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4 patients dead Fire at Bihar Hospital

over 20 rescued after massive

Several critically ill patients have been shifted to nearby hospitals, and authorities are currently verifying their condition and whereabouts. The Civil Surgeon has also reached the spot to oversee the situation and coordinate medical assistance.

Patna.(Agency)

A day after a deadly fire at a B&B in Delhi's Malviya Nagar claimed 21 lives, another major fire incident has been reported from Bihar's Muzaffarpur district. A blaze broke out at a hospital, with officials saying 4 people have lost their lives in the incident.

As the fire spread, thick and toxic smoke quickly engulfed large sections of the building, leading to chaos inside the hospital premises. Emergency response teams rushed to the spot and launched evacuation efforts to move patients to safety.

Preliminary reports suggest that a short circuit may have caused the fire, though the exact cause is yet to be officially confirmed.

More than 20 patients were reportedly injured in the incident and were safely evacuated from the building. Several of the rescued patients are said to be in critical condition.

The critically ill patients have been shifted to nearby hospitals, and authorities are currently verifying their condition and whereabouts. The Civil Surgeon has also reached the spot to oversee the situation and coordinate medical assistance.

THE ICU WAS IN SMOKE, EMPLOYEES ABSENT
Fire Officer RN Pandey said information about the blaze was received at around 3 am. By the time firefighters reached the hospital, the ICU was completely engulfed in thick smoke. He further stated that most hospital employees were absent from the scene when rescue teams arrived.



INVESTIGATION IS UNDERWAY

Subrat Kumar Sen, DM of the district, informed that four people have died in the incident, while efforts are underway to ascertain the status of all patients who were admitted at the time of the fire. Family members of some patients have approached authorities claiming they have been unable to trace their relatives following the incident.

The victims have been identified as Shashank Kumar, Uday Kumar, Geeta Devi and Brijnand Rai. "The ICU in-charge of the hospital is also gravely injured. He is also admitted to a nearby hospital. We have to confirm the proper data about how many lives are lost. Currently, four deaths have been confirmed," Sen said. Talking about the cause of the fire, Sen said, "At first look, it seems like a short circuit at the oxygen unit and the monitor system. An investigation is underway. We will carry out the necessary procedures to find out the real reason for the fire breakout."

Explosive Allegations Rock Ahmedabad: Police Employee Under Scrutiny Over Alleged Criminal Links

Public Trust Under Scrutiny as Claims of Criminal Connections, Enforcement Failures, and Administrative Silence Trigger Controversy

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Makan Ahmedabad. Serious allegations have emerged in Ahmedabad against a police department employee, popularly known as "Giri," who is allegedly operating from a private office near the Wadaj police outpost instead of performing official duties. Local sources claim that the office is being used to coordinate dealings with bootleggers and other criminal elements across the city.



According to allegations, illegal liquor operations and other unlawful activities are reportedly flourishing in the Gulbai Tekra area. Critics allege that despite repeated complaints, effective action has not been taken, raising concerns about enforcement and accountability. Questions have also been raised regarding the response of local police officials, who have reportedly denied knowledge of such activities. This has fueled public speculation about whether the allegations are being properly investigated.

Further claims suggest that the individual has accumulated significant assets, including luxury properties and vehicles, disproportionate to a regular government salary. However, these allegations have not been independently verified. The controversy has led to growing demands for a fair and independent investigation. Citizens and social activists are calling on law enforcement and government authorities to establish the facts, ensure accountability, and restore public confidence in the system. Note: The allegations mentioned in this report have not been officially confirmed. An independent investigation would be required to verify the claims.

Accept rebel TMC MLAs or risk a party split. Mamata in Catch-22 bind

A rebel group of TMC MLAs asked the Speaker to recognise Ritabrata Banerjee as a parallel leader in the Assembly. The move has sharpened a leadership contest around Mamata Banerjee and widened signs of organisational strain.

Kolkata.(Agency)

A dramatic day inside the West Bengal Assembly on Wednesday saw the Trinamool Congress (TMC) confront an unprecedented internal rupture, as a breakaway group of MLAs openly staked claim to a separate leadership structure, setting up a direct challenge to the Mamata Banerjee-led party's central command.



The political crisis unfolded early in the day when suspended TMC leaders Ritabrata Banerjee and Sandipan Saha arrived at the Assembly along with a group of rebel legislators, signalling the formal consolidation of a splinter faction within the party's legislative ranks.

Within hours, multiple MLAs reached the Assembly in unmarked and tinted vehicles, with several openly acknowledging that they were aligning with a new bloc under Ritabrata Banerjee's leadership. By mid-morning, the rebel camp claimed the support of 60 TMC MLAs, with nearly 25 already present inside the Assembly complex.

Kerala debt Rs 5.07 lakh crore: White Paper sparks ruling UDF vs LDF showdown

Kerala Chief Minister VD Satheesan tabled a White Paper in the Assembly outlining the state's financial stress. The document sparked opposition objections before the Speaker allowed it to be placed on record.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Kerala Chief Minister VD Satheesan on Thursday tabled a white paper on the state's financial health in the Assembly, revealing a debt burden of Rs 5.07 lakh crore, rising liabilities, mounting losses on public sector undertakings (PSUs) and one of the lowest levels of capital expenditure among Indian states.

The document immediately triggered a showdown between the ruling United Democratic Front (UDF) government and the opposition Left Democratic Front (LDF), which questioned the contents of the report.

According to the white paper, Kerala is currently burdened by outstanding liabilities of

Rs 5.07 lakh crore. The report also highlighted that committed expenditure accounts for 77 per cent of TRR.



cent of the state's total revenue receipts (TRR), while interest payments alone consume 20.9 per

The government further noted that Kerala's capital expenditure stands at just 1.3 per cent of its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), one of the lowest among the country's states.

On Kerala's public sector enterprises, the report revealed that accumulated losses of PSUs had increased from Rs 31,571 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 78,851 crore in 2024-25.

The white paper also flagged concerns over the financial position of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB), saying that it faces a loan liability of Rs 21,000 crore while projects worth Rs 35,000 crore remain unfunded.

A Delhi corridor 'accidental' meet that triggered TMC's biggest split in 28 years

New Delhi.(Agency)

An unprecedented encounter in New Delhi has snowballed into the most serious internal rupture in the 28-year history of the Trinamool Congress, culminating in a

breakaway group of 60 MLAs staking claim to the party's legislative leadership in West Bengal.

What began as an 'accidental' meeting between Chief Minister Suwendu

Adhikari and TMC MLA Ritabrata Banerjee at the Bengal Bhavan on May 22 has, within 13 days, reshaped the state's political balance and triggered an open rebellion inside the ruling party.



A brief meeting between Suwendu Adhikari and TMC MLA Ritabrata Banerjee in Delhi preceded a rapid rebellion in Mamata Banerjee-led party. The fallout has led to a formal split, a new opposition leader and an urgent scramble for control in West Bengal.

FROM BENGAL VERDICT TO DELHI POLITICS

The chain of events is said to have begun after the West Bengal Assembly election results on May 4, when internal churn within the TMC became visible. Party meetings reportedly saw declining attendance as unease over leadership dynamics and organisational control grew.

Amid this, tensions within the party were further complicated by long-simmering resentment over internal power structures, including the growing influence of MP Abhishek Banerjee, alongside allegations and controversies that had already begun to strain cohesion inside the organisation.

THE BENGAL BHAVAN MEETING

The turning point came on May 22 in Delhi, when Ritabrata Banerjee, MLA from Uluberia East, and Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari crossed paths at the Bengal Bhavan ahead of the CM's scheduled meetings in the national capital.

Describing the interaction himself, Ritabrata Banerjee said the meeting lasted only a few minutes and was informal in nature. According to him, Adhikari greeted him and asked about his stay at the guest facility. Banerjee responded that he had come to

complete procedural formalities related to vacating his accommodation following administrative requirements. He also said the Chief Minister mentioned that opposition MLAs were being invited to administrative meetings and that he would attend if informed. The interaction, both sides initially suggested, was routine. But its political implications were quickly amplified in Bengal's political circles, with speculation about possible realignments within Mamata Banerjee's party.

RAPID ESCALATION & LEGISLATIVE TAKEOVER

Within days of the Delhi meeting, developments accelerated sharply. Ritabrata Banerjee emerged as the face of a coordinated rebellion within the party, eventually aligning with a group of as many as 60 out of TMC 80 MLAs.

The breakaway faction submitted signatures to the Assembly Speaker, who subsequently granted them recognition and allocated space for the opposition leadership in the legislature.

News box

Rains a month away, damaged jersey barriers cleared in push for safety in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)

GMDA has removed more than 400 damaged jersey barriers and cleared obstructions from major stretches across the city over the past few weeks, including Rajiv Chowk, Old Railway Road, Delhi-Gurgaon Road, Medanta Hospital Road and IFFCO Chowk-Southern Peripheral Road (SPR), among others. Apart from damaged barriers, foundation stones, redundant pipelines and other structures along carriageways and road margins were removed. With monsoon not far away, the metropolitan authority is working to improve the city's road infrastructure. According to data, 474 people died in 1,118 road accidents in the city last year, while 2024 recorded 478 fatalities in 1,024 accidents. Officials noted that a higher number of accidents typically occur during the winter months, highlighting the urgent need for safer and better-maintained road infrastructure.

"Damaged road infrastructure not only compromises road safety but also affects the effective right-of-way available to motorists. The removal of these obstructions will help create safer road edges, improve visibility and provide a better commuting experience," the GMDA official said. "By clearing road margins and removing unnecessary roadside infrastructure, we aim to facilitate smoother maintenance of drains, shoulders and other critical urban infrastructure during the rainy season," the official added. Officials said the citywide exercise is being carried out in phases through dedicated field teams, with priority given to major intersections and crowded stretches. The authority plans to continue the removal of remaining obstructions and undertake corridor-wise safety improvements in the coming months.

Gurgaon man arrested for brother's murder over alcohol-fueled quarrel

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 23-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing his elder brother by attacking him with a brick and a spade following a quarrel at their house in Daulatabad village. The accused, identified as Aman, was arrested on June 3 and taken on one-day police remand for questioning. Police said the victim, Ashish (26), died after suffering severe head injuries during the assault.

According to police, information was received on May 31 that a young man was lying dead inside a house in Daulatabad village. A team from Rajendra Park police station reached the spot, secured the crime scene and called forensic and fingerprint experts to collect evidence. The body was later sent for post-mortem examination. Family members identified the deceased as Ashish, a resident of Daulatabad in Gurgaon district. Based on a complaint lodged by the family and findings of the post-mortem examination, a case was registered at Rajendra Park police station and an investigation was launched. During interrogation, Aman told police that Ashish, his real brother, was addicted to alcohol. On the day of the incident, another person had come to drink with Ashish at the house. When Aman asked the visitor to leave, an argument broke out between the brothers, police said. The argument escalated into a physical fight, during which Aman allegedly struck Ashish on the head with a brick and a spade, causing fatal injuries.

Woman on way to get dialysis dies as truck rams into car on NH-8

Noida.(Agency)

A 76-year-old woman who was going to CR Park from Bhiwadi to undergo dialysis died after a truck hit the car she was travelling in near Binola flyover on Tuesday morning. Asha Diwan's husband, who was in the same car, escaped with minor injuries. The deceased's son, Ravi, lodged a complaint and alleged the truck was being driven negligently. An FIR has been registered at Bilaspur police station under sections 281 (rash driving) and 106 (causing death by negligence) of the BNS. Efforts are on to identify the truck and the driver, an officer involved with the investigation said.

According to police probe, the truck hit the deceased's car, a Maruti Ciaz, from the side, causing it to jump a divider.

"The woman was rushed to a hospital but doctors declared her dead on arrival," the officer said. She did not have any external injuries, the officer added. "She could have received internal injuries. However, the exact reason behind her death will only be ascertained after the post-mortem report," he said. The couple lived in Kuwait till 2019, where the deceased's husband ran a clothes and bag manufacturing business. In another accident, a 50-year-old motorcyclist died after a dumper allegedly hit his bike near Banjara Market in Sector 58 on Tuesday.

The deceased, Jai Prakash, was a native of Hathras district in Uttar Pradesh. He was employed at a private company near Rajiv Chowk and was travelling to work when the accident occurred. According to a complaint filed by his son, Narendra Pal, Jai Prakash was riding his motorcycle, a Splendor Plus bearing registration number DL3SCU1821, from Faridabad towards his workplace near Rajiv Chowk on Sohna Road. Near Banjara Market, a dumper bearing registration number HR55AX1561 allegedly struck the motorcycle.

"The complainant alleged that the dumper was being driven rashly. The collision left Jai Prakash seriously injured and damaged his motorcycle," an officer said. Police said the injured man was taken to Govt Hospital in Sector 10A, where he succumbed to his injuries during treatment.

Following information from the hospital, a police team reached the facility, collected the medico-legal documents and shifted the body to the mortuary for post-mortem examination. The victim's son later submitted a formal complaint seeking legal action against the driver.

