary travel, the role of the office in everyday life is quietly being redefined. And when the role of the office changes, the logic of where we live begins to change with it. This is not unfamiliar territory. Just a few years ago, remote work transformed homes into

multi-functional spaces—offices, classrooms, and lifestyle hubs. What followed was not just a temporary adjustment but a structural shift in how buyers evaluated homes. What is different now is that this transition may be more measured and more permanent.

DEMAND REMAINS STRONG, BUT THE DECISION FRAMEWORK IS CHANGING

Early signals suggest that demand itself is not weakening. As per ANAROCK data, housing sales across India's top seven cities—MMR, NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, and Kolkata—rose by around 7–9% year-on-year in Q1 2026 to over 1.01 lakh units, reflecting steady underlying demand even as work patterns and commute realities continue to shift. But beneath that stability, the way people make decisions is beginning to evolve. Earlier, the homebuying question was straightforward: “How close is the office?” Today, it is becoming, “How often do I need to go there at all?” That

single shift is beginning to rewire the housing decision.

FROM COMMUTE-DRIVEN TO



LIFESTYLE-DRIVEN CHOICES

If office attendance is no longer a daily requirement, proximity starts to lose its absolute hold. It doesn't disappear, but it competes with other priorities. Space, flexibility, layout, and quality of life are gaining importance. At the same time, the cost of commuting is becoming more visible. Long travel times, rising fuel expenses, and unpredictable congestion

are no longer just inconveniences; they are influencing financial and lifestyle trade-offs. What this creates is a gradual move from commute-optimised buying to lifestyle-optimised buying.

HOW HOMEBUYER PREFERENCES COULD EVOLVE

This shift is likely to show up in how buyers evaluate homes. Space could again become a priority, but this time for a purpose that matters. Buyers may be looking for homes that are more practical than just bigger, with layouts that allow for focused work, adaptability and longevity.

At the same time, the acceptable radius for homebuying may expand. When commuting is only necessary a few days a week, a greater distance from the workplace is more acceptable in exchange for bigger homes, better communities, or better living environments. The decision, in essence, is not just about getting to the office faster; it's about living better.

A falling rupee is not RBI's headache

New Delhi, (Agency)

It's not the Reserve Bank of India's job to save a falling rupee. This might sound controversial in a country where every fall in the rupee triggers prime-time panic and political outrage. But it is also the truth.

If you do not believe it, read the RBI's own mandate. The RBI's preamble says the central bank exists “to regulate the issue of bank notes and keeping of reserves with a view to securing monetary stability in India” and to operate the country's currency and credit system “to its advantage”. Notice what is missing. There is no line promising that the RBI will protect the rupee at Rs 80, Rs 90 or even Rs 100 against the dollar.

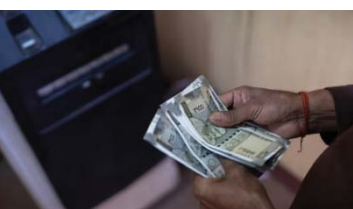
WHAT DOES THE RBI DO?

The RBI's actual job is much bigger and much more boring: control inflation, maintain financial stability, manage liquidity and make sure the economy does not spiral during global shocks.

“The RBI is legally mandated to maintain monetary stability, financial stability and orderly market conditions — not any fixed rupee value,” said Dr Manoranjan Sharma, Chief Economist at Infomerics Ratings.

And yet, every time the rupee weakens,

India reacts like the economy itself is collapsing. Television debates begin. Opposition parties attack the government. Market experts start discussing whether the rupee could touch Rs 100 against the dollar and how



it will break household finances. And the assumption is almost always the same: if the rupee is falling, the RBI must stop it.

But should it?

That question matters more now because the rupee's slide has become impossible to ignore. When Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014, the rupee traded near Rs 58 against the dollar. By May 2026, it had weakened sharply and recently touched record lows near Rs 97 amid rising crude oil prices, foreign investor outflows and global uncertainty. This has naturally

spooked citizens, who have been flooded with warnings about how a falling rupee could make life more expensive — from fuel and imports to foreign travel and education.

And while it is true that a weaker rupee does put pressure on the economy, the harsher reality is that no central bank can completely prevent a currency from weakening during a global shock like the ongoing West Asia conflict, which has pushed up crude oil prices and rattled financial markets.

These are forces far bigger than the RBI can manage/control. And that is precisely why economists increasingly argue that obsessing over defending symbolic exchange-rate levels may itself be misguided.

Because aggressively protecting the rupee can sometimes create even bigger problems for the economy. India, after all, does not run a fixed exchange-rate system.

WHEN SHOULD RBI INTERVENE?

Unlike countries that tightly peg their currencies to the dollar, India follows what economists call a “managed float” regime. The rupee is broadly allowed to move according to market forces while the RBI steps in occasionally to smooth excessive volatility or panic.

SBI recovers over Rs 10,000 crore from written-off loans as IBC, ARC sales aid bad-loan clean-up

New Delhi, (Agency)

State Bank of India recovered more than Rs 10,000 crore from written-off loan accounts during FY26, using multiple bad-loan resolution mechanisms, including the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), one-time settlements and asset sales to reconstruction companies. According to SBI's annual report, recoveries from written-off accounts rose to Rs 10,054 crore during FY26 from Rs 8,002 crore in the previous financial year, even as the country's largest lender continued to carry a sizeable stock of legacy stressed assets on its books. The bank's written-off loans, classified as Advances Under Collection Account (AUCA), stood at Rs 1.61 lakh crore as of March 31, 2026, down from Rs 1.71 lakh crore a year earlier. AUCA accounts are fully provided bad loans that are technically removed from the

balance sheet but remain under active recovery efforts. During FY26, SBI wrote off fresh loans worth Rs 17,803 crore. The annual report showed that a substantial portion of the AUCA pool consists of old legacy accounts accumulated over the years. Of the total AUCA balance, loans worth Rs 25,528 crore are over 10 years old, while Rs 86,157 crore fall in the five-to-10-year category. Loans less than five years old account for Rs 49,228 crore. The bank said recoveries from written-off accounts remain a key focus area for its stressed assets resolution group (SARG), which works on maximising value through cash recoveries, restructuring, resolution and reduction in provisioning burden. SBI highlighted the increasing role of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code in the recovery ecosystem, describing it as an effective

and time-bound mechanism for stressed asset resolution through the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). As of March 31, 2026, the lender had referred 1,247 cases under the IBC framework, of which 1,006 were admitted by the NCLT. Resolution plans were approved in 293 cases, while liquidation orders were passed in 549 cases. The bank, however, did not disclose the exact amount recovered specifically through IBC resolutions. Apart from the insolvency route, SBI continued recoveries through one-time settlement (OTS) schemes, SARFAESI proceedings, Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRTs), compromise settlements and sale of bad loans to the National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) and other asset reconstruction companies (ARCs).

source and is issued on deduction of tax by the employer on behalf of the employees. This certificate provides details of TDS/TCS for various transactions between deductor and deductee. It is mandatory for employers to issue the Form to their employees and it forms a vital document for employees to file their returns. Form 16 is required to be issued by the employer up to 15th June of the financial year immediately following the financial year in which the amount was paid and tax has been deducted.