Serious Allegations Raise Questions Over Illegal Liquor Networks and Police Oversight in Mehsana

Mehsana. Serious allegations have surfaced in Gujarat's Mehsana district, raising concerns over the effectiveness of prohibition enforcement and the functioning of local law enforcement agencies. Discussions at the local level suggest that illegal liquor and gambling networks are allegedly operating across several parts of the district, prompting demands for a high-level investigation. According to claims made by local sources, areas including Langhnaj, Nandasan, Kadi, Bavlu and Santhal have witnessed the alleged growth of bootleg-

ging and gambling activities. The allegations have placed a police constable,



Tarunsinh Dabhi, at the center of controversy, with some local voices claiming that he exercises significant influence over illegal operations in the region. However, these allegations have not been

independently verified by any official agency. Sources further allege that interstate liquor smuggling networks operating from neighboring Rajasthan have links to illegal supply chains in parts of Mehsana district. Concerns have also been raised regarding the alleged availability of illicit and potentially hazardous liquor, which critics say could pose a serious threat to public safety. The controversy intensified after questions were raised about the response of enforcement agencies. Critics argue that if such activities are indeed tak-

ing place, authorities should conduct a comprehensive investigation to establish the facts and identify those responsible. At the same time, officials have reportedly denied knowledge of the allegations, creating further debate among local residents. Public interest groups and citizens are now demanding an independent inquiry into the matter. They argue that if any individual, regardless of position, is found involved in unlawful activities, strict legal action should follow. Conversely, if the allegations are proven false, the find-

ings should be made public to prevent misinformation. The issue has sparked wider discussions about accountability, transparency, and public trust in law enforcement institutions. Citizens are now looking toward the state government, Home Department, and senior police authorities for a clear response. Note: The allegations mentioned in this report remain unverified. No official findings have been released, and all individuals named are presumed innocent unless proven otherwise through due legal process and investigation.

Demanding higher wages not an offence, says Gurgaon court

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A Gurgaon court has granted bail to three workers accused of participating in the violent clashes that took place in Manesar on April 9, saying demanding higher wages in view of rising living costs was "not an offence". Additional sessions judge of Gurgaon Gagan Geet Kaur, in an order dated May 30, also expressed concern over the plight of their dependants. Terming it an irony of the system, the court observed, "It is a matter of serious and sensitive consideration how the families and children of the migrant workers, who have been confined in jail... for participating in a protest seeking higher wages, would have survived without their salaries." Shahrukh Alam, who represented the workers along with Vrinda Grover, submitted, "None of the workers have any previous criminal



records; they are simple workers raising a demand for a wage hike." Alam added that police imposed stringent sections in the FIR despite having no substantial evidence to support their allegations. The judge noted that mere presence at the protest site did not automatically establish

participation in any violent act. "The applicant was present at the site solely to exercise his fundamental right to peaceful assembly and to voice support for a legitimate demand for wage increases," it said. Police said the accused hatched a conspiracy through WhatsApp messages to commit arson and provoke their colleagues. They opposed bail, saying since the workers were migrants, they could disappear and influence witnesses. The court rejected these arguments. It said whether the protest was organised as part of a conspiracy was a matter to be determined during trial, and the workers could not be kept in jail solely based on suspicion. "No useful purpose will be served in keeping them behind bars," the court said, granting bail to Raj Kumar (32), Vivek Kumar (24) and Shyambir (50).

Gurgaon civic body to conduct two-day cleanliness drive in four wards on June 4-5

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

MCG will undertake a two-day intensive cleanliness drive in four wards across the city on June 4 and 5 as part of a statewide sanitation campaign launched by the Haryana urban local bodies department ahead of World Environment Day.

The drive will focus on ward 10 (Zone 1), ward 32 (Zone 2), ward 4 (Zone 3), and ward 22 (Zone 4), where civic teams will target garbage vulnerable points, remove accumulated waste, and carry out intensive cleaning operations. The campaign is being conducted in compliance with directions issued by the urban local bodies department to all 87 urban local bodies across the state.

According to MCG officials, the selected wards have been identified for focused intervention and will be closely monitored to ensure visible improvement in sanitation conditions.

MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya has directed additional municipal commissioners, joint commissioners, and other officers to oversee the implementation of the campaign and ensure adherence to timelines and targets. "This special cleanliness drive of MCG will not be limited to cleaning alone but will also serve as a medium to make citizens responsible towards environmental protection and cleanliness. This initiative will prove to be an important step towards building a clean, healthy and green city," said Dahiya. The state govt has described the campaign as a mission-mode effort aimed at improving urban sanitation, eliminating garbage vulnerable points and encouraging community participation.

Thunderstorms, rain likely across Haryana till June 6

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Thunderstorms, lightning, gusty winds and scattered rainfall are likely across the state till June 6. Yellow and orange alerts have been issued for parts of the state till then.

Weather remained pleasant on Wednesday, with the city's minimum temperature at 22.8 degrees Celsius, a 3-degree dip from Tuesday's 25.4 degrees Celsius. The maximum temperature, however, rose to 38.2 degrees Celsius, a 4-degree rise from Tuesday's 34.1 degrees Celsius. IMD said the maximum temperature is likely to rise 2-3 degrees Celsius during the next 24 hours before falling by 2-4 degrees Celsius over the following two days under the influence of active weather systems. Temperatures are expected to increase gradually thereafter. IMD has forecast thunderstorms with gusty winds of 50-60 kmph at isolated places on June 4, while similar activity with wind speeds of 40-50 kmph and moderate rainfall are likely on June 5 and 6. Haryana's average minimum temperature increased by 0.7 degrees

Celsius on Wednesday and the maximum temperature rose by 2.6 degrees Celsius. Both remained close to normal.

There was light to moderate rainfall at isolated places in Haryana and Punjab,



while thunderstorms and lightning accompanied by gusty winds were reported at isolated locations in Punjab. Weather experts said the cooler-than-usual nights and intermittent weather activity have been linked to repeated western disturbances affecting north India this year.

"Evidence increasingly suggests that sharp temperature swings, where intense heatwave conditions are followed by unusually cool and stormy spells, are becoming more common across north India," said Vishwas Chitale, fellow at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). He said an unusually high number of western disturbances have affected the region since the beginning of the year, with several systems extending into May and June, beyond their traditional peak season. While such systems can provide temporary relief from extreme heat across northwest India, they can also trigger thunderstorms, hailstorms and flash floods. Chitale cautioned that a few days of below-normal temperatures should not be viewed as a reversal of the long-term warming trend. "Weather reflects short-term variability, whereas climate change is measured over decades. The broader pattern remains clear: India is experiencing rising temperatures, more frequent heat extremes and increasing heat stress," he said.

Court denies bail to PhD scholar held for Noida wage stir

Noida.(Agency)

An additional sessions court denied bail to Delhi-based PhD scholar and theatre artist Aakriti Choudhary, who was arrested for allegedly orchestrating the April 13 industrial workers' unrest that turned violent, observing that evidence available in the case diary indicates her prima facie involvement. "The incident is of a serious nature, involving gang violence and law and order in the industrial area. In such circumstances, by granting bail, the chances of the applicant potentially influencing witnesses and sending a negative message to society cannot be ruled out. The grounds for releasing the applicant on bail are insufficient," the court held. Choudhary, who is from Bihar and a former student of Daulat Ram College in Delhi, has also been charged under provisions of National Security Act along with co-accused Satyam Verma, a Lucknow-based scholar. Her name was included in three FIRs registered in connection with April 13 violence, and her bail applications in all cases have now been rejected. On Monday, the court was hearing FIR number 164 filed under BNS sections 109(1) (attempt to murder), 191(1)(2)(3) (rioting and armed rioting), 121(2) (causing grievous hurt to deter a

public servant), 132 (assault or criminal force to deter a public servant), 333 (house-trespass to commit an offence), 125 (act endangering life or personal safety), 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 127(2) (wrongful confinement), 351(3) (criminal intimidation), 352 (intentional insult or provocation), 61(2) (criminal conspiracy), and provisions of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act and section 7 of Criminal Law Amendment Act at Phase-II police on April 14, a day after the violence. While the original FIR was based on a complaint filed by the HR manager of Motherson against 450-500 unknown people for vandalism, arson and violence targeting company guards and policemen, police had later added names of several activists, including Choudhary, Verma, Manisha Chouhan, Shrishti Gupta, Aditya Anand, Rupesh Roy and Himanshu Thakur and named them as key conspirators. Except for Aditya Anand, who is yet to file a bail plea, applications of all six key accused have been rejected by the court. Choudhary was detained by plainclothes officers at Botanical Garden Metro Station on April 11, two days before the protest, after she had attended an earlier demonstration in solidarity



with workers and to advocate for a peaceful strike. The detention was captured on CCTV cameras at Botanical Garden metro station and circulated on social media. Her counsel told the court that the DU student was sent to jail from Sector 39 police station on charges of disturbing peace in the city even before the FIR number 164 was filed. "The applicant (Choudhary) was arrested by the police on April 11 from Botanical Garden metro station and was sent to jail

the next day. The police summoned her on a B warrant on April 17 in the case, whereas the incident of crime has been shown as dated April 13, from which it is clear that the applicant has been falsely implicated," the counsel argued. He also pointed out that Choudhary is a bright student, having passed Class 10 with 95% marks and Class 12 with 97% marks, and after completing her MA in modern history, she qualified for the National Eligibility Test (NET) and is currently preparing for research. Assistant district court advocate (criminal) objected to the bail application and said Choudhary was accused of criminal conspiracy armed with deadly weapons, committing a riot, using criminal force, breaking the gate of the plaintiff company and entering the company premises, assaulting the plaintiff company's employees and police personnel with intent to murder, wrongfully confining them, deterring public servants and police personnel from performing their duties, breaking CCTV cameras, glass and railings installed on the company premises, disturbing public peace, endangering the lives of others, blocking roads, and damaging vehicles belonging to the company, the public and the police by setting them on fire.

No 'smooth, comfortable travel experience': firm penalised, tourists awarded Rs 2L

Consumer panel holds Thomas Cook responsible for deficiency in service offered to Mohali residents

Chandigarh. (Agency) Holding that a tour and travel firm failed to provide a "smooth and comfortable travel experience, which was the core promise of the package", the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission of Chandigarh, has directed Thomas Cook to pay Rs 2 lakh compensation to two Mohali residents.

The Commission observed that the repeated bus coach's breakdown during a Scandinavian tour of the complainants over three consecutive days "materially affected the quality of the tour" and amounted to deficiency in service.

The complaint was filed by Rupinder Kaur and Harvinder Singh Sandhu, who claimed that they booked Thomas Cook's "Scenic Scandinavia Summer 2025" package for June 12-22, 2025, paying Rs 7.61 lakh. They

alleged that despite opting for a premium package, they faced prolonged delays, late-night hotel check-ins, irregular meals and physical exhaustion after the tour bus (coach) broke down repeatedly on June 16, 17 and 18, 2025.

The complainants contended that the repeated disruptions deprived them of the comfortable and hassle-free experience promised by the tour operator and caused considerable mental and physical hardship.

In its defence, Thomas Cook, through its counsel, submitted that the complainants had booked the tour after accepting the terms and conditions and that the coach breakdown resulted from an

unforeseen technical snag attributable to an independent contractor.



The company's counsel said the terms and conditions clearly stipulate that they acted merely as a travel agent and organiser, facilitating services through independent

contractors such as airlines, hotels, and coach operators, and shall not be held liable for any deficiency attributable to such independent service providers. The company argued that the incident was beyond its control and that replacement arrangements, refreshments and packaged meals had been provided to passengers.

Rejecting the company's stand, the Commission observed, "a consumer books such tours with the legitimate expectation of a hassle-free and comfortable experience.

The plea of the Thomas Cook that they are merely facilitators and not responsible for acts of independent contractors cannot be accepted in its entirety, especially when the services are offered as a composite package under (Thomas Cook

brand and assurance."

"Waiting for hours in adverse weather conditions and late-night hotel check-ins cannot be termed as minor inconvenience," it observed. The Bench further held that providing refreshments after the breakdowns did not absolve the company of liability, calling them "reactive measures rather than proactive planning".

"A premium tour operator is expected to ensure contingency arrangements, particularly in foreign tours involving senior citizens," the panel held. While rejecting other allegations relating to sightseeing exclusions, cabin category and hotel quality for lack of proof, the commission held Thomas Cook deficient in service in relation to transportation arrangements and awarded a consolidated compensation of Rs 2 lakh, including litigation expenses.

Short news

Surat bus crash: Kin provide blood samples for DNA matching

Bardoli, Surat. (Agency)

A DAY after seven persons, including four women, were killed and several injured after a bus caught fire following a head-on collision with another bus near Bardoli town in Gujarat's Surat district on Tuesday, the police are facing another challenge — identification of the deceased.

As of Wednesday evening, only the body of Ghanshyam Raju Barkale, who was the driver of the bus that caught fire and hailed from Jalgaon in Maharashtra, could be identified. The Maharashtra State Transport bus was bound for Surat from Jamer Bus Depot in Jalgaon.

With the bodies severely charred, the Bardoli rural police on Wednesday took blood samples of four individuals, who are relatives of people who were on board the bus and are missing, for DNA tests.

The bus that caught fire ran on compressed natural gas or CNG, which was previously reported and confirmed police.

Sachin Patil (22), whose mother Manisha was on board the bus, told The Indian Express on Wednesday, "I was at work when my mother called me up around 3:40 pm on Tuesday and told me that she would reach in one-and-a-half hours. After around half an hour, I called her up to ask where the bus had arrived. She did not answer the call. I called her again... made at least ten calls at different time intervals within 15 minutes but got no response. I called up my wife at home and asked her if she had received a call from her mother — she said no. I became worried. My mother had gone to attend a religious function at our native place around 10 days ago."

He added, "At 4:30 pm, my aunt Sunita Patil, who resides in Surat, called me and told me that the bus on which my mother travelled had met with an accident in Bardoli. I immediately called my brother, Bhavesh Patil, and we both reached the spot.

Southwest monsoon likely to set in over Kerala on June 4

Kerala. (Agency)

After days of speculation over its delayed arrival and uncertainty over its onset, the southwest monsoon is likely to set in over Kerala on Thursday. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that conditions have become favourable for the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala within the next 24 hours, while forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall across the state over the coming week.

In 2025, Kerala received a total rainfall of 1,752.7 mm against a normal rainfall of 2,018.6mm recording a deficit of 13%. The forecast comes amid questions over the delayed and frequently revised monsoon onset dates this year. However, weather experts say the uncertainty is linked to the complex interplay of several atmospheric systems that govern monsoon progression.

Cusat Advanced Centre for Atmospheric Radar Research director S Abhilash said that the monsoon's arrival does not occur on the same date every year and depends on the strength of supporting systems over the Indian Ocean and the Pacific region.

"The technical criteria required for monsoon onset, including rainfall, cloud cover and wind patterns, are being satisfied. Therefore, it can be declared as the onset of the monsoon. However, this is likely to be a weak onset because several supporting systems are absent or weak," he said. He said that the Madden-Julian Oscillation, a key atmospheric phenomenon that enhances monsoon activity, is currently weak. In addition, there are no significant low-pressure systems over the Bay of Bengal or the western Pacific that would normally help strengthen and pull the monsoon flow towards the Indian mainland.

'Nobody knew what had happened': MSRTC driver's family waited hours for news of Surat bus crash

His family learned of his death through social media. Other families are still waiting.

Mumbai. (Agency)

The family of MSRTC driver Ghanshyam Barkale, 43, first learned he had died in Tuesday's Surat bus accident through social media messages. They waited hours before depot officials confirmed the news.

"We came across messages about the accident on social media. Nobody knew exactly what had happened. It was only around 6 pm that officials from the depot informed us that Ghanshyam had died," said his cousin, Shrikant Barkale. Barkale's body was identified soon after the accident and handed over to relatives late Tuesday night. He was cremated Wednesday morning in his native village in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district. He had been serving at the Jamer MSRTC depot since 2013, was the sole earning member of his family, and is survived by his parents, wife, a 16-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old son.



Several other families affected by the accident are still waiting. Some victims' bodies were severely charred, and authorities have sent the remains for DNA testing, delaying identification and handover. Family members have reached Surat and provided DNA samples, but with identification incomplete in several cases, they remain unable to begin funeral rites.

The accident, involving two MSRTC buses on National Highway-53 near Bardoli in Gujarat's Surat district, claimed seven lives and injured around 40 passengers.

Twenty-six remain hospitalised in Surat and Bardoli.

According to officials, the accident occurred around 4 pm on Tuesday when a Surat-Dhule MSRTC bus allegedly rammed into the rear of a tractor carrying a water tanker. The impact reportedly caused the driver to lose control, after which the bus crossed the road divider and collided head-on with an oncoming Jamer-Surat bus, which overturned and fell into a roadside ditch. All seven fatalities occurred in the Jamer-Surat bus. A preliminary MSRTC report held the driver of the Surat-Dhule bus responsible, citing failure to follow traffic regulations. The driver remains hospitalised with multiple injuries. The family owns agricultural land but relatives said it doesn't generate sufficient income. They've sought government assistance, including employment support for Barkale's wife. Officials from the Jamer and Dhule depots visited.

Terror module linked to Pak's ISI: 24-year-old Kurla resident held

Mumbai. (Agency)

Delhi Police's Special Cell and Thane Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Tuesday arrested a 24-year-old Kurla resident from Bhayander area in connection with an alleged terror module linked to Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI.

According to officials, the arrested accused Huzaifa Ansari came in police radar a few days ago after he was found allegedly in touch with Pakistani handler Shahzad Bhatti through social media.

The Delhi police arrested last week arrested eight accused, including Sajid Shaikh alias Arbaz Khan from Kurla in Mumbai and Tauqeer Shaikh from Mumbai in Thane. The agency claimed that Pakistan-based alleged handler Shahzad Bhatti has been using social media to radicalise Indian



youth to engage in terror related activities. During interrogation, it was learned that Ansari, who knew Shaikh and Khan, influenced them to become part of his group in return of money. Ansari allegedly made them join social media and also provided their bank accounts to Pakistani handlers. The agency claimed that Tauqeer Shaikh got Rs 21,000 in his bank account

and Arbaz Khan got Rs 25,000 after both were introduced to them through Huzaifa.

Ansari lives in Nehru Nagar area in Kurla along with his parents and sister. He and his father work as mechanics in a garage in Kurla East. He fled from home after Delhi police arrived in the city and arrested Tauqeer Shaikh and Arbaz Khan last week.

Police continued searching for him and finally they got a tip-off that he was hiding in the Mira Road area. A police team from Thane ATS and Delhi Police Special Cell laid a trap and managed to nab him from Bhayander on Tuesday night. He was brought to the Thane unit office and after detailed questioning he was produced in the Thane court.

Power distribution in Gujarat cities to go underground by 2030; Cabinet gives nod

The Wire-free City Mission will cover all 17 municipal corporations and 151 municipalities of Gujarat. The state government has approved Rs 500 crore for the first phase, minister Jitu Vaghani said

Gandhinagar. (Agency)

The Gujarat government seeks to turn all cities of the state into "wire-free urban centres" by converting the existing overhead power distribution network into an underground cable network by 2030.

To achieve the target, the state cabinet gave its in-principle approval to the Gujarat Wire-Free City Mission on Wednesday.

The Mission will cover all 17 municipal corporations and 151 municipalities of Gujarat. Senior minister and spokesperson of Gujarat

government Jitu Vaghani announced the decision in a media briefing.



"...under the 'Gujarat Wire-Free City Mission,' all cities across Gujarat will be transformed into wire-free urban centres

in a phased manner by 2030. As part of the first phase of this ambitious initiative, the state government has approved a provision of Rs 500 crore," the minister stated.

Quoting Vaghani, an official release stated, "...under the Gujarat Wire-Free City Mission, the existing overhead power distribution network in urban areas will be comprehensively converted into an underground cable network. As part of the initiative, more than 14,600 circuit kilometres of high-tension overhead lines and over 31,400 circuit kilometres of low-tension overhead lines will be shifted

underground in a phased manner across the state."

"In the first phase of the project, the existing 11 kV overhead power lines will be converted into underground cable networks, followed by the phased undergrounding of low-tension distribution lines," it added. Vaghani said that the underground cabling network will help prevent incidents such as damage to wires and short circuits during natural disasters. He added that the reduction in technical faults and outages will enhance the reliability of the power distribution system, ensuring citizens receive an uninterrupted, high-quality electricity supply.

Ghosts of the 1990s return to haunt Manipur

The three-year-old ethnic conflict in Manipur has expanded beyond just the Meiteis and Kuki-Zo tribes. Another major community in the state, the Nagas, who have maintained a semblance of neutrality so far, have now stepped in, threatening a lapse into the Naga-Kuki bloodletting of the 1990s. Already, competitive hostage-taking of civilians among the two communities is making this conflict front gruesome. This front is poised to be more dangerous with fewer means to control it. When the fight was between the Meiteis and Kuki-Zos, bad as it was, it was still possible to separate them physically—with Meiteis retreating to the Imphal valley and Kuki-Zos into the hills and then the authorities keeping a buffer ring between them so that the two warring groups could not confront each other till the situation normalised.

In the new scenario, such a separation will be virtually impossible as the traditional homelands of Nagas and Kukis in the hills almost totally overlap. The Nagas claim they were the original landowners and it was they who allowed the Kukis to settle on their land as tenants. Kukis dispute this claim. Land, therefore, is at the crux of this new dispute. The older conflict between the Meiteis and Kukis also reflected this. The tension in this case lies between traditional pre-modern notions of homeland and the modern Westphalian state and its commensurate land revenue administration. Sadly, in Manipur, these differing outlooks on land have been allowed to institutionalise. Broadly, these traditional outlooks can be characterised as a three-way division between Meiteis in the valley who inherited the legacies of a past feudal principality with a wet rice agriculture-driven economy—the sedentary Nagas in the hills living off a mix of settled agriculture and foraging and Kukis who were once constantly mobile shift-cultivators and foragers. With the advent of the decolonised modern era, things have transformed considerably, but some vestiges of the past continue to haunt. In 1960, when Manipur was still a Union territory, the modern land revenue administration titled the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act Act was introduced, but only in the Imphal valley. Its hills were left untouched in accordance with the British administrative structure of directly administering the revenue plains, while the non-revenue backward hills were classified as 'excluded' or 'partially excluded' areas. Manipur hill lands, therefore, continue to be governed by the customary laws of the communities there. Even the Indian Forest Act, under which reserved forests and protected forests are declared, has an additional feature in the hills of the Northeast, including Manipur: the introduction of a new forest category called 'unclassified forests'. These are, by definition, government land but community-owned and managed. Of Manipur's forests in the hills, over half are under this 'unclassified forest' category, and almost all of them are in traditional Naga areas. Two layers of conflict potential can be anticipated from this land administration architecture, especially if it were treated as permanent and static rather than a phase in a path of progressive change, as all modern laws are meant to be. The first is between the valley and the hills, governed by two sets of laws. Under modern land law, the valley is where individual owners lease their homestead and farmland plots from the government in exchange for commensurate taxes paid to the government. It is also open to all Indian citizens for settlement. Land in hills, on the other hand, remains exclusively in the custody of traditional communities, prohibiting all others from buying or settling there. A sense of besiegement among the valley population is one factor behind demands by a section of the Meiteis for scheduled tribe status, which would make their land, too, exclusive to them, as land in the hills already is.

Keep the altar and the Assembly apart

Punjab's contentious anti-sacrilege legislation faces constitutional test

THERE is a question the Punjab government did not ask before convening a special session of the Vidhan Sabha on April 13 to pass — unanimously and in evident haste — the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Act, 2026. Can the State legislate faith without eventually violating it? The answer, delivered within weeks by the Akal Takht, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and the internal logic of the Act itself, is that it cannot and that the altar and the Assembly must never meet. When political authority begins to police religious belief through punitive law, religion is subordinated and transformed into an administrative category, with devotion becoming susceptible to surveillance. The legislation was framed by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann as a "historic correction" and presented as the AAP government's answer to a decade of unresolved sacrilege cases that had caused profound anguish to the Sikh community. The Bargari desecrations, the police firing at Behbal Kalan, the sarpoo stolen from Burj Jawahar Singh Wala (all in 2015) and the Golden Temple incident (2021), whose perpetrators were never publicly identified, are grievances that are not politically fabricated. They are open wounds. Any government seeking Sikh electoral support had reasons to address them, with the Act prescribing imprisonment of not less than seven years, extendable to 20, with a fine up to Rs 10 lakh. In cases involving conspiracy to disturb communal harmony, life imprisonment can be awarded. The Act expands the definition of sacrilege to cover spoken, written, symbolic and electronic expression that intentionally hurts Sikh religious feelings, and it notifies all offences as cognisable, non-bailable and non-compoundable.

The Akal Takht's response, and it is the most telling fact in this entire episode, was not to celebrate but to object. Within weeks of the law receiving the Punjab Governor's assent on April 17, the Akal Takht's officiating Jathedar, Giani Kuldip Singh Gargaj, and SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhani met Governor Gulab Chand Kataria to submit a list of objections and demand a review. CM Mann ruled out a review; instead, he launched a statewide "Shukrana Yatra" to celebrate the Act's passage. The irony of the state government thanking itself for a law that it claimed would protect the sanctity of Sikh religion appears to have been lost on him. To understand what the Akal Takht was objecting to, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between two institutions that the 2026 Act has fatally conflated. The Akal Takht was historically conceived as the sovereign, spiritual and temporal authority of the Sikh Panth, a seat

independent of political power. The SGPC was created through a colonial-era legislation, the Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925, as a statutory body for the management of gurdwaras, and answerable for elections and party politics. Over the decades, the two became institutionally entangled through the dominance of the Shiromani Akali Dal, which has historically controlled both. The result is that an elected statutory management body, deeply enmeshed in Punjab's factional politics, has come to take on the role of spiritual authority. The 2026 Act gives that conflation the force of criminal law. What the Act actually does, beyond its penalty clauses, is assign the SGPC a sweeping quasi-regulatory role over the



physical existence of the Guru Granth Sahib itself. The SGPC must maintain a central register of all saropis in Punjab, assign each a unique identification number and record details of printing, storage, distribution, location and custodianship. Statutory duties are imposed on "custodians" — a category that in practice encompasses granthis, gurdwara management committees and ordinary devotees — to ensure safe custody, observe the Sikh Rehat Maryada, prevent misuse or damage and report any suspected sacrilege to both the police authorities and management bodies.