How to file IT returns without Form 16

In certain cases, employers may not issue a Form 16 to employees. However, if your income under all heads, including salaries, is above the basic tax exemption limit then you are required to pay tax. Monthly salary slips help determine your gross salary, allowances, monthly TDS deduction, professional tax deductions and bonus which form one of the most important records as they form the base for manual tax calculation.

Bank statements

Bank statements help validate salary credits, interest income and the financial transaction trail which becomes particularly useful if salary slips are incomplete.

even small differences in repayment discipline matter. Because in lending, predictability is everything. **BORROWING FOR NEEDS, NOT WANTS?** So what explains this trend?

One possible answer lies in why women borrow. Shetty says women often approach debt more cautiously and for clearly defined purposes. “Women's lower default rates stem from cautious, purpose-driven borrowing,” he explains. According to BankBazaar data, 29.27% of women borrow mainly for emergencies, compared to 25.43% of men, who are relatively more likely to use credit for discretionary spending.

The idea is simple: when borrowing is tied to essential goals, i.e., education, healthcare, family security or emergencies, repayment tends to become a priority. Shetty says women also score higher on family-linked financial priorities, particularly relationship and wealth goals.

For years, loans and borrowing have largely been seen as a man's domain. But banks are quietly noticing something interesting: women borrowers are often proving to be more reliable when it comes to repaying loans. So, are lenders beginning to trust women more with credit?

New Delhi, (Agency)

It is a common perception that men take the majority of loans in India. After all, they have traditionally been seen as the primary earners and financial decision-makers in many households. But scratch beneath the surface, and an interesting trend begins to emerge: lenders are increasingly warming up to women borrowers. The reason? It is not simply about inclusion or diversity targets. It is

increasingly about repayment behaviour. Data from lenders suggests women are often more disciplined borrowers, miss fewer EMIs, prepay loans more actively and tend to borrow with a purpose. In short, many banks and fintech lenders believe women borrowers may come with lower repayment risk.

So, are women actually better at managing debt or is the story more complicated?

THE REPAYMENT GAP THAT IS HARD TO IGNORE

When I started looking into this, one thing stood out almost immediately: repayment patterns. According to data shared by Adhil Shetty, CEO of BankBazaar, women seem to perform slightly better than men across several financial markers. “Our data indicates women display relatively stronger repayment behaviour across several financial markers,” says Shetty. He points to BankBazaar's Attainment Index — which measures progress towards

financial goals — where women scored 84.3, compared to 82.1 for men. The difference becomes even sharper when repayment habits are examined. “Around 10.98% of women reported missing a loan payment compared to 14.29% of men.

Cases of repeated missed payments were also lower among women, at 3.25% versus 7.14% for men,” Shetty says. Women also appear slightly more proactive about financial monitoring, with 90% tracking their credit scores, compared to 88% of men. For lenders,



CMYK

Short news

Calcutta High Court acquits professor who was sentenced to 20 years in jail in POCSO case, slams probe, asks govt to compensate

Kolkata.(Agency)

Slamming the police for “total ignorance of basic investigative protocols,” the Calcutta High Court has overturned the conviction of a college professor, who was sentenced to 20 years in prison by a lower court under the POCSO Act in July 2024.

Setting aside the conviction, the Division Bench of Justice Arijit Banerjee and Justice Apurba Sinha Ray, in their judgment on May 22 this year, ordered the state government to pay the professor Rs 10 lakh as compensation within the next three months, saying he faced social defamation and spent four years in jail.

The High Court also allowed the West Bengal government to recover the compensation amount from the police officers Nibedita Koley and Joydeep Mukherjee, who were involved in the probe.

“We must express our profound dismay at the investigation conducted by S-I Nibedita Koley. Her handling of these grave charges—under Sections 376(2)(f), 328, and 506 of the IPC and Section 6 of the POCSO Act—reveals a total ignorance of basic investigative protocols. While children are indeed “supremely important national assets”, the stringent provisions of the POCSO Act cannot be weaponized to settle personal scores. The Investigating Officer (IO) failed to take even rudimentary steps to verify the allegations against Professor Pratap Digal. Instead, she allowed herself to be swayed by biased and unreliable witnesses, completely ignoring neutral residents,” the High Court said.

‘Misogyny, verbal abuse’: TMC’s Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar writes to Lok Sabha Speaker against Kalyan Banerjee

Kolkata. (Agency)

Trinamool Congress MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar Thursday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking permission to lodge a formal complaint against party colleague and lawmaker Kalyan Banerjee, alleging that he had repeatedly verbally abused her inside Parliament.

In her letter to the Speaker, Ghosh Dastidar alleged that Banerjee’s behaviour reflected “misogyny” and claimed that similar conduct had been directed at other women MPs as well.

“I seek your permission to lodge a formal complaint to you for redressal against Lok Sabha member of AITC Kalyan Banerjee, who has repeatedly verbally abused me inside the Lok Sabha. This misogyny has been against many lady members and needs to be punished,” Ghosh Dastidar wrote in the handwritten letter to the Lok Sabha Speaker. Her letter comes a day after Ghosh Dastidar resigned from all organisational posts in the TMC. Earlier this week, the four-term MP had also stepped down as president of the party’s Barasat organisational district unit.

In her resignation letter to the party, Ghosh Dastidar — once among the party’s most recognisable faces and national president of its women’s wing — stated that there was little meaning in continuing in a position where “obscene behaviour” by an “uneducated and uncivilised” party MP towards a woman lawmaker could not be stopped, and where no support.

Climate change-driven heat stress in TN reduces productivity of outdoor workers by 1.4x: Study

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Even as Tamil Nadu reels under one of its harshest summer heat spells in recent years, with temperatures consistently breaching the 40-degree Celsius mark across several districts, a new peer-reviewed study has warned that climate change-driven heat stress significantly affects the productivity, health and livelihoods of outdoor workers in the state.

The study, ‘Quantifying the impact of heat stress on labour productivity in outdoor workplaces in southern India amid a changing climate’, which was published in the journal, ‘Scientific Reports’, found that rising temperatures and prolonged exposure to extreme heat significantly reduced labour productivity among informal outdoor workers, many of whom already labour without adequate social protection or occupational safeguards.

Undertaken between 2021 and 2023 across 11 districts of Tamil Nadu, the study surveyed 1,560 workers employed in agriculture, construction industry, brick kilns, salt pans and stone quarries — occupations that demand prolonged outdoor exposure under intense heat.

The findings revealed that nearly 61% of the workers reported productivity loss during summer, compared to 39% during winter. Further, workers exposed to elevated heat stress faced risk of reduced productivity by as much as 1.4x, while the risk of heat-related illnesses such as dehydration, cramps, headaches, nausea and fatigue more than doubled.

Army, IAF lead 15-hr operation, contain forest fire raging in Kasauli

Kasauli .(Agency)

A high tempo operation spearheaded by the Army and aided by the Air Force and local agencies finally managed to contain the forest fires that erupted in the Gilbert Trail and Upper Mall area on the western slopes of Kasauli.