The Rehat Maryada, Sikhism's code of religious conduct, has thus been incorporated by legislative reference into a criminal statute. Failure to observe it, or to report a suspected breach, is no longer a matter of religious discipline; it becomes a police matter. Every religion develops norms and codes in order to sustain itself. Religious norms must emerge organically within the spiritual community, not through coercive State legislation backed by imprisonment. An elected

political-religious institution cannot become the legal custodian of faith. The distinction that the Act obliterates is the one between moral authority, institutional guidance and criminal coercion. The first two are the proper domain of a religious community. The third belongs to the State. Once they are fused, the State does not merely administer religion. It replaces the latter. Legislation, indeed, must stay within limits. It is the concern that the law criminalises ordinary religious life rather than targeting desecrators that has spurred resistance from within the Sikh establishment itself. Voices associated with the Akal Takht have warned that the terminology of "custodian" may expose granthis, devotees and gurdwara committees

to criminal prosecution for lapses that are accidental or matters of legitimate internal theological disagreement. The law thus may invite systematic police intrusion into the daily conduct of religious life. Moreover, the Panth was not adequately consulted before a statute purporting to codify the terms of its most sacred obligations was passed in a hurried two-day special session. That the SGPC and the Akal Takht initially welcomed the legislation, then rapidly reversed course, is itself a measure of how poorly thought through the Act was. Faith cannot be reduced to obedience enforced by legislation. The Guru Granth Sahib is not a text that has survived by sheltering behind State power. It has survived because its authority rests not on coercion but on devotion freely given. To convert that scripture into a protected zone whose boundaries are patrolled by the police and enforced by a sessions court is not to honour the tradition but rather to betray it. The Akal Takht understood this. It is an irony that the legislature did not. India's constitutional framework anticipated precisely this danger. The secular republic was not designed as a State hostile to religion, but as one that maintained principled distance from all faiths, preventing both the capture of religion by political authority and vice versa. The 2026 Act violates that distance in both directions. It allows the State to enter theological territory that it has no competence to adjudicate, while handing a politically entangled religious institution the coercive power it has no democratic mandate to wield.

The legal challenges have already begun. A petition before the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeks to quash the Act on constitutional grounds, arguing that a penal framework which singles out one religion's scripture for special protection, while leaving all others unaddressed, fails the most basic test of equality before law (Article 14).

Solar self-reliance: Local mandate essential, but address concerns

The Centre needs to be prepared for quick-fix strategies

A major change in India's solar sector that mandates the use of only domestically manufactured cells from June 1 aims to cut the dependence on imports, particularly from China. From a long-term perspective, both for purposes of energy security and adoption of renewable energy, it's a commendable step. Developers are already required to use domestically manufactured modules. Now, the cells inside those panels must also come from government-approved Indian manufacturers for a wide range of projects. Given the global headwinds, there is little choice but to work towards building a complete domestic supply chain. The challenges are manifold, and any misstep can put the brakes on India's evolving engagement with the solar rooftop panel. India has an annual solar module manufacturing capacity of nearly 200 GW, but its solar cell production is only around 30 GW. Handholding the industry to ramp up production while maintaining quality standards is one

aspect. Narrowing the price difference with imported supplies is another. No less important is negotiating the



supply-demand gap in the transition period. Installation of rooftop solar panels is bound to get

costlier because of higher domestic production costs. The sudden shortfall of panels, too, can act as a deterrent to adopting clean energy. The Centre needs to be prepared for quick-fix strategies for its self-reliance roadmap. The new rules will test the resolve of customers as well as developers and manufacturers, particularly smaller enterprises wary of monopolies. The critical role of enforcement and monitoring mechanisms cannot be overstated. As with solar panels, where imported supplies continue to be used because of lower costs, a similar situation could emerge with regard to imported solar cells. The lack of digital traceability and verification only leads to misuse and corruption. A compliant vendor losing out to readily available cheaper and dodgy alternatives made by circumventing the norms defeats the purpose of the exercise.

Govt's infra push doesn't match the hype

Govt infrastructure contracts have only brought profits to big corporates instead of acting as an overall driver of growth

That night, Rajesh broke the news to his wife, Madhu, who always complained about the long hours he kept. "We have to get a car," Rajesh said. "That will save an hour off my commute." "I'll ask Savita to stop coming," Madhu said. "As it is, she only does one hour of dusting and takes Rs 6,000. I will do it myself, and we can use that money for our car EMI." She wasn't entirely unhappy. Doing a little more housework was a small price to pay for the car she had wanted for a long time. Redirecting spending from consumption to investment — what Rajesh and Madhu were planning — is exactly what companies do when they invest a larger part of their profits in machines and equipment, or increase their office and factory space. Governments do that too, to boost economic growth. They invest in building railroads, highways, ports and airports. They invest in human capital, by spending on education and health, or even by giving subsidies to improve the lives of the poorest among the working people. An economy grows faster when all three — households, private companies and the government — invest more for the future. And the opposite — falling overall investments — makes economic growth falter. Most mainstream economists want developing countries, like ours, to invest a larger proportion of national income every year. And within that, they prefer that the private sector invest the lion's share. This is because higher investment is needed to keep growing fast, and the private sector is believed to be less wasteful in deploying its hard-earned profits. Whether one agrees with this view is irrelevant here. What matters is that successive governments in India have organised their economic policies within this neoliberal framework. Have these policies succeeded in increasing capital investment, especially from the private sector?

The answer, unfortunately, is no. In 2011-12, the year many economists identify as the beginning of the moderation in our growth trajectory, capital investments — captured in a measure called Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) — stood at 34% of our GDP. In 2025-26, it dropped to 30%. (I have used the old GDP series to make a consistent comparison.)

What is worse is that the share of private firms in this has dropped sharply over the years. Ten years ago, in 2015-16, for instance, private investment accounted for 41% of the overall capital investments in the economy. In 2024-25, the last year for which we have data, this had dropped to just 32%. Data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), India's premier private data agency, suggests this has deteriorated further in 2025-26. Interestingly, the government sector's share hasn't risen either. In fact, it fell marginally, from 26% ten years ago to 25% in 2024-25.

The heavy lifting is being done by households and self-employed people. They have invested in building homes and in buying transport equipment and other small machinery. These are also counted as investment — or, to be precise, 'capital formation' — when a country's GDP is calculated. Ten years ago, they accounted for 33% of overall investments. That has shot up to 43% now. If we look at the productive assets built, ten years ago 'dwellings, buildings and structures' — factories, offices, houses, roads, bridges and so on — accounted for 53% of all assets. In 2024-25, that rose to 58%. Machinery, which made up 34% of all new assets, has dropped to 31% in

the same period. This confirms the thesis that much of India's capital investment over the past decade has been in building infrastructure. In fact, even the machinery being produced is oriented towards the infrastructure sector. This is a crucial indicator of the direction in which our economy is headed. The data confirms what



some of us have been arguing for some time — that India's growth is overwhelmingly being driven by government expenditure on infrastructure. You might ask: what is wrong with that? For the past two decades, we have been told that when a country invests in infrastructure, it sets the ball rolling for sustained economic growth. The first thing it supposedly does is generate direct jobs for engineers, project managers, supervisors and thousands of construction workers.

Then it boosts demand for goods needed for building infrastructure — steel, cement, concrete slabs, heavy equipment, cranes, and so on.

These industries, in turn, hire more people to meet this increased demand. All these newly employed people now have more money in their hands, generating new demand for consumer goods and services. And all this happens while a proper network of roads, highways, waterways and ports is created for accelerated industrialisation and the faster movement of goods and labour. But none of that has actually happened. If we compare 2019-20 — the year before Covid-19 — with the present, the combined expenditure on infrastructure by the Central and state governments has grown at a whopping 15% per year. In the same period, the CMIE's employment surveys show, employment in real estate and construction has risen at a measly 1% annually. What is more alarming is that, in the key feeder industry of cement, tiles and construction materials, employment has actually fallen. This is in spite of robust 6.6% annual growth in cement output, and massive capacity addition in the cement industry. Much of this has been achieved by increasing labour productivity rather than hiring more workers.

Effectively, therefore, government infrastructure contracts have only fattened the bottom lines of big corporates instead of acting as an overall driver of growth. This has also meant that private investment has been restricted to those industries that feed infrastructure projects. There is no incentive to invest anywhere else. That is why, even though India's economy is growing, we don't 'feel' it on the ground.



To stay or not to stay at

Home

On the contrary, a study by American Psychological Association points out, working mothers may actually be the ones who are better off at raising children when compared to those who stay at home. The study also reported that working mothers enjoyed better health, lesser signs of depression and contributed more to a child's overall learning opportunities. The ladies in Pune voice their opinions on the same.

Not true
Stay-home mums are the ones who have to let go of their ambitions and desires in order to take care of their child, say a few. Actor Manini

Mishra says, "The mother who stays home instead of working sacrifices her aspirations and career to ensure that her child is well taken care of. It is not easy to stay home, look after the house and also take care of the child." Manini feels that stay-home mums contribute as much as a working mother does or perhaps even more.

Absolutely right
Women are known to be good at multitasking, point out others. Multitasking directly relates more efficiency. Actor Poonam Dhillon explains, "Working women are always more capable and are good at multi-tasking. Working mums put in a lot more effort to ensure they get to

spend some quality time with their children too. This contributes to the overall development of the child." SOS Mummy! Actor Smita Jaykar feels that stay-home mums make their children dependent on them for everything. She explains, "Stay-home mums tend to spoon-feed their children. This curbs their independence." Smita also says she finds that her children are a lot more independent than most kids their age.

Not applicable
A few others are of the opinion that since these studies are conducted abroad, they have no relevance in India. Actor Renuka Shahane stresses on the health aspect. "This study does

not hold good for the women in India. Whether a woman is working or not working, her work pressure remains the same. In the west, once women are back home, they relax and rejuvenate. That is not the case here. A woman has to handle

so many more things here, and that could lead to a lot of stress," she explains.

Work is happiness
Personal happiness is always a driving force while taking crucial decisions, feel others. Actor Manjari Phadnis

To work or stay home — that's a decision many women need to make when they've had a baby. To ensure that their child is well taken care of, many mothers choose to stay home.

elaborates, "The mothers who stay at home tend to centre their lives around their children. Working mothers, on the other hand, learn to manage home and career and do both well. And managing them both gives them a sense of accomplishment."

Don't worry, be happy
Film-maker Chitra Palekar feels that is "no such thing as this is better than that". "If you are able to spend quality time with your child, then nothing like it. Being happy and the providing the space your child needs is the way to go about it." As long as both the mother and child are happy, it is bound to contribute to the growth of the child.



How you are as a parent does play a very important role in forming the personality of your child as s/he goes into adulthood. We tell you more

Do you pride yourself as one of those new age parents, indulgent yet strict as per the needs of the situation? Do you worry endlessly and even stays up till your kid get home from a night out with friends? Are you constantly going through your child's belongings - cupboard, books, online profile, SMSes, etc? Do you always tell your child what to do and what not to just to 'keep them safe'?

All parents have their own style of parenting - their way of bringing up their children. According to Bela Raja, child guidance counsellor, one's parenting style, if negative, can have an adverse effect on the psyche of the child even to the point of causing damage. "A good style of parenting is one where parents respect the needs and emotions of their child as much as the child respects the parents. It's also important for parents to encourage the development of the child's self-esteem. They need to teach him/her to feel good about themselves. Moreover, no matter how silly or insignificant it may seem, a child's concerns have to be addressed, even if it's just the fear of entering a room alone," she says.

Bela adds that since the child's first social interaction is with the parents, the style of interaction used here will have a significant bearing on the child as a grownup. TV anchor Mini Mathur, mother of

seven-year-old Vivaan opines that she is a moderate parent. "I guard against being over protective so that he learns to fight his own battles. For now I am playing the role of a guide, protector in the hope that he learns to be independent and take his own decisions as an adult," she explains. And though at times she does get 'extremely over-indulgent', she is also the disciplinarian in the family. "Kabir is the indulgent, knowledge imparting, fun type of parent, so the task of balancing things out and keeping Vivaan in check is left to me. Thankfully he's growing up to be a well balanced, sensitive and grounded kid, so I guess I'm doing something right somewhere," she says.

If you're worried that your college going kid is splurging too much on clothes or shoes, this behaviour could be the result of you saying no to them everytime as kids or if your child hesitates to take any decision on his own, it could be the result of you being an over-protective or dominating parent in their younger days or if people complain that your child is overly arrogant and rude, it could be because you did not correct these faults in his/her childhood itself.

Here are some parenting styles and what the potential outcome could be like:

Over-protective parents:
Leads to clingy adults A child growing under overprotective parents faces severe detachment problems as an adult. If you don't let him/her face life in all its shades, they will grow up to be excessively dependent, weak and seek help for trivial matters. TIP: Such behaviour can restrict your child's emotional

intelligence. Give them an opportunity to explore the world without constant interference.

Suspicious parents:
Leads to lying, distrustful adults It's okay to keep a check on your child, but overdoing it can hamper their trust instinct. The child will then panic at the sight of your call or message. To save

face, they may even resort to lying. Over suspicious parents envision fear by putting this fear in their child, they raise suspicious adults with low confidence. TIP: If you have an excessive urge to check on your kids, have a frank talk with them and look for a solution. For instance, they can call you every time they reach their friend's house, instead of the other

way round.
Abusive parents:
Leads to an extreme personality It's all right to point out your child's mistakes, but use of emotional or physical violence can scar them for life. Abusive parents permanently damage their child's cognitive development leading to low self-esteem and confidence. Such

What's your style of Parenting?

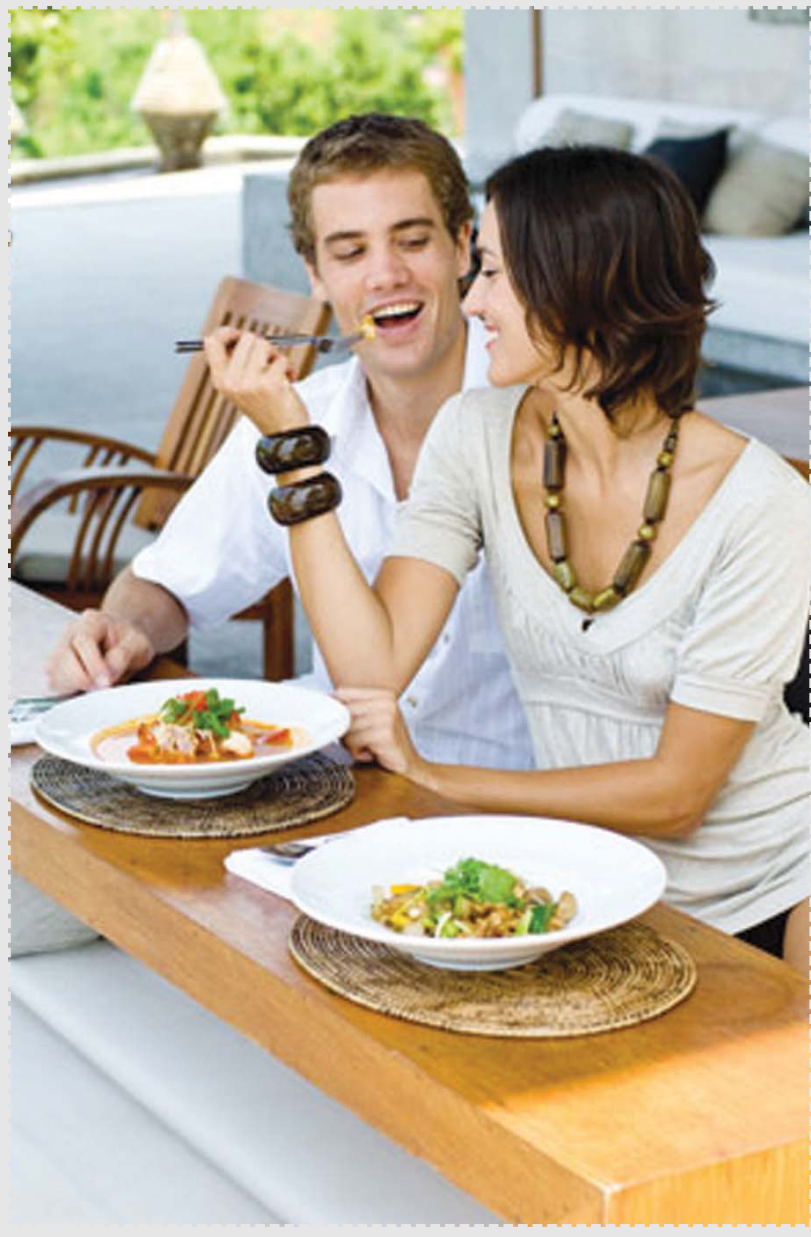


children grow up to be extreme personalities - a total rebel or a doormat. TIP: Identify the first signs of losing your temper. See if it's the way your child talks or their mistakes that annoys you. Take precautions at this very stage.

Pushy parents:
Leads to suicidal adults Pushy parents who want their kids to be winners all the time put kids under extreme pressure leading to nervous breakdowns or even suicidal tendencies. Such parents find it hard to digest failure and they crush the child's personality. Even as an adult, such kids strive to conform to others expectations, which, when unfulfilled, will create a feeling of worthlessness. TIP: Share positive feelings with your children. Encourage kids even if they don't win a competition.

Comparing parents:
Leads to a show off Parents, who don't empathise with their child are quick to deform their child's personality. This leads to adults who harbour excessive feelings of worthlessness, low self-esteem and self-pity. TIP: Even if you disagree with your child, use positivity. Avoid comparing siblings and phrases that hurt.

Passive parents:
Leads to arrogant adults Parents, who don't participate in their child's activities or those who feel too sorry for being hard on their child, turn them into difficult adults. Such parents are often unable to say 'no' and the child grows up to be an overconfident person, who cannot accept mistake or accept criticism positively. TIP: Spend quality time with your kids. Do things together, such as painting, story telling, going to the park, etc. In case they make a mistake, point it out gently. Do not give in to your child's whining, crying or temper tantrum, as it only reinforces the behaviour.



How to reveal your feelings to the guy you love

If you have feelings for that someone special, here's how to let him know

Surely, when you are in love with someone, you would want them to know your state of mind. And it's best that he knows about it because it will relieve you of the constant worry and make you feel better.

Talk to him about it

One of the best ways to approach the guy is by talking to him and letting him know how and what you feel about him. Don't be scared of the outcome. Realise that you are doing this so that it helps you feel better and nothing else. Whether he accepts it or not should not be your cause of worry at all.

Drop hints

If you are not the sort who can gather

courage to go out and talk to him about your feelings, don't worry. You can always drop subtle hints so that he knows that there is something that you wish to tell him. Whether you accept it or not, guys read into your feelings really well and these hints will go a long way in making him understand how you feel about him.

Say it to a common friend

If the two of you have common pals, it's best you acknowledge your feelings to that person. Be rest assured that the friend at some point of time will approach the guy and would tell him how you feel about him. But make sure that the friend has good intentions and does not end up bitching about you or making fun of your feelings.

Work-life balance "I've learnt to persevere"



She's one of India's few lady CFOs. She has won the 'Best CFO Award' and manages to balance her professional as well as family life effortlessly.

Vibha Padalkar, CFO and executive director, HDFC Life

Achieving work-life balance: A mother's equation with her children is always evolving. When the kids are young, they demand a lot of your time. I tried to manage that with meticulous planning each day. I use technology to my advantage.

For me, the boundary between work and home is a blur. I don't believe I need to "switch off"; I have a flexible approach. During the IPO (Initial Public Offering) of the company I was previously working with, I'd come home only to have dinner with my son, who was then five years old, put him to bed and then go back to office (10 km away) around 10pm.

As I was leading a team, I could not allow personal commitments to affect my professional life.

Key to staying fit: I have tried many things like gym and yoga, but slack does set in. So, since the past few

years, I have stuck to what is achievable - 45 minutes of treadmill at home, five days a week. I am also regular with my annual health check-ups.

Energy high: Being optimistic by nature, I am rarely down for extended periods of time. My desire to constantly excel professionally gives me a high. Simple things like a relaxing cup of tea with my family on a Sunday morning, watching my son leave home at the crack of dawn to play football and annual vacations give me a lot of happiness.

Spiritual diet: I am neither religious nor spiritual; I don't follow any daily practices or rituals. However, I believe in having a moral compass; a clear conscience is a must.

Handling failure and success: I try not to get too affected by success or failure. I'm blessed with a sunny disposition; I'm like a ball that kids try to submerge under water, but find it impossible to do! I've learnt to persevere and be tenacious.

Crisis management formula: I always have a plan B, so most problems fizzle out. On the personal front, I rely a lot on my immediate family members to help me out and that support is invaluable.

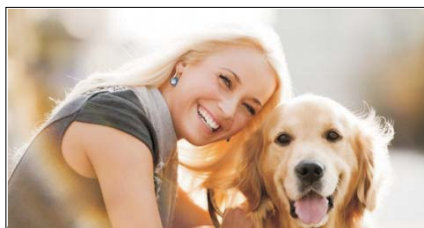
Want to keep a pet? Go on, there are several benefits...

A recent study showed that there are more pets than children in American households. Amazed? Statistics say that there has also been an increase in the number of Indian families opting for pets. Keeping pets at home has several benefits — and if you're among those who has always wanted to keep a pet, let us convince you to go ahead and get one home!

Pets can enhance your mood

Whether you believe it or not, pets are a great way to improve your mood and temperament. Research has shown that people who suffer from various diseases have lesser chances of depression if they keep pets as compared to those who are suffering from similar diseases and don't keep pets.

Reasons why you should keep a pet



Help to control blood pressure

Health experts say that dog owners have less blood pressure and heart rates. This eventually reduces the need to take medicines and also helps reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

A source of exercise

Want someone who will accompany you for

walks? Dogs can be great companions and will happily go out for walks, at times even urging you for a walk, when you're too tired, thereby keeping you active and fit. Other activities related to pets like feeding, bathing, playing and cleaning are also good ways to exercise.

An antidote for loneliness

No matter how low or lonely you keep, a pet will always be there for you. Whether you want to pour your heart out to them or tell them your secrets, you know it's all safe with them! Pets give you unconditional love and are always faithful.

Reduce stress

Stressed out? Pets are known to reduce

stress and anxiety levels. Experts say that people can get relieve from stress and depression, if they spend time with their pets.

Long life

Several studies have revealed that people who tend to spend their time with pets are more likely to live longer than people who don't.

Better social skills

Want to improve your social skills? It is said that people who keep pets are said to be good in their social relations. Kids who grow up with pets at home are always respectful towards living things.

Safety

Having a dog at home is especially good because they also double up as caretakers. No burglar alarm can be better than a dog at home!

You cannot escape a Bad boss

Wearing a tie and a scowl, he walks in. Some of his colleagues who have missed deadlines try to disguise their apprehension with forced smiles. Others grin away, knowing that they will be praised very soon.

Bosses constitute an inseparable part of our lives. You can love them, or hate them. But you cannot escape them. Some bosses you are likely to meet as you go along...

Divide-and-rule boss

If he inherits a team of eight, he divides them into two opposing units of four each within one week. Each group bitches about the other, making sure that the boss knows everything. The problem escalates when the team becomes an insecure bunch consisting of eight islands (read, people). Each fellow is insecure, leading to complete chaos. Such a fragmented team is bad news. At the centre of it all is a bad boss.

Do-my-work boss

That guy who cannot do without playing solitaire, or wasting time on social networking sites. He gives indifferent instructions, never ever



they are broke anyway.

Hi - my - lovely boss

A bad case of being flirtatious simply because he is powerful. He makes passes, and gets away with murder if the junior colleague is mild and gentle. Known to do nepotism, which is terrible news for

team morale.

I-will-do-everything boss

If a boss has to succeed, the team must learn. But some bosses are so paranoid that they end up doing the work of their juniors. Not good, since dependence leads to incompetence. Having a boss is inevitable, if you don't own the company you work for. Praying for a good one is equally important, since a bad guy can change your life: and not in a way you want it to change.

takes the responsibility for his team's mistakes, simply because all his work (that includes supervision) is done by his juniors. Not a good guy to work with, because you never know what will hit you and when.

Buy-my-dinner boss

He can be brilliant at his work. But he is a miser, and makes juniors pay the bills whenever he takes them out for dinner and drinks. Youngsters are scared of this kind, and especially when it's the end of the month and

How to be friends with your ex's family



Breaking up is hard and not only spoils your equation with the person concerned but with those the two of you have been close to as a couple. This could include friends or his/her family.

Take some time

Right after you've broken up; maintain some distance not only from your ex but from his/her family as well. Do not worry about what the family would think about you, because if they have really known you, they would understand that you require some time to be on your own before you meet them again.

But keep in touch

Don't break your ties with his/her family altogether. Taking some time off does not mean that you move away

from their lives entirely. During the time that you wish to have on your own, keep messaging them or calling them every once in a while to find out how they've been and update on your situation as well.

Start with small gatherings

One way to reunite with them once again is by calling them over to your place or by going over to their place to meet them. But do this when your ex is not at home (if you are very close to the family and they are even comfortable chatting with you when he/she is not at home). This way you would avoid bumping into your ex and landing up in an awkward situation.

So the two of you have broken up but you would like to maintain your relationship with your ex's family. Here's how

Newsrooms can moderate and calibrate, algorithms chase engagement: Kalli Purie on AI

At SPIEF 2026, India Today Group Vice-Chairperson and Editor-in-Chief Kalli Purie underlined that AI must support, not replace, newsroom judgement. Other speakers from Russia and China echoed concerns over conscience, cybersecurity and the risks of unchecked automation.

New Delhi.(Agency)

At a time when artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping several sectors, including journalism, a key question that industry leaders are grappling with is how to harness the benefits of AI without undermining human creativity. The issue was at the heart of the discussion at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 2026, with experts, including India Today Group Vice-Chairperson and Executive Editor-in-Chief Kalli Purie, outlining how a balance between AI and human intervention is the need of the hour.

Speaking at the session 'The Limits of AI in the Media', Purie underscored the need for ethical safeguards, fact-checking and human judgment. The key distinction,

Purie said, was that newsrooms apply moderation and calibration, while algorithms do not. Meanwhile, Purie's fellow panellist Maria Zakharova, director of the press department of the Russian Foreign Ministry, underscored that AI should remain a tool that supports human abilities rather than replacing them.