The last of the forest fires, which had been simmering for past couple of days but flared up on Tuesday afternoon and night, were put out under adverse wind conditions around the Upper Mall road of the hill station.

The fires had almost reached the crest of the Ridge on the Upper Mall and may have ended engulfing the Doordarshan tower, Kasauli Club and the residences situated on the Ridge-line had continuous efforts on ground and in air not been mounted, officials said.

When The Indian Express team reached Kasauli Wednesday morning, Army jawans were beating the fire back, fire tenders were dousing the hillside with water and IAF MI-



17 helicopters were showering water from the skies. The IAF helicopters undertook multiple sorties till early afternoon, fetching water from Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh in Bambi buckets and dumping it over the fire lines. Notably, by road, Chandigarh is about 60 km away from Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh.

Speaking to The Indian Express at the Kasauli Club, a Colonel involved in the firefighting operations said that efforts by the Kasauli

Brigade and IAF warded off a disaster. “At one point last night, we were worried due to the intensity of the fire but a sustained overnight operation lasting over 15 hours saved the situation,” he said.

An Army statement said that its personnel, in close coordination with the IAF, civil officials of both Kasauli and Chandigarh administration, and other local agencies, doused the forest fire on the western slopes of Kasauli. Speaking to The Indian Express, RK Singla, member of the Kasauli Cantonment Board said the heavy winds blowing in on the reverse slope of the Upper Mall were fuelling the flames. “We do not know what caused the fire. It could be due to the extreme heat, which we have been witnessing over the past few days, which, coupled with the dry pine leaves and tinder, led to the big fires. The fires also reached the vicinity of the Air Force Station and were also witnessed in the area around Sanawar but were brought under control,” he said.

Orissa High Court seeks response on alleged illegal construction and excavation in Mahendragiri hills

CUTTACK. (Agency)

The Orissa High Court on Tuesday sought response from the state government and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on a PIL alleging unauthorised excavation, illegal construction and ecological destruction in and around the sacred Mahendragiri hills in Gajapati district.

The petition was filed by Pradeep Kumar Bhuyan and three other residents of Gajapati district, who belong to the Sabar (Saora) ST community. Advocate Shivsankar Mohanty represented the petitioners.

The vacation bench of Justices KR Mohapatra and MS Sahoo was hearing the petition on virtual mode. While Additional Government Advocate SR Pattnaik represented the state government, Deputy Solicitor General of India PK Parhi appeared for the ASI. The matter has been posted after the ensuing summer vacation.

The petitioners claimed they were hereditary



worshippers of the sacred Mahendragiri hills, and sought immediate direction to stop all unauthorised excavation, illegal construction, encroachments, installation of artificial idols and unlawful religious activities near the centrally-protected Bhima, Kunti and Yudhistira temples situated on the hills. They also sought demolition and removal of alleged illegal structures raised in violation of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, forest laws and environmental

regulations.

The PIL stated that Mahendragiri hills was of immense religious, cultural and ecological significance for the Sabar and Kondh tribal communities.

It alleged that though the state government had declared the 4,250 hectare of Mahendragiri region a Biodiversity Heritage Site in November 2022, private parties, under the guise of “research work” and “Mahendra Ashram” carried out illegal excavation, construction and alteration of ancient structures. Photographs submitted before the court allegedly showed excavation near Kunti temple, uprooting of trees near Yudhistira temple and construction of a concrete road within prohibited areas surrounding protected monuments. The petition also expressed concern over a proposed “Mahendra Mela” scheduled from June 1 to June 13, warning that large religious gatherings and rituals could seriously disturb the fragile.

Odisha’s 1st 8-lane service road to come up from Palasuni to Tamando soon

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

Works minister Prithiviraj Harichandan on Wednesday announced an ambitious expansion of the state’s highways and transport infrastructure, including the first-ever eight-lane service road along National Highway-16, six-laning of key corridors and fast-tracked construction of 122 railway overbridges (ROBs).

Speaking to mediapersons after returning from New Delhi, where he met Union Road Transport and Highways minister Nitin Gadkari and Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Harichandan said several road projects submitted by the Odisha government to the MoRTH have received in-principle approvals which will significantly improve traffic management, tourism connectivity and industrial growth in the state.

“In Odisha, for the first time, an eight-lane service road with four lanes on each side will be constructed along NH-16 from Palasuni to Tamando, one

of the highest traffic density routes. This is a historic step for the state’s infrastructure development,” the minister said.

The other flagship projects include the upgradation of NH-316 between Bhubaneswar and Puri into a six-lane controlled-access highway with



service roads. The 67-km corridor, currently a four-lane highway completed in 2017, witnesses heavy traffic due to pilgrimage and tourism movement to Puri, home to the revered Shree Jagannath temple.

Harichandan further said that a comprehensive accident prevention

master plan is also being prepared for all major roads.

Under the proposal, apart from the eight-lane service road from Palasuni to Tamando stretch near Bhubaneswar, the Puri-Brahmagiri-Satapada road will also be widened into a four-lane highway to improve access to the Chilika tourism circuit. “Earlier, the MoRTH had dropped the proposal in view of wildlife concerns and sanction of the coastal highway. Gadkari has assured to reconsider the project after he was explained about the need and urgency of the road expansion,” the minister said. He announced that the Tangi-Brahmapur-Ichchapuram section of NH-16 will be upgraded into a six-lane highway. “Preparation of the detailed project report (DPR) will begin shortly, followed by the tendering process. Gadkari has directed officials to take immediate steps for the widening of the NH project,” Harichandan added.

West Bengal hands 142.79 acres to BSF for India-Bangladesh border fencing

Kolkata.(Agency)

The West Bengal government has handed over 142.79 acres of land to the BSF for setting up outposts and barbed-wire fencing infrastructure along the India-Bangladesh border. Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari said. The handover is part of the BJP government’s decision, taken at its first cabinet meeting on May 11, to transfer 600 acres of land within 45 days for border fencing and related infrastructure projects.

“Govt of WB has initiated intensified measures to strengthen border security by facilitating construction of BSF outposts and barbed-wire fencing, further enhancing security in the border areas. Additional land has now been handed over to BSF, taking the total tally to 142.79 acres,” the CM said in a social media post late on Wednesday.

He also shared a district-wise chart detailing the land transferred to the BSF across nine districts.

According to the chart, 22.92 acres of land have been handed over in Coochbehar, 35.16 acres in Jalpaiguri, 8.81 acres in Darjeeling, 2.84 acres in Uttar Dinajpur, and 20.17 acres in Dakshin Dinajpur.

Additionally, 10.9 acres has been handed over in Malda, 38.8 acres in Murshidabad, 0.55 acre in Nadia, and 2.6 acres in North 24 Parganas.

As part of the first phase of the initiative, 43 acres of purchased land across five districts and sanction orders for 31.9 acres of vested land were handed over to the BSF on May 20.

Coaching class associations demand crackdown on integrated coaching after NEET row

Mumbai .(Agency)

Private coaching class owners associations from across Maharashtra on Wednesday demanded strict regulations to curb integrated coaching system claiming that this model along with other unchecked aspects have encouraged malpractices in the industry exposed by the NEET paper leak.