THE AI SANDWICH MODEL

Kalli Purie argued that algorithms are primarily driven by engagement and profit. This, in turn, lacks the calibration that traditional journalism provides, she further said. Newsrooms do moderation and calibration. Algorithms do not do that because they are based on values of profit and engagement," she said. Thus, to



preserve original reporting and human judgment, Purie pointed out that the India Today Group launched an initiative called "Handmade by Reporters". "We tried to create an entire subsection called handmade by editors and reporters... focusing on what they saw, what they heard

rather than a more vanilla report," Purie said. This not only adds gravity to the reporting but also helps establish a connection with the reader.

The Executive Editor-in-Chief of the India Today Group said the future would see AI and human creativity coexist. For this, Kalli Purie described an "AI sandwich" model that is already being used in the India Today newsroom operations.

Under this model, journalists remain involved both at the beginning and at the end of the editorial process, while AI is used in the middle to improve efficiency and productivity.

"Our newsroom is something called the AI sandwich, which is that you start with a human, you have AI in between to increase

efficiency... but then it again ends with a human touch or a human print so that the final approval remains with humans," she said.

Before signing off, Kalli Purie asserted that India was well-positioned not only as a major consumer of AI, but also in developing innovative applications built on existing AI models developed by big tech.

'AI DOES NOT HAVE A CONSCIENCE'

Echoing Kalli Purie, Maria Zakharova, Director of the press department of the Russian Foreign Ministry, underlined that AI should remain a tool that supports human abilities rather than replacing them. Highlighting the pitfalls of over-reliance on AI, Zakharova.

MCD launches sealing drive in Delhi after Malviya Nagar fire exposes violations

New Delhi.(Agency)

A day after the deadly fire at a bed-and-breakfast facility in Malviya Nagar exposed major building and licensing violations, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will begin a sealing drive against unauthorised commercial establishments in south Delhi found flouting building bye-laws and licence conditions, officials said on Thursday. A senior MCD official said the building where the incident occurred had never previously been booked for any violation.

"It was never brought on record for any violation. The building plan was also never sanctioned," the



official said, requesting anonymity.

Officials also pointed to irregularities in a food outlet operating from the ground floor of the same building. "Under the B&B scheme, commercial kitchens or full-fledged restaurants are not permitted. Only limited hospitality activity is allowed," another official said.

The outlet, operating under the name Snacks and Bites, had earlier been granted permission for a tea-and-snacks setup, but its licence expired in April, a senior MCD official said. "What was shown as a snacks outlet was, in reality, functioning as a full restaurant," the official added.

According to officials, the structure was located in a Lal Dora area where enforcement of building regulations has historically been weak due to the absence of formally sanctioned layouts.

No work done on Delhi HC's January order on fire safety

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court on January 7 directed authorities to urgently address the concerns about inadequate fire safety measures in hotels, restaurants and other hospitality establishments across the capital. However, the authorities concerned are yet to comply with the order, the counsel associated with the case said.

A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia was hearing a PIL that raised the issue, seeking formulation of a comprehensive action plan to strengthen safety standards.

The bench had disposed of the plea, directing the Delhi government, MCD and NDMC to treat the PIL as a representation and take an "appropriate decision with expedition".



The court had directed devising "with expedition" an action plan to put in place the safety measures so that fire incidents may be avoided.

Advocate Arpit Bhargava had filed the petition in the aftermath of 25 people losing their lives in a nightclub fire in Goa on December 6, 2025. He, however, claimed that he sent repeated reminders to the chief secretary of the Delhi government, the commissioner of the MCD and the chairperson of the NDMC to comply with the order, but to no avail.

Terming the inaction as "complete apathy", he claimed that he sent the last reminder to the authorities on May 5, "beseeching them to comply with the court's directions in light of several fire incidents in the past few months".

Fourth S-400 defence system reaches India, deployment likely on western front

New Delhi.(Agency)

India has received the fourth regiment of the Russian-made S-400 Triumf air defence system, marking another major boost to the country's long-range air defence capabilities.

Defence sources said the first consignment of the fourth S-400 regiment arrived in India on June 3 after Indian Air Force (IAF) officials completed pre-dispatch inspections in Russia last month.

The remaining components of the regiment are expected to arrive through different ports over the coming days, with the complete delivery scheduled to be completed within this month. The newly inducted unit is likely to be deployed along India's western frontier, close to the Pakistan border, enhancing the country's ability to

detect and neutralise aerial threats in the region.

Known in Indian service as the "Sudarshan Chakra", the S-400 is among the world's most advanced air



defence systems. It is capable of tracking and engaging multiple targets simultaneously, including fighter aircraft, ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones and airborne surveillance platforms at ranges of up

to 400 kilometres. India signed a \$5.43 billion agreement with Russia in October 2018 for the procurement of five S-400 regiments. Three regiments have already been delivered, inducted and deployed at strategically important locations across northern and eastern sectors. The fourth regiment is now in the process of being operationalised, while the fifth and final regiment is expected to be delivered by the end of 2026, completing the contract.

Deliveries under the original schedule were expected to conclude by the end of 2023. However, the timeline was affected by disruptions arising from the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Russia has since assured India that all remaining deliveries will be completed by November 2026.

AAP, Congress train guns on BJP government over 'negligence'

New Delhi.(Agency)

NEW DELHI: A devastating blaze at a hotel in a congested bylane of south Delhi's Malviya Nagar on Wednesday has put the BJP government in the firing line of the Opposition, with both AAP and the Congress alleging lapses in the response to the inferno that snuffed out 21 lives.

Reacting to the news of the fire that broke out at the Fourish Stay bed-and-breakfast facility in Hauz Rani at around 8.30 am, former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi wrote on X in Hindi, "The question is: Who will take responsibility for the recurrence of fire incidents in Delhi and the deaths of innocent people? Why has the fire safety system deteriorated to such a

deplorable state on the BJP's watch?... Such negligence at the cost of people's lives is no longer acceptable." Echoing those sentiments, former AAP MLA from



Malviya Nagar Somnath Bharti claimed that the fire brigade reached the site almost an hour late. "The rescue teams were despatched, but the fire brigade, which should have

arrived within a few minutes of the incident, reached almost an hour later, despite the station being just three minutes away from the spot," Bharti said.

Another AAP leader added to that, saying, "In the past three months, this is the third major fire incident calling attention to negligence." Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav, who visited the site, rued, "There is an absolute failure of the fire department in this case.

Even though several other incidents have been reported in the past few days, the government is not focused on this issue.

Alleging grave lapses, he noted, "There were around 20 rooms even though there was permission for only six."

Delhi hotel fire: Bed and Breakfast facility didn't have fire safety NOC, emergency exits

New Delhi.(Agency)

What initially appeared to be a routine fire emergency on Wednesday morning soon escalated into one of the national capital's deadliest hotel fire tragedies in recent years, raising serious questions over fire safety compliance in the city.

As firefighters battled thick smoke and rescued dozens of trapped occupants, preliminary findings pointed to a building design that may have turned the structure into a death trap.

The five-storey building, operating under a bed-and-breakfast (B&B) licence that permitted only six rooms, was allegedly running nearly 25 rooms across the basement, ground floor and upper storeys, officials said. Authorities added that the establishment did not possess a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the Delhi Fire Services. The DFS received information about the fire around 8:50

am on Wednesday. Within a minute, seven fire tenders were dispatched to the spot. As the scale of the incident became clear, additional vehicles and personnel were rushed in, taking the total number of fire tenders deployed to 17.

"The first team that reached the site immediately initiated firefighting and search-and-rescue operations. We first evacuated six casualties from the basement. As the fire was gradually brought under control, we continued rescuing people from the upper floors," A K Malik, chief fire officer, said.

According to officials, the basement and ground floor had two rooms each, while

every upper floor had five rooms. Four rooms had also been constructed on the terrace. Two of them were allegedly



being used to accommodate guests, while the remaining two served as storage areas. Officials said the building has been sealed as part of the investigation. They pointed to major

structural violations that may have contributed to the high casualty count.

Building sealed for probe

Officials said the building has been sealed as part of the investigation. They pointed to major structural violations that may have contributed to the high casualty count. The front facade was completely covered, leaving no provision for ventilation.

Major fires in city

59 deaths were recorded in the 1997 Uphaar Cinema fire after toxic smoke spread through blocked exits and locked doors during a screening. 43 died in 2019 Anaj Mandi factory fire after short circuit triggered blaze in illegally operated, poorly ventilated site. 27 died in 2022 Mundka building fire after short circuit triggered blaze.

Government to roll out tax sop ordinance to lure back foreign investors, stop exodus

New Delhi.(Agency)

The government has decided to promulgate an ordinance amending the Income Tax Act to pave the way for tax exemptions for foreign investors. The decision was taken in a Union cabinet meeting chaired by PM Narendra Modi. The government had earlier taken the ordinance route to reduce the corporate tax rate. According to reports, the government is preparing to eliminate capital gains tax on investments made by FPI (foreign portfolio investors) in government securities. This move is being taken to stop the exodus of foreign capital. FPIs have so far sold Indian stocks worth a phenomenal Rs 308,909 crore so far. The exodus is so high that the figure in the first five months of 2026 has already exceeded the amount of Rs 306,419 crore in 2025. On a net basis, FPIs recorded a sale of more than Rs 2.25 lakh crore so far in 2026. The figure for the whole of calendar year 2025 was Rs 1.66 lakh crore. The stupendous figures is attributed to a combination of facts such as the declining value of the rupee, the AI rush in other markets and the attractiveness of certain other emerging markets and relatively unfavourable valuations of the Indian equities, which triggered the exodus in the first place.

Why this step?

While more steps could be taken to promote foreign investment. Foreign investors currently pay 12.5% LTCG (long-term capital gains) tax on listed shares and bonds held for more than 12 months. They also pay a 20% withholding tax on interest earned on government bonds. Gaurav Maheshwari, CFO, Alankit was quoted as saying that India is often considered less attractive compared to financial centres such as Singapore and Hong Kong, which usually do not impose capital gains tax on FPIs. But India thinks that income from Indian assets should generate taxes to the country's tax revenues.

Tax relief not the biggest solution

"FPIs were net sellers in India in eight of the 12 months in 2025, with total outflows of Rs 1,66,286 crore. January 2026 alone saw a Rs 33,598 crore exit, the highest monthly outflow since August 2025. The LTCG tax is contributing, but it is one factor in a five-variable equation," Harsha Vardhana VM, Group CEO, Atom Financial Services was quoted by the media as saying. Unless the energy supply disruption eases and the crude oil prices fall the pressure on the rupee will not ease. Also the earnings of the Indian companies have to rise and the attractiveness of the Indian equity market has to return in the eyes of the FPIs for a sustainable resumption of capital flows into India, experts feel.

Nayara Energy completes scheduled Vadinar refinery turnaround, resumes ops

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Nayara Energy has completed its scheduled 2026 turnaround at its Vadinar refinery, India's second-largest single-site refinery, carrying out critical maintenance, inspections and operational upgrades while maintaining uninterrupted fuel supplies across its network. Nayara had shut its 20 million tonnes a year Vadinar refinery in Gujarat, starting April 9 for planned maintenance. It has since resumed operations. In a statement, the firm said the turnaround, executed amid a challenging geopolitical environment, involved more than 34,000 personnel and approximately 480 pieces of heavy equipment, including 180 cranes, highlighting the scale of the operation and the company's focus on strengthening refinery reliability and performance.

Stating that the turnaround has been completed as per the schedule, it said, "Delivered amid a complex geopolitical environment, the turnaround reflects the company's operational resilience and its ability to execute large-scale interventions without impacting supply continuity." Nayara Energy, which accounts for about 8 per cent of India's refining capacity and around 7 per cent of the country's retail fuel network, said the planned shutdown was aimed at ensuring the long-term safety, efficiency and reliability of refinery operations that support domestic energy demand. In addition to routine maintenance, the company implemented a series of value-enhancement projects designed to improve product quality.

IRCTC reinforces its AI monitoring system to ensure hygiene and quality of food in trains

New Delhi.(Agency)

To maintain hygiene and quality of food supplied in trains, the IRCTC has expanded its AI-based monitoring system to more than 800 kitchens that prepare food for Indian Railways, using 2,394 cameras to bring down related complaints from passengers.

The AI-enabled system detects nine types of factors that are primarily responsible for unhygienic food in trains — hairnet compliance, transparent gloves detection, mopping, wiping, and presence of rodents, flies and cockroaches. IRCTC served about 60 crore meals in 2025-26 to train passengers.

"This system started around two-and-half years back and we are consistently expanding... bringing more kitchens and types of errors under this initiative. The cameras installed in the kitchens are supported by AI tools that quickly identify unhygienic practices and send alerts. The system can detect even an insect as small as 7-8 mm. As soon as it detects a problem, a message is sent to the kitchen manager concerned. If the issue is not resolved, it is escalated. Overall, action is taken against the person responsible within two hours," said a senior IRCTC official involved in monitoring operations from the war room at the corporation's headquarters in Delhi.

How Sebi uncovered a Rs 15 lakh crore revenue hole at Rajesh Exports

A shareholder complaint, a Swiss refinery and years of unexplained revenues have culminated in one of the most significant accounting investigations in India's corporate history

New Delhi.(Agency)

It began with a complaint that could easily have gone unnoticed. In March 2024, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) received an email from a shareholder of Rajesh Exports alleging potential financial misrepresentation linked to large trade receivables that had remained outstanding for years.