Under the banner of State Consortium of Coaching Teachers and Institutes (SCCTI) representatives of nine coaching associations from across Maharashtra staged a day-long protest at Mumbai’s Azad Maidan on Wednesday.



Condemning the NEET paper leak, they demanded strict action against those involved but also submitted a charter of demands to the state government highlighting the issues in the system to

press for the urgent need of regulations on coaching classes.

Further demanding that government must establish a coaching class council on lines of medical or bar councils, they highlighted other issues such as dual teacher who are faculty members from schools or colleges but also work in private coaching classes and reduced importance for Class 12 marks with heavy dependence on NEET/JEE like competitive exams for entrance procedures.

“Within the coaching industry, there is a difference between ordinary coaching class operators and large corporate-style coaching institutes hat have huge student strength, excessively large batch sizes, tie-

ups with colleges, and misleading or deceptive advertisements that misguide students and parents. If a law is introduced to curb such malpractices, we would support it,” stated the charter of demand submitted by the consortium.

Demanding the need for biometric attendance in junior colleges, spokesperson of the consortium, Bandopant Bhuyar, said, “These integrated coaching institutes merely register students with junior colleges through tie-up arrangements to attend only coaching class lectures. Government approved junior colleges allow this tie-ups as they get to charge Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 per student, and earn profit without having to provide any teaching support.”

NEWS BOX

India suffer 2-0 defeat to Jamaica, set to play third-place match at Unity Cup



CHENNAI. (Agency)

India's campaign in the Unity Cup 2026 suffered a setback after the Blue Tigers went down 0-2 to Jamaica in the semifinal at The Valley in London on Wednesday.

Facing a physically stronger and higher-ranked Jamaican side, India showed flashes of promise but struggled to convert possession into clear chances as the Reggae Boyz comfortably booked their place in the final against Nigeria.

Jamaica struck early through Courtney Clarke in the eighth minute after a quick counterattack exposed India's defence. Gurpreet Singh Sandhu initially blocked the first dangerous ball, but Clarke collected the loose ball outside the box and curled a brilliant finish into the top corner to hand Jamaica the lead. India attempted to respond with a more aggressive approach in the second half. Lallianzuala Chhangte, Ryan Williams and Farukh Choudhary tried to stretch the Jamaican defence, while Sandesh Jhingan stood out with a series of crucial interventions at the back.

Chhangte even found the net in the 53rd minute after a scramble inside the box, but the effort was ruled out for offside. Khalid Jamil introduced fresh legs, including debutant PN Noufal and Vikram Partap Singh, as India searched for an equaliser. However, Jamaica's pace and composure proved decisive once again when Kaheim Dixon doubled the lead in the 78th minute with a brilliant solo effort, weaving past defenders before firing into the far corner.

Despite the defeat, India's defence showed resilience for long periods against the 71st-ranked Jamaicans. Concerns remain, however, over the injury sustained by Ryan Williams, who had to be substituted in the second half. India will now face Zimbabwe in the third-place playoff, while Jamaica moves on to the Unity Cup 2026 final against Nigeria.

Watch: Kavya Maran congratulates Vaibhav Sooryavanshi after Eliminator blitz



NEW DELHI. (Agency)

While many on social media trolled Kavya Maran for her emotional reactions during Sunrisers Hyderabad's crushing Eliminator defeat against Rajasthan Royals, the SRH owner made sure to congratulate the teenager who caused most of the damage. Moments after the match, Kavya was seen shaking hands and briefly chatting with 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi following his breathtaking knock in Mullanpur.

Rajasthan Royals teenager Vaibhav Sooryavanshi once again became the biggest talking point of IPL 2026 after his stunning Eliminator innings against Sunrisers Hyderabad helped RR storm into Qualifier 2. Sooryavanshi smashed a sensational 97 off just 29 balls as Rajasthan Royals defeated SRH by 47 runs to keep their title hopes alive. The youngster's fearless hitting completely dismantled Hyderabad's bowling attack and left social media stunned throughout the night.

The post-match interaction between Kavya and Sooryavanshi quickly went viral online, especially after the SRH owner's emotional reactions during the game had already become a major talking point across social media.

WATCH THE VIDEO HERE:

The SRH owner had endured a difficult evening in the stands as Hyderabad's campaign slowly unravelled during the massive 244-run chase.

HOW VAIBHAV DESTROYED SRH BOWLERS

For nearly the entire evening, Sunrisers Hyderabad looked like a bowling attack running out of ideas against Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Pat Cummins kept moving fielders around, paused repeatedly for chats with his senior players and kept trying different plans against the teenager. One over it was yorkers at the stumps, the next came sharp bouncers into the body. Then slower balls, cutters and wider lines outside off followed. The 15-year-old batted with a kind of freedom that never allowed SRH to settle. Full balls were launched straight back over the sightscreen. Short deliveries disappeared behind square.

French Open Day 5 schedule: Jannik Sinner, Aryna Sabalenka aim for more dominance

IPL 2026 Eliminator: Off the field, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is all grace and humility, seeking blessings from legends before battle. On it, he is something else entirely: a fifteen-year-old phenomenon for whom respect ends precisely where the boundary rope begins.

New Delhi. (Agency)

An hour before the toss, the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Stadium in New Chandigarh was still finding its feet. Ground staff were attending to the pitch, television crews were setting up cables along the boundary, and the players of Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad were beginning to filter out for their warm-ups. Among the first to emerge was a boy in pink. Unhurried, wearing the ease of someone who

had nowhere more important to be. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi walked out to have a look at the pitch, the way any opening batter might on the evening of an Eliminator. He spoke to the broadcasters. He had a quiet word with the coaching staff. Then he joined a kickabout with his teammates, tearing up and down an imaginary left flank with the single-mindedness of someone who absolutely needed the ball at his feet and was not going to stop until he got it.

Then he saw Sunil Gavaskar standing near the boundary rope, doing his broadcast duties. Vaibhav jogged over, bent down, and touched the great man's feet. Sanjay Bangar, former India all-rounder, received the same reverence. When Vaibhav moved towards Jatin Sapru, the broadcaster took a couple of quick steps back, urging the teenager not to bother. Vaibhav insisted. The clip went viral almost immediately, with thousands of people marvelling at the 15-year-old's humility, his grace, his sense of what elders deserve. Quite right too. What nobody mentioned was that it was the last

time Vaibhav Sooryavanshi showed anyone on that field any respect whatsoever on Wednesday.



CARNAGE ON THE FIELD

What followed over the next eight overs was 97 runs from 29 balls. Twelve sixes. A record broken, a century missed by three runs, and an entire bowling attack reduced to scrambled logic by a boy who should be sitting his school examinations this year, but has found rather more pressing matters to attend to. By the time Praful Hinge finally had him caught at deep third, the press box at New Chandigarh, full of people paid to have seen everything, was still humming. Not

with noise. With something quieter and more unsettling. The recognition, shared but unspoken, that what they had just witnessed was not normal. That it might not be comparable to anything.

Rajasthan Royals posted 243 for 8. They won by 47 runs. They are through to Qualifier 2. But those are the facts that will be forgotten. What will be remembered is the feeling in that stadium while Vaibhav was batting: a collective, breathless awe, the kind usually reserved for natural phenomena rather than cricket matches. To understand the full weight of Wednesday evening, you need to understand what this teenager has been doing since before most of his peers had made their school's first XIs. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was playing Ranji Trophy cricket for Bihar at twelve — first-class cricket, against men, as a child who had not yet reached secondary school. At 14, he hit the first ball of his IPL debut for six, then finished that season with a hundred against Gujarat Titans — 101 off 38 balls — the youngest centurion in the competition's history.

French Open Day 5 schedule: Jannik Sinner, Aryna Sabalenka aim for more dominance

New Delhi. (Agency)

Day 5 of the French Open 2026 brings a packed order of play across Roland Garros, featuring top seeds, big-name clashes, and Indian participation in doubles and mixed doubles. On Court Philippe-Chatrier, World No.1 Jannik Sinner faces Juan Manuel Cerundolo in his second-round match after a dominant opening win over Clement Tabur. In the women's draw, Aryna Sabalenka continues her campaign after a confident straight-sets opening-round victory and now meets France's Elsa Jacquemot. Ann Li plays Diane Parry, while Arthur Rinderknech meets Matteo Berrettini in a

late night match.

Court Suzanne-Lenglen features Coco Gauff against Mayar Sherif, Amanda Anisimova



versus Julia Grabher, Zizou Bergs against Ben Shelton, and Adolfo Daniel Vallejo

facing Mose Kouame.

On Court Simonne-Mathieu, Naomi Osaka plays Donna Vekic, Francisco Cerundolo meets Hugo Gaston, Felix Auger-Aliassime takes on Roman Ambros Burroughs, and Victoria Mboko faces Katerina Siniakova.

Indian interest continues in doubles action. Anirudh Chandrasekar partners Takeru Yuzuki in men's doubles against Jakub Paul and Marcus Willis on Court 2. In mixed doubles on Court 5, Yuki Bhambri teams up with Alexandra Panova against Lyudmyla Kichenok and David Pel. Bhambri, coming off a strong men's doubles opening-round win, will look to carry his momentum forward.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's India debut loading? Captain Suryakumar Yadav already a fan



New Delhi. (Agency)

India T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav heaped praise on teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi after the Rajasthan Royals batter produced another jaw-dropping innings during the IPL 2026 Eliminator against Sunrisers Hyderabad. The 15-year-old fell agonisingly short of a historic century, but his breathtaking assault still left some of the biggest names in cricket stunned. Sooryavanshi smashed 97 off just 29 balls in Mullanpur on Wednesday, hammering 12 sixes and five fours at a staggering strike rate above 334 as Rajasthan Royals stormed into the next stage of the playoffs. Following the innings, Suryakumar posted a heartfelt message on social media, calling the youngster a "star in the making."

"Chin up boy... what a CLASS inning, you've taken everyone's breath away. Star in the making," Suryakumar tweeted after the match. The innings triggered reactions across the cricket world, with Sachin Tendulkar, Chris Gayle and Michael Vaughan among those praising the RR batter. Even before the Eliminator blitz, Vaughan had suggested that India should already start considering the teenager for the senior side after his fearless performances throughout IPL 2026. Sooryavanshi has now scored 680 runs this season at an average of 45.33 and a strike rate of 242.86, turning himself into one of the biggest stories of the tournament.

HOW SOORYAVANSHI DISMANTLED SRH BOWLING

Sunrisers Hyderabad tried almost everything against Vaibhav Sooryavanshi on Wednesday night. Nothing worked.

Pat Cummins kept changing the field almost every over. The SRH captain regularly walked up to his senior players after every six, searching for answers. Yorkers were tried, then came the bouncers. Slower balls, cutters, wide lines outside off, SRH threw almost every variation possible at Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

Novak Djokovic hits out at Paris crowd after boos during tense Roland Garros clash

French Open 2026: Novak Djokovic slammed sections of the Roland Garros crowd after being booed during his win over Frenchman Valentin Royer. The Serbian accused the Paris spectators of showing "no respect" as he battled into the third round.

Paris (Agency)

Novak Djokovic hit out at sections of the Roland Garros crowd after being repeatedly booed during his second-round clash against Frenchman Valentin Royer, accusing the Paris spectators of showing "no respect" throughout the match. The Serbian eventually battled past the local favourite in four sets to reach the third

round of the French Open.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion defeated Royer 6-3, 6-2, 6-7(7), 6-3 in a gruelling contest that lasted nearly three hours and 45 minutes on Court Philippe-Chatrier. But while Djokovic secured his place in the next round, the atmosphere inside the stadium remained tense for most of the evening. Speaking after the match,



Djokovic admitted he hoped he would avoid facing more French players for the remainder of the tournament because of the crowd behaviour. "I hope I won't play any more French players for the rest of the tournament," Djokovic said after the win. The tension between Djokovic and the crowd escalated midway through the match

when the Serbian sarcastically applauded the spectators after being booed during points. The chair umpire eventually stepped in and appealed for calm inside the stadium. "Ladies and gentlemen, please have some respect for both players," the umpire announced. Djokovic immediately responded by saying: "They have no respect. No respect." The atmosphere remained heated for most of the evening as Royer, ranked 74 in the world, continued pushing the Serbian far harder than many expected heading into the clash.

DJOKOVIC SURVIVES ROYER TEST IN PARIS HEAT

The match itself turned into a much tougher battle than Djokovic would have ideally wanted. Playing under intense Paris heat, with temperatures once again rising above 32 degrees, the 39-year-old repeatedly used ice packs around his neck and head during changeovers to stay cool. Royer, who had won only one tour-level match before arriving at Roland Garros this year, produced the best performance of his young career and managed to frustrate Djokovic for long spells, especially after stealing the third-set tiebreak

Deja vu strikes: Praggnanandhaa shocks Carlsen again in Norway Chess clash

Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa stunned World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen again at Norway Chess 2026 in Oslo, continuing a growing rivalry after his breakthrough win over Carlsen at the same event in 2024.

Las Vegas. (Agency)

Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa delivered another stunning result against World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen at the Norway Chess 2026 tournament in Oslo, continuing a rapidly growing rivalry that has become one of the most talked-about storylines in modern chess. For Praggnanandhaa, it was a deja vu moment as he defeated Carlsen for the second time at Norway Chess, following his breakthrough win in 2024. In 2024,

Praggnanandhaa registered his first-ever classical victory over the Norwegian superstar at the same event, marking a major milestone in his career and announcing his arrival at the elite level. The latest result further strengthened his reputation as one of the brightest young talents in world chess.

The defeat, meanwhile, marked another setback for Carlsen in a turbulent tournament start, with the Norwegian reportedly struggling with form and time-pressure errors at key moments. Despite entering the game with strong expectations, Carlsen once again found himself in a complex middlegame position against Praggnanandhaa. Praggnanandhaa gradually outplayed Carlsen with steady, precise play and appeared in control for much of the encounter. However, the momentum shifted in severe time trouble, where Carlsen briefly created chances to turn the game in his favour. In a dramatic final phase, the Norwegian made a decisive mistake under pressure and resigned shortly after,

conceding victory to Praggnanandhaa.