Two years later, that complaint has snowballed into what could become one of the biggest accounting controversies India has seen since Satyam. At the centre of Sebi's interim order is a startling allegation: Rajesh Exports may have

misrepresented about Rs 15.15 lakh crore of revenue between FY21 and FY25 through its overseas subsidiaries and step-down subsidiaries. The figure is so large that it almost obscures the more important story. This is not a case about missing cash. Nor is it, at least for now, a case where regulators have accused the company of siphoning away Rs 15 lakh crore. Instead, Sebi is asking a deceptively simple question: can the revenues that Rajesh Exports reported over the years actually be verified?

The answer to that question may ultimately determine whether this becomes an accounting dispute, a governance failure or something much bigger. For years, Rajesh Exports occupied a curious position in India's corporate landscape. The Bengaluru-based company routinely reported revenues that placed it among the country's biggest businesses by turnover. In FY25 alone, consolidated revenue



stood at more than Rs 4.23 lakh crore. During the five years under scrutiny, the company reported cumulative consolidated revenue of nearly Rs 15.45 lakh crore.

Yet despite those enormous figures, Rajesh Exports rarely commanded the kind of valuation typically associated with companies of such scale.

Investors generally accepted the explanation. Gold refining and bullion

trading are notoriously low-margin businesses. Huge volumes often translate into modest profits. The business model seemed unusual, but not necessarily implausible. Sebi's investigation suggests the real story may have been elsewhere.

The regulator's first major observation was that the Indian business was not driving the numbers. Between FY21 and FY25, nearly all of Rajesh Exports' reported revenues came from overseas subsidiaries and step-down subsidiaries. In several years, these entities accounted for more than 98% of the group's consolidated revenue. That means investors buying Rajesh Exports stock were not really valuing a Bengaluru-based jewellery and bullion company. They were largely valuing businesses operating thousands of kilometres away.

Foreign investors get major capital gains tax relief from the government

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a major step aimed at attracting foreign investment, the government has decided to remove capital gains tax on foreign investors investing in Indian government bonds. Sources told India Today that the proposal was cleared by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday as part of a broader effort to boost capital inflows, support the rupee and cushion the economy from the impact of the ongoing Iran conflict and high crude oil prices. The Cabinet has also approved an ordinance to amend the Income Tax Act to implement the changes. The decision will come into effect after receiving the President's assent.

The move comes at a time when India is grappling with record foreign investor outflows, pressure on the rupee and rising energy costs triggered by the prolonged conflict in West Asia. BIG PUSH TO ATTRACT FOREIGN CAPITAL.

According to sources, the government's objective is to encourage greater foreign investment into Indian debt markets and offset some of the



economic challenges arising from the Iran war and elevated crude oil prices.

Foreign portfolio investors have sold nearly Rs 2.5 lakh crore worth of Indian equities this year, making 2026 one of the worst years on record for foreign fund outflows. The heavy selling has weighed on the rupee and prompted calls from market participants for measures that would make Indian financial assets more attractive to overseas investors. WHAT CHANGES FOR FOREIGN INVESTORS?

At present, foreign investors are required to pay 12.5% long-term capital gains tax on listed shares and bonds held for more than 12 months. Under the new proposal approved by the Cabinet,

capital gains tax on investments made by FPIs in Indian government securities, also known as G-Secs, will be completely abolished.

The government is also expected to address the tax burden on interest income earned from government bonds. Currently, foreign investors pay a 20% withholding tax on interest earned from government securities. A concessional rate of 5% that was available earlier was withdrawn in 2023. Market participants have long argued that the current tax structure reduces the attractiveness of Indian government bonds compared with competing emerging markets. The government hopes the move will encourage larger foreign participation in India's bond market and bring fresh dollar inflows into the country.

Higher foreign investment in government securities can help support the rupee, improve liquidity in the debt market and provide an additional source of capital at a time when equity inflows have remained weak.

Will PIN-based verification minimize UPI-related frauds? Expert weighs in...

New Delhi.(Agency)

The National Payments Corporation of India is introducing a new safety feature which aims to reduce digital payment fraud. Whenever a user scans a QR code or enters a mobile number, UPI apps will display the recipient's verified bank-registered name directly on the screen. This update removes custom nicknames and unverified tags which makes it far more difficult for scammers to deceive users. How will the new framework impact UPI users? Rohit Mahajan, Founder & CEO, pluto ONE told Zee News that the proposed changes are the steps for UPI, where security and trust are as important as convenience. "The biggest change is that users will need to do a verification step for big transactions, not just use their UPI PIN. This extra step could be using their fingerprint. Verifying the device they are using," Mahajan said. However he added that for small transactions the impact is expected to be minimal, but for payments users will have an extra security check before the transaction is done. This may take a second longer but it will greatly reduce fraud, unauthorized transactions



and scams. Another key change is that the name of the verified beneficiary will be shown before payment confirmation. This can help prevent transfers and fake collections. These changes will make people more confident in using UPI for payments like education fees, healthcare costs, insurance premiums and investments. As UPI transactions and values grow stronger security controls are needed to keep India's digital payments system secure and scalable. Does PIN-based verification on payment platforms also mean that UPI related frauds will be minimized? Mahajan cautions, though extra authentication will reduce fraud. It won't eliminate it completely. "Many UPI frauds happen because scammers trick users into sharing OTPs or installing apps. The extra verification for transactions will add protection against account takeover and suspicious transactions. Even if a scammer gets a user's PIN they still can't complete a transaction without the authentication."

Rupee trades in narrow range against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI.(Agency)

The rupee traded in a narrow range against the US dollar in early trade on Thursday as rising equity outflows and dimming prospects of US-Iran truce renewed pressure on the domestic unit.

Forex traders said prolonged West Asia crisis poses a major risk for India, which relies heavily on energy imports. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.70, then touched 95.69 in initial trade, registering a rise of 7 paise from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee depreciated 40 paise to close at 95.76 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 99.47, down 0.06 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading lower by 0.93 per cent at USD 96.90 per barrel in futures trade.

"For India, every rise in crude oil carries an additional burden. Like an unexpected increase in household expenses, higher oil prices mean more



dollars are required to meet import needs, often putting pressure on the rupee," CR Forex Advisors MD Amit Pabari said. Another factor weighing on sentiment has been persistent foreign fund outflows, traders said. Foreign investors have withdrawn approximately USD 26.4 billion from Indian markets this year, already

surpassing last year's record outflows.

At the same time, overseas direct investments by Indian companies rose to USD 48.39 billion during FY 2025-26, while resident remittances abroad touched USD 28.9 billion, Pabari said.

Every dollar leaving the country increases demand for foreign currency and adds pressure on the rupee's valuation, he added.

The spotlight now shifts to the RBI Monetary Policy Committee decision on June 5. "Ordinarily, markets would be debating growth and inflation. This time, however, policymakers also have to consider a rapidly weakening rupee, elevated oil prices, and shifting global interest-rate expectations," Pabari said. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex declined 229.69 points to 74,139.32 in early trade, while the Nifty dropped 66.30 points to 23,339.

Rajesh Exports share price falls 5% to hit lower circuit as Sebi alleges revenue inflation

Sebi's interim order against Rajesh Exports sent the stock to a 5% lower circuit after it alleged possible revenue inflation and barred promoter Rajesh Mehta. The action has heightened investor uncertainty as the regulator has sought more records and ordered a fresh forensic audit.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Shares of Rajesh Exports Ltd hit the 5% lower circuit on Wednesday after market regulator Sebi passed an interim order against the company and its promoter, Rajesh Mehta, alleging large-scale financial irregularities, possible revenue inflation and non-cooperation during an ongoing investigation. The sharp fall came after Sebi said a forensic review had found prima facie evidence suggesting that nearly 97-99% of the company's reported revenue may have been inflated, calling the findings "egregious and unheard

of." The regulator has barred promoter Rajesh Mehta from buying, selling or dealing in Rajesh Exports securities until further orders.

WHY DID RAJESH EXPORTS SHARES FALL TODAY?

The stock came under intense selling pressure after Sebi's interim order raised serious questions over the authenticity of the company's financial statements.

According to the regulator, its investigation and forensic review uncovered prima facie evidence that a substantial portion of Rajesh Exports' reported revenue may not be genuine. Sebi said approximately 97% to 99% of the company's revenue appeared to be inflated based on the findings available so far. Such allegations are among the most serious that can be levelled against a listed company because they directly impact investor confidence in the company's reported earnings, revenue and financial health. The development triggered panic selling in the stock, pushing it to the lower circuit limit. WHAT HAS SEBI

ACCUSED RAJESH EXPORTS OF? The market regulator has accused Rajesh Exports of financial misrepresentation, failing to cooperate with investigators and

portions of the company's transactions because supporting records were incomplete or unavailable. Only a small fraction of sampled transactions could be fully substantiated through documentation. The investigation was launched after a shareholder complaint received in March 2024 raised concerns about large outstanding trade receivables on the company's books. WHAT DID SEBI FIND?

The order, which runs over 100 pages, stems from an investigation covering the period between April 2020 and March 2024. Sebi had appointed BDO India Services as the forensic auditor to examine the company's



withholding key records required for a forensic audit. According to Sebi, the company did not provide access to critical accounting systems, failed to furnish complete documentation and withheld important financial records sought by investigators and forensic auditors.

The regulator said the forensic auditor was unable to independently verify large

books. The regulator also raised concerns about transactions involving overseas subsidiaries and step-down subsidiaries, including entities in Singapore and Switzerland. These included REL Singapore, Global Gold Refineries AG and Swiss precious metals refiner Valcambi.

Short news

TN's Kottayur panchayat tribal residents struggle as govt houses lack power, toilets

KRISHNAGIRI.(Agency)

Tribal residents of two habitats in Kottayur panchayat continue to live in the dark as six houses, constructed under the PM JANMAN scheme, are yet to be given power connections. The residents also lack proper toilet facilities. The houses were constructed in 2023-24 in Noorundhusamy Malai and Sivapuram villages in Kottayur panchayat of Anchetti taluk in Krishnagiri district for Rs 5.73 lakh each.

The visited the houses on Wednesday, where a resident, P Jayamma (60), said, "Each house was constructed under the PM JANMAN scheme last year, but we did not receive power connections. We are using power connection from a nearby electricity pole. When electricity board staff visit our village, they scold us and the connection is disconnected. Our village is situated inside the forest, and wild animals such as elephants frequently move near our houses. Therefore, we are in need of a power connection. We also lack properly toilet facilities. While toilets were constructed, there is no drainage connection, rendering them useless." Seconding her, M Madevamma (65), another resident, said she lost her husband two years ago and her daughter is a disabled person who cannot speak. "Apart from the power connection issue, we were struggling to defecate in the open because of our family situation."

Three killed in fire at private hospital ICU in Bihar's Muzaffarpur

Bihar.(Agency)

A massive fire broke out in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of a private hospital in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district early on Thursday, leaving at least three patients dead and several others injured. The death toll is expected to rise as the rescue operation is underway.

The incident took place at Prasad Hospital in the Brahmapura locality of Muzaffarpur town. Muzaffarpur District Magistrate Subrat Kumar Sen confirmed the death of three people in the tragedy. "The district administration is looking into the matter," the DM said.

Unofficial reports confirmed the death of five people in the incident.

Three of the deceased have been identified as Shashank Kumar (Aurai), Geeta Devi (Motipur), both from Muzaffarpur, and Uday Kumar, a resident of Tariyani in Sheohar district. The local fire station received information about the outbreak of the fire at around 3:55 am. A team rushed to the spot and evacuated nearly 20 patients from the ICU. Those who suffered injuries have been admitted to nearby hospitals for treatment.

Ram Nivas Pandey, an officer of the fire department, said that his team rescued 15-20 patients from the ICU. He said the fire spread rapidly through the intensive care unit, engulfing it in dense smoke and complicating evacuation efforts.

Prima facie, the fire appears to have resulted from a short circuit. However, it has yet to be confirmed. "Our priority is to rescue the patients. Investigation will follow," Pandey said.

2025 murder of gold merchant: HC asks DGP to take action against absconding BDO, orders action against investigation officer

Kolkata.(Agency)

The vacation bench of the Calcutta High Court has directed the West Bengal Director General of Police to take necessary action against 'absconding' Block Development Officer Prashant Barman and ensure that the accused is brought under the course of justice.

Prashant Barman is one of the accused in the murder of gold merchant Swapna Kamila in October 2025. Kamala was missing from Duttabad on October 28, 2025, and the next day his mutilated body was found near Jatragachi in New Town.

Burman approached the Calcutta High Court last year seeking anticipatory bail in the case. The court rejected the anticipatory bail. In January, Burman filed a bail application in the Supreme Court, which rejected it and directed him to surrender. However, Prashant Barman was not arrested by the police.

On Wednesday, during the hearing of the bail application of another accused, Sajal Sarkar, in the same murder case, the vacation bench of Justice Apurba Sinha Roy ordered immediate action against the BDO.

The court ordered a departmental action against the investigating officer in the case, and directed the state DGP to submit a report on the implementation of the order to the Registrar General of the High Court within the next 10 days.

10 years on, Madras HC says Appavu Radhapuram victor in 2016

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Setting aside the victory of AIADMK's I S Inbadurai in the 2016 Assembly election from the Radhapuram constituency, the Madras High Court has declared DMK leader and former Assembly speaker M Appavu as the elected candidate.