GUKESH DRAWS AGAINST FIROUZJA While Praggnanandhaa grabbed headlines with his win over Carlsen, reigning World



Champion D. Gukesh Dommaraju and tournament leader Alireza Firouzja played out a hard-fought classical draw after a tense battle. Firouzja later edged the Armageddon tiebreak to secure the extra points and continue his strong start to the tournament.

In the other classical game, Vincent Keymer and Wesley So also shared the point after a balanced contest. So went on to win the Armageddon decider, taking the additional points. After round three, Firouzja continues to lead the standings following another productive day. In the Norway Chess Women section, Anna Muzychuk and Humpy Koneru played out a balanced classical game that eventually ended in a draw. Muzychuk later won the Armageddon tiebreak to claim the extra points. In the other match, tournament leader Bibisara Assaubayeva and Divya Deshmukh contested a complex game before sharing the classical point. Divya then secured victory in Armageddon to take the additional

points. After round three, Assaubayeva remains at the top of the standings, though Divya and Zhu Jiner are closing in with crucial Armageddon wins.

Akshara Singh praises Akshay Kumar, and reveals how he took a stand for her on the set during the shoot of Ghis Ghis Ghis song from Welcome To The Jungle.

Akshara Singh

Reveals Akshay Kumar Took A Stand For Her During Song Shoot:

'Was Told To Wear Ghagra Choli...'

Akshay Kumar has earned praise from Bhojpuri actor Akshara Singh, who revealed he supported her on set during the shoot of the song Ghis Ghis Ghis from Welcome To The Jungle. She said that the actor took a stand for her while they were shooting for the song, and how Akshay intervened to ensure she felt comfortable. Akshara shared that she was initially asked to wear a ghagra-choli for the dance, based on a stereotypical assumption about Bhojpuri performers. She 'made a face' when that was suggested. Akshay noticed her reaction and immediately stepped in and told the team to let her choose what she was comfortable in.

Akshara Singh Reveals How Akshay Kumar Took A Stand For Her

While speaking with Hindustan Times, Akshara Singh recalled shooting for Ghis Ghis Ghis song. "I was told to wear a ghagra choli for a shot as people have this mindset that that's what Bhojpuri artists wear. It's not 1947 that we would wear only that. I just made a face on that and Akshay sir noticed it from afar. He told the team, 'Isko chod, isko comfortable rehne de na. Iske mann pe chod aur iska jo mann kar raha hai isko pehenne de.' (Leave her, let her be comfortable. Leave it to her, let her wear what she wants'). That line touched me so much," she said.

Akshara Singh Reveals Akshay Kumar Shot For the Song Despite 103 Degree Fever

Akshara also spoke about Akshay Kumar's professionalism during the shoot, mentioning that he continued working despite suffering from a high fever. She said his energy never dropped and he maintained a positive attitude throughout the schedule. "It was inspiring as tabiyat kharab hone ke bawajood unki energy mein koi kami nahin thi. There was no tantrum at all, and the tantrums I have seen from heroes in Bhojpuri, this was in extreme contrast," she said.

She further shared that Akshay actively engaged with her during the song, asking her to help him with Bhojpuri pronunciation, tone, and meaning. According to her, it felt special to see an established Bollywood actor show such openness and respect for the language and her expertise.

Welcome To The Jungle features a massive ensemble cast led by Akshay Kumar. The film also stars Suniel Shetty, Paresh Rawal, Johnny Lever, Rajpal Yadav, Arshad Warsi, Tusshar Kapoor, Shreyas Talpade, Aftab Shivdasani, Jackie Shroff, Daler Mehndi, Raveena Tandon, Lara Dutta, Jacqueline Fernandez, Disha Patani, Urvashi Rautela, Farida Jalal, Krushna Abhishek, Mukesh Tiwari, Yashpal Sharma, Vinu Dara Singh, Kiran Kumar, Zakir Hussain, late Pankaj Dheer, Puneet Issar, Kiku Sharda, Feroze Khan, Sudesh Berry and Vrihi Kodvara.



Shahid Kapoor

Flaunts Chiselled Physique In Latest Photos, Fans Ask About Farzi 2

The second series of the crime thriller was officially confirmed by the makers in February, as Farzi completed 3 years.

Shahid Kapoor has once again sent the internet into a frenzy with his latest shirtless photos, leaving fans impressed by his chiselled physique. The actor shared a series of pictures on social media, flaunting his toned abs and rugged appearance. However, amid the excitement, a large

section of fans asked him about Farzi 2. Taking to his Instagram handle, Shahid Kapoor shared a series of photos flaunting his hot looks with no caption. Fans immediately reacted with calling him hot. However, some even called him Sunny in the comment section. The name is attached to his character in Farzi, a crime thriller series. And currently its second season shoot is going on. Fans asked him about Farzi 2.

Shahid Kapoor Shares BTS Pics From Farzi 2 Shoot

The second series of the crime thriller was officially confirmed by the makers in February, as Farzi completed 3 years. A few days later, Shahid shared some behind-the-scenes photos from sets, revealing that he has commenced shoot for the series. Now, Shahid has shared some more BTS glimpses, including a picture with Vijay Sethupathi, who played Michael Vedanayagam, a Special Task Force officer, in the first season.

Recently, the actor shared a selfie with Vijay Sethupathi from the sets of Farzi 2. The photo shows them smiling widely for the camera. They are both seen with thick-framed black glasses on. "Spexy men at work!" wrote Shahid. Meanwhile, the actor also shared a series of BTS photos from Farzi 2 shoot on Instagram. The first photo shows him seated in a chair with a car in the background. Another captures him with Bhuvan Arora and DK, all looking intently at something. A third

picture shows the director giving instructions to Shahid and the rest of the team. "Sunny days are back !! Farzi ing away !!!" wrote Shahid.

Shahid Kapoor's Latest Work

Shahid Kapoor was last seen in Vishal Bhardwaj's O Romeo. It was also announced that the film would make its OTT debut on Prime Video. The film, which opened in theatres on February 13, was Shahid Kapoor and Vishal Bhardwaj's fourth collaboration, following Kamini, Haider, and Rangoon. Triptii Dimri, Avinash Tiwari, Nana Patekar, Farida Jalal, and Tamannaah Bhatia all had key roles in the film. He will be next seen in Cocktail 2 with Rashmika Mandanna and Kriti Sanon. The teaser has already released.



David Dhawan Issues Statement On Vashu Bhagnani's Claims: 'We're Lawful Owners of Chunnari Chunnari'



Producer Ramesh Taurani, Tips and the team of 'Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai' filmmaker David Dhawan have finally broken their silence over the claims made by Vashu Bhagnani, tagging it as a "smear campaign driven by personal vendetta."

A statement on Wednesday was issued by the makers, where it stated that a "series of baseless allegations have been made against us by Mr. Vashu Bhagnani." "It is amply clear to us that this is a smear campaign driven by personal vendetta, intended to derail the release of our film Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai," the statement on behalf of Taurani and Dhawan read.