The court also directed the Assembly secretary to make necessary changes in official records by entering Appavu's name as the representative of the constituency for the 2016-2021 period. The court, however, observed that the improper declaration was not attributable to any conduct on the part of Inbadurai. It said the order would not disqualify him in any manner, except with regard to claiming pensionary benefits as an MLA for the 2016-2021 period.

Delivering the verdict on a poll petition filed by Appavu 10 years ago after he was declared to have lost the poll by 49 votes, Justice G Jayachandran on Wednesday ruled that the



DMK leader had won by 104 votes. In his plea, Appavu had challenged Inbadurai's victory, alleging that he was forcibly evicted from the counting centre when counting for the 19th, 20th and 21st rounds commenced and that postal ballots were arbitrarily declared invalid. Acting on the petition, the court had earlier ordered a recount of postal ballots and a specified number of votes recorded in EVMs.

Pleased that HC vindicated my win: Appavu

The recount was carried out on the HC premises, but the outcome was not disclosed owing to a stay granted by the Supreme Court on the declaration of the result. Appavu had contended that 403 postal ballots were rejected without assigning reasons. Inbadurai, however, argued that the ballots had been attested by middle school headmasters, who were not gazetted officers, though election rules required attestation by gazetted officers. In his order, Justice Jayachandran noted that the recount report contained a "damning disclosure". Of the 403 postal ballots, Appavu secured 153 votes, while Inbadurai received only one vote and 44 ballots were declared invalid. "This is conclusive that the election petitioner (Appavu) had won the election by a margin of 104 votes," the judge observed. Recalling that the SC had not stayed the HC's earlier finding that middle school headmasters are gazetted officers, the judge held that the postal ballots attested by them were valid.

'Unauthorised' school in Chunabhatti ordered shut, students told to relocate

Mumbai.(Agency)

Parents of students enrolled at Orchids International School in Mumbai's Chunabhatti were in for a shock when, instead of receiving information about the school reopening after summer break in the first week of June, they were asked to choose one of the institution's three other branches for their children's relocation. The reason — the school located in Chunabhatti is declared unauthorised for not having required permission from the government.

Claiming that the school has misguided them, parents complained that the school charged them full fees for the new academic year, stating that there is no reason to worry. "But now when we were expecting school to resume, they are asking us to select other branches. My child spends more than an hour in the school bus to travel to this school



in Chunabhatti. Going to their other branches located far away is absolutely not an option," said an aggrieved parent, adding that a meeting with the school authorities on Wednesday did not yield any solution.

The school was declared unauthorised in March 2026, which was informed to the management via a letter dated March 18. The letter signed by education officer of Mumbai North region, Mushtaq Shaikh states that as per the rules under the Right To

Education (RTE) Act, any institution receiving Letter of Intent (LOI) to start a school is expected to obtain final approval from the government within 18 months from then, after completing the required infrastructure. But as the school was running without the final approval, it was declared unauthorised and ordered to shut operations.

Stating that it is a crime to run an unauthorised school, the letter levied a fine of Rs 1,00,000 on the management and warned of an additional penalty of Rs 10,000 per day if the school continues to function despite the order to shut down. "This was informed to the school in March and subsequently we also put up a notice at the school gate in April, announcing that the school is declared unauthorised. A complaint was filed with the Chunabhatti police station against.

3 coaching centres sealed days before recruitment exam, student anxiety simmers in Prayagraj

Lucknow.(Agency)

Twice a day for the last two days, Priya Rajput, a young job aspirant from Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur, and Pankaj Singh from neighbouring Deoria have been making anxious trips to their coaching centre in Prayagraj, hoping to find its gates reopened. Instead, they are met each time by locked doors and official seals pasted across the entrance.

Both are in their 20s and have left their hometowns to prepare for the Uttar Pradesh Police Constable recruitment examination, which is scheduled for June 8-10 and will see nearly 28 lakh aspirants compete for just over 32,000 posts.

With just days to go, every hour of study matters. But the coaching institute where they had enrolled is among three prominent ones sealed by the

Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA) on May 31, which claims the buildings were operating without completing mandatory formalities.

The action came days after the owners of

were declared on May 7; cancellation of the Lekhpal recruitment test conducted on May 21 over what they claim are irregularities; and greater transparency in recruitment processes.

The PDA, though, denied any connection between the crackdown and the protest, insisting the action was based solely on compliance-related violations.

For aspirants gathered outside the shuttered centres, though, the timing has raised difficult questions. "The examination is next week, and our study is blocked," said Pankaj Singh, who is enrolled at Super Climax Coaching, one of the three institutes.

The other two are Target On Coaching and Examपुर Coaching, among Prayagraj's most prominent institutes. All three institutes have been operating for several years from rented premises leased by their owners.



the three institutes participated in a candlelight march in Prayagraj on May 29, held by aspirants for competitive examinations. Their demands: release of scorecards for the Uttar Pradesh Police Sub-Inspector examination held on March 14-15, whose results

TMC leader Jay Prakash Majumdar held over 'grabbing' woman's house

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

The police on Wednesday arrested Trinamool Congress spokesperson and state vice-president Jay Prakash Majumdar over allegedly illegally occupying a woman's house for several years and allegedly harassing her.

As per the sources, locals were staging a protest against Majumdar outside the flat in Bidhannagar, which led to an altercation. The police then arrived at the spot, detained Majumdar, and took him to Bidhannagar North police station, where he was subsequently arrested. He faces charges of illegally occupying a flat, and making derogatory remarks against and threatening the woman landowner.

It is learnt that Majumdar had been illegally occupying the Bidhannagar area-based flat for the last around 12 years. He reportedly rented the flat in 2012, the lease agreement for which expired in 2015. However, it is being alleged that Majumdar neither renewed the lease after that nor did he vacate the flat. The owner, Arati Raychaudhari, has also alleged that Majumdar even stopped paying the rent for the said flat.

On Wednesday, a group of people gathered outside the flat to protest against Majumdar, when, it is alleged, the TMC leader physically assaulted some of the protesters. Upon receiving the information, the police arrived at the spot and detained him.

The complainant has alleged that she had also sent legal notices to Majumdar and his family, asking them to vacate her flat. However, the notices went unanswered, she claimed, alleging that the TMC leader further hurled insults at and threatened her.

Single contractor bags consultation contract for 9 key civic projects, BMC process transparent

Mumbai.(Agency)

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation administration on Wednesday defended its move of appointing single agency as private project management consultant (PMC) for nine water infrastructure projects in Mumbai.

A PMC is a third party organisation which carries out a detailed project report (DPR) of any civic project which is to be undertaken by the civic body. The construction plan for the project is then prepared on the basis of this DPR, following which contractors are appointed for construction. Meanwhile, the appointed PMC oversees the construction work and acts as a supervisor.

Over the past few years, the BMC has taken



up as many as 14 water infrastructure projects including the Gargai Dam water project, the Modak Sagar water treatment plant, the desalination plant and the ongoing Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) project, under which the BMC aims to construct 7 STPs across Mumbai's island

city, eastern and western suburbs. The cost of these projects exceed Rs 30,000 crore and according to the authorities, the civic body pays 1 per cent of the total project cost to the PMC, which amounts to Rs 300 crore.

However, the civic body's data shows that a single agency — Tata Consultancy Engineers — had bagged a contract for working as a consultant for 9 out of the 32 water projects.

The civic body's move led to a huge uproar among the civic standing committee earlier this month, following which the authorities gave a detailed explanation on why this consultant was appointed.

On Wednesday, while giving a presentation to the civic standing committee, the civic

officials stated that the process of appointing a consultant is transparent, competitive and governed by established rules. The authorities also maintained that consultants are empanelled through a structured selection process approved by the Standing Committee.

The BMC stated that consultants are engaged for projects requiring specialised expertise, technical knowledge and experience that may not be readily available within the municipal administration.

"TCE was appointed since the projects demanded immediate appointment and completion by 2029. Besides this, this firm also has knowledge in working with BMC in several water supply projects, therefore, we selected them solely on the basis of ease of execution," a civic official said.

Prayagraj family murders: A day after, police 'solve' case, say man killed parents, sister; hacked to death by aide over share

Lucknow.(Agency)

Police in Prayagraj on Wednesday claimed to have solved the murder of four members of a business family, saying the elderly couple's son conspired with a friend to kill his parents and sister before he himself was murdered in a dispute over the stolen jewellery.

A day after the decomposed bodies were discovered, the police arrested Sunny Gupta and recovered the alleged murder weapon — an iron pipe and 1002.12 grams of gold and 360.56 grams of silver ornaments.

The case came to light on Tuesday evening in South Malaka locality under Kotwali police station area after Manjeet Kesarwani approached police stating that the house of his maternal uncle, Virendra Vaishya, had remained locked for two days and a foul smell was emanating from inside. Police broke open the lock and discovered the bodies of Virendra Vaishya, 70, his wife Anita Vaishya, 65, and daughter Meenakshi Vaishya, 45, from the house.

Police said Virendra and Anita were found dead on a bed inside a room, while the body of Meenakshi was found lying close to the upstairs. All three had head injuries caused by a heavy object.

Vaishya family used to live on the upper floors and there was a market complex on the ground floor.

Vaishya's son Abhishek, 40, was missing from the house and initially appeared to be main suspect. But, the police officials found his body also lying with similar head injuries caused by heavy object inside his shop. The shops was locked from outside.

NEWS BOX

Are Gambhir and selectors on the same page over India's new T20I captain choice?

New Delhi. (Agency)

It seems like India coach Gautam Gambhir and the selection committee aren't on the same page when it comes to their choices of who should replace Suryakumar Yadav as the next T20I captain, according to a report from PTI. India Today revealed that the Indian T20I team will have a new captain in Shreyas Iyer as the BCCI are ready to move on from Suryakumar Yadav. Suryakumar, who led India to the T20 World Cup 2026 win, has been woefully out of form and struggled during the IPL this year to score runs. This meant that the selection committee decided to drop him and pick Shreyas as the new skipper for the upcoming tours of Ireland and England. Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma have also been mentioned as dark horses in a three-way race for the role as BCCI wants a new captain who will be at the helm for the next



two T20 World Cups. While Gambhir and the selectors are on the same page when it comes to Suryakumar's removal from captaincy, when it comes to the choices, they do seem to have differences.

GAMBHIR'S CLEAR CHOICE

PTI is reporting that Gambhir's preferred choice is Sanju Samson, who impressed with a superb knockout-stage campaign at the T20 World Cup. However, the selectors remain unconvinced about whether Samson or Ishan Kishan can deliver consistent performances over an extended period. It is also said that Gambhir is not entirely sold on Shreyas Iyer's candidature. The two worked together during Kolkata Knight Riders' IPL-winning campaign in 2024, with Shreyas leading the side and Gambhir serving as mentor.

However, Shreyas' comments that season about not receiving enough recognition are believed to have raised a few eyebrows, and those remarks have reportedly remained a point of discussion. A decision on the new T20I captain is expected to be announced ahead of the 2 T20Is against Ireland on June 26.

Virat Kohli to miss ODI series against Afghanistan due to injury



New Delhi. (Agency)

India suffered a big blow ahead of the Afghanistan ODIs as star batter Virat Kohli has been ruled out of the series due to a hamstring injury. India are set to play three ODIs against Afghanistan, starting from June 13 till 20. Kohli played a key role during the IPL 2026 final as he helped RCB chase down 156 against the Gujarat Titans to lift their second consecutive title. The veteran batter remained unbeaten on 75 off 42 balls as RCB secured a five-wicket win in Ahmedabad. During the final stages of the game, Kohli was seen struggling while running, but was able to finish the game off in style. Sources told India Today that Kohli got injured during the final and scans have revealed a distal semimembranosus tendon tear. Kohli amassed a total of 675 runs in 16 matches with an average of 56.25 and a strike-rate of 165.85. The extent of Kohli's injury is yet to be determined. The injury comes at the wrong time for the star batter, who was hoping to carry the form into the Afghanistan series as he aims to keep his hopes of playing in the ODI World Cup 2027 alive. Kohli had a sensational run in the format in 2025, emerging as India's top run-getter with 651 runs to his name from 13 matches, including three hundreds and four fifties. Kohli carried this form into 2026, scoring 240 runs during the three-match series against New Zealand, including a hundred and a fifty.

The BCCI are yet to confirm Kohli's replacement for the series. The injury also casts doubts over Kohli's participation for the England tour, where they will play three ODIs starting from July 14 to July 19.

India named a strong squad for the three ODIs against Afghanistan, but both Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya's availability for the matches will be subject to both of them getting fitness clearance after the IPL 2026 campaign.

Group E preview: Can Germany reclaim former glory after successive early exits?

FIFA World Cup, Group E preview:

Germany may headline Group E, but Ecuador and Ivory Coast have the quality and belief to upset the established order. With World Cup debutants Curacao eager to make history, this promises to be one of the tournament's most competitive and unpredictable groups.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Group E looks set to be one of the most competitive groups at the 2026 World Cup. Germany may begin as favourites, but their recent record at the tournament leaves little room for complacency. The four-time champions have suffered group-stage exits in the last two World Cups and will be under pressure to make a strong statement in North America. Ecuador and Ivory Coast have enough quality to challenge any side in the group. Ecuador were among the strongest teams in South American qualifying and



possess a well-balanced squad capable of troubling the tournament's biggest