It mentioned that their association with Bhagnani dates back to 1995. "When we generously offered him a 50 percent partnership and a producer credit on a project for which we had laid out all the groundwork. Coolie No. 1 went on to become a massive box office hit and gave Mr. Bhagnani a kick-start in the industry." "Over the years, we continued to extend our heartfelt support and good wishes to him. It is out of respect for this long-standing relationship that we chose to remain silent until now."

"However, Mr. Bhagnani remains determined to spread misinformation via various platforms including social media. Suspiciously, he has also chosen to file a legal complaint in Kathiwar court in Bihar – over 2000 kms away from Mumbai. He decided to take legal action against all associated with our film rather than engage in direct dialogue," the statement read.

Taurani and team David Dhawan, in the statement, mentioned that they "are deeply disheartened and disappointed" by Bhagnani's conduct.

They mentioned that they are the "lawful owners" of the songs Chunnari Chunnari and Ishq Sona Hai.

"We urge the public to not pay heed to such targeted negativity. We maintain that we are the absolute and lawful owners of the songs Chunnari Chunnari and Ishq Sona Hai. Since this matter is sub judice, this will be the only statement we shall be making at this time."

Sunjay Kapur Estate Row: Priya Kapur Seeks Funds To Pay School Fees Of Karisma Kapoor's Children



The legal fight over late businessman Sunjay Kapur's estate has taken another turn after his widow Priya Sachdev moved court seeking access to funds for Samaira and Kiaan's education. The matter has drawn attention as the ongoing inheritance dispute now involves claims linked to school and college fee payments for Karisma Kapoor's children.

Priya Sachdev seeks access to EPF funds

Priya Sachdev has approached the Delhi High Court seeking permission to withdraw money from Sunjay Kapur's Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) accounts. According to court proceedings held on May 26, Priya requested approval to use the funds for the school fees and educational expenses of Samaira and Kiaan, Sunjay's children with actor Karisma Kapoor.

The application asked for partial changes to an interim injunction passed by the court on April 30. That earlier order had frozen Sunjay Kapur's estate and restricted the liquidation, transfer or dissipation of his assets and corporate holdings during the ongoing inheritance dispute. However, the court had earlier allowed limited relaxation for essential expenses related to his children. Priya's legal team has now sought specific approval to access the provident fund accounts for educational purposes. Her lawyers reportedly informed the court that the money would only be used for school fees and related academic expenses concerning Samaira and Kiaan.

Earlier dispute over unpaid fees

The issue of educational expenses had already surfaced during previous hearings linked to the estate battle. During one hearing, Karisma Kapoor's legal representatives reportedly claimed that Samaira's college fees had not been paid because the managers handling Sunjay Kapur's estate had failed to clear the payments.

Priya Sachdev later denied the allegation in court. Her lawyer reportedly presented receipts showing that payments had already been made. According to the court submissions, ₹95 lakh per semester had already been cleared towards the fees.

NEWS BOX

Bangladesh spares rare albino buffalo nicknamed 'Donald Trump' from Eid al-Adha sacrifice after viral fame

World.(Agency)

A rare albino buffalo in Bangladesh, popularly nicknamed 'Donald Trump' because of its blond tuft of hair, has been spared from Eid al-Adha sacrifice following a last-minute intervention by the government. The nearly 700 kg buffalo had already been sold for ritual slaughter ahead of the Islamic festival when authorities stepped in, citing security concerns after the animal became an internet sensation.

According to officials, Bangladesh Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed ordered that the buffalo be removed from the sacrifice list, the buyer refunded, and the animal relocated to the national zoo in Dhaka. "At the last moment, the decision was taken to spare the buffalo from sacrifice due to security concerns and the unusual level of public interest," a Home Ministry official said on Wednesday.

How 'Donald Trump' buffalo became viral

The buffalo shot to fame after videos of the animal went viral on social media, drawing crowds from across the country to the farm where it was being raised. Visitors were especially fascinated by its rare albino appearance, blond fringe.

According to Reuters' report, farm owner Ziauddin Mridha said the unusual nickname was coined by his younger brother, who thought the buffalo's blond hair resembled that of US President Donald Trump.

Mridha also said that the animal as unusually gentle and said it required special care, including regular feeding and baths. Albino buffaloes are extremely rare in Bangladesh, where cattle are typically dark-coloured, making the animal stand out during the busy Eid livestock season. However, officials and observers noted that its viral nickname and growing popularity may ultimately have saved its life.

Matthew Perry's assistant gets 41 months in prison for central role in his ketamine death

World.(Agency)

Matthew Perry's live-in personal assistant, who had a central role in the "Friends" star's descent into ketamine addiction and injected him with the fatal dose of the drug, was sentenced Wednesday to three years and five months in prison.

Judge Sherilyn Peace Garnett handed down the sentence to 60-year-old Kenneth Iwamasa in federal court in Los Angeles. He was also sentenced to two years of probation and a \$10,000 fine.

It was the fifth and final sentencing in the 2 1/2-year investigation and prosecution that followed Perry's death at age 54 on Oct. 28, 2023. Iwamasa was at Perry's side through the final days of his life, acting as the actor's enabler, drug messenger and de facto doctor. He was the last person to see Perry alive, and he was the one who found him dead in his Jacuzzi.

He was the first person to reach a deal with prosecutors, pleading guilty in August of 2024 to one count of conspiracy to distribute ketamine resulting in death, and became their most important witness.

Iwamasa's lawyers said in a court filing that he was an employee doing his employer's bidding and had a "particular vulnerability" in his relationship to Perry. "In short, he could not 'simply say no.' That inability had tragic consequences."

Iran expands restrictions on distribution of news content by international media outlets

World.(Agency)d

Iran has expanded restrictions on distribution of news content from the country, directing international news outlets to place restrictions on use of their content by Israeli media. The directive, issued on Tuesday to international news outlets based in the capital, Tehran, specified that mandatory language be included on "all submitted content, including photos, videos, reports, and other media productions."

The instructions were sent to a number of news organizations, including The Associated Press, from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, which oversees media activity. "Responsibility for failing to comply with this directive rests with the submitting media outlet," said the instructions, translated from Farsi. The new restrictions come three months after the United States and Israel launched attacks on Iran that grew into a continuing, occasionally flaring war in the region. President Donald Trump insisted a peace deal is close on the 88th day of the war, even as Iran on Tuesday denounced the most recent U.S. strikes as a sign of "bad faith and unreliability."

Under the new measures, international news outlets are required to say that the content in question cannot be used by Israeli media, and also Farsi-language TV stations based outside Iran. For years, Iran has banned international media from sharing some material with BBC Persian, VOA Persian, Manoto TV and Iran International at the risk of having their operations shut down in the country.

Despite the restrictions, many Farsi-language media outlets abroad still access images and videos released by Iranian state media through a variety of websites and messaging apps. The Washington-based group Freedom House ranks Iran as not having a free and independent media, noting that all television channels are controlled by hard-liners within its theocracy and those working in other outlets face harassment and arrest.

Iran hits US base after attack near Bandas Abbas airport, vows more decisive reply

US officials said American forces shot down four Iranian drones near the Strait of Hormuz and struck a drone control site near Bandar Abbas, citing threats to US forces and commercial shipping.

World.(Agency)

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Thursday that it targeted a US airbase at around 4:50am local time in response to what it described as an American attack near Bandar Abbas airport earlier in the day. Iranian media reports did not disclose the location of the targeted base, but the IRGC warned that any further US action would invite a "more decisive" retaliation.

The Iranian statement came hours after US officials confirmed fresh military action against Iranian drone operations near the Strait of Hormuz.

According to Reuters, the US military shot down four Iranian attack drones that officials believed threatened American forces and commercial shipping in the strategic waterway. The US also struck a drone ground-control station near Bandar

Abbas that was allegedly preparing to launch another drone. A US official described the operation as limited and defensive, saying it was intended to maintain the ceasefire that came into effect in early April.

However, Tehran accused Washington of repeatedly violating the truce. Iranian media claimed the IRGC Navy fired warning shots toward a US-linked oil tanker attempting to pass through the strait, forcing it to retreat.

Another report said four vessels attempting to transit the waterway without Iranian coordination were also turned back after warnings from Iranian naval forces.

THE HORMUZ DEADLOCK

The Strait of Hormuz remains at the centre of the conflict. Before the war erupted in

February, the narrow maritime corridor handled nearly one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments.



Iranian state media said only 23 vessels crossed the strait with Iranian permission in the previous 24 hours, significantly lower than normal traffic levels before the conflict.

The renewed military activity pushed global oil prices higher after sharp declines earlier in the week. US crude futures rose nearly 2 percent in Asian trading amid concerns over possible disruptions to energy supplies.

US President Donald Trump further intensified tensions by dismissing reports of a possible framework agreement under which Iran and Oman would jointly oversee commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking during a cabinet meeting, Trump insisted that no country would control the waterway and warned Oman against attempting to dominate traffic routes. The White House later rejected Iranian media reports about a draft agreement as fabricated.

After Iran showdown, Trump threatens to blow up Oman for this reason

World.(Agency)

As talks over the Iran war struggle to crawl forward, US President Donald Trump's aggressive rhetoric has now spilled over to Oman. During a tense Cabinet meeting, he warned that no country would be allowed to control the Strait of Hormuz, not even Muscat.

On Wednesday, the US President rejected a report claimed Iran and Oman would control shipping through the strait as part of a new framework to end the war.

"Nobody's going to control it," Trump said. "It's international waters and Oman will behave just like everybody else or we'll have to blow them up."

Trump's statement stunned many because Oman has been one of Washington's closest and oldest Gulf partners. It hosts American military

cooperation programmes and has often acted as a quiet mediator between the US and Iran.

The Strait of Hormuz has been the



flashpoint of negotiations aimed at ending the US-Israel war against Iran. Before the conflict began earlier this year, nearly one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas moved through the narrow waterway every day.

WHITE HOUSE REJECTS IRAN'S HORMUZ DRAFT

Earlier in the day, Iranian state TV claimed an unofficial draft agreement would allow commercial shipping through Hormuz to return to pre-war levels within a month.

Iran and Oman would jointly oversee shipping traffic under the reported proposal. As part of the proposed memorandum of understanding, the US would reduce its military presence around Iran and end its naval blockade.

But the White House dismissed the report as a "complete fabrication".

Trump later repeated that the strait would remain under international access rules. "We'll watch over it, but nobody's going to control it," he said

India, China hold constructive border talks in Beijing; agree to prepare for next meeting of Special Representatives

Beijing [China].(Agency)

The 35th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) was held in Beijing on Wednesday, with both sides describing the discussions as "constructive and forward-looking", according to the official press release by the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Indian delegation was led by Joint Secretary (East Asia) Sujit Ghosh, while the Chinese side was headed by Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Affairs Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hou Yanqi.

According to the official release, the two sides reviewed the situation in the border areas between India and China, expressing satisfaction with progress in maintaining peace and tranquillity along the border. They noted that this stability has enabled the gradual normalisation of bilateral relations.

The delegations discussed key issues,



including delimitation, border management, mechanism building, and cross-border cooperation. The Indian side particularly stressed the need for an early meeting of the Expert Level Mechanism on transboundary rivers. Both sides agreed to maintain regular diplomatic and military-level contacts through existing mechanisms, including those established under the outcomes of the 24th Special Representatives (SR) talks. They also agreed to work together on substantive preparations for the next SR meeting,

which is expected to be held in China. During the visit, Sujit Ghosh met Director General of the Department of Asian Affairs of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Liu Jinsong and made a courtesy call on Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Hong Lei.

Officials from both sides emphasised continued engagement as a key factor in sustaining stability in border regions and advancing broader bilateral dialogue. Earlier on

May 19, Consul General of China in Kolkata, Xu Wei, remarked on the advancing relationship between New Delhi and Beijing, noting the improvement in bilateral trade relations and people-to-people relations. Speaking after attending a special session on Indo-China trade and development of North East, Xu Wei said, "Under the strategic guidance of both our leaders, China-India relations are now moving toward advancement."

Iran war depleted US Tomahawk, Patriot missile arsenal, may need years to rebuild

A CSIS analysis said the US may need years to rebuild key missile stockpiles after the Iran war. The report has raised questions about readiness if another conflict erupts, particularly over Taiwan.

World.(Agency)

America's military might may look unstoppable, but behind the scenes, the Pentagon is now racing against time to refill some of its most critical weapons stockpiles after months of war with Iran. A new analysis by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), cited by the news agency Associated Press, says the United States could need at least three years to rebuild major missile systems heavily used during the conflict. Some inventories

may take even longer to fully recover.

The report raises fresh questions about whether the US would be prepared for another major war -- especially a possible confrontation with China over Taiwan.

According to the analysis, the US heavily relied on Tomahawk cruise missiles, Patriot interceptors and THAAD missile defence systems during the Iran conflict. These weapons were used to strike targets, intercept missiles and defend against drone attacks across the region.

"The United States has enough munitions for any plausible scenario in the Iran war," the report said. But it warned that depleted inventories have created "a window of vulnerability" if another conflict breaks out in the western Pacific.

PENTAGON WARNS OF A TIME PROBLEM

The study says the biggest issue is no longer money. It is production speed. Even though the Trump administration has proposed a

record \$1.5 trillion defence budget for 2027, military factories still cannot quickly replace the sophisticated weapons already used in battle "It takes time to expand



production capacity and to build these complex systems," the report noted. CSIS warned the vulnerability could last several years before stockpiles return to previous levels. It may take even longer before inventories reach the levels military planners actually want. The report surfaces

as tensions between Washington and Beijing continue to rise. China has repeatedly stated it wants its military prepared to take Taiwan by force if necessary by 2027. Chinese President Xi Jinping recently warned that poor handling of relations with Taiwan could push China and the US into direct conflict. His stance was evident during Trump's China visit.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION DEFENDS US READINESS

Despite the warnings, President Donald Trump and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth insist the US remains fully capable of handling any future conflict.

The administration says billions of dollars are already flowing into the defence industry to expand production lines and open new factories. Speaking during a Cabinet meeting, Hegseth praised Trump's push to strengthen American defence manufacturing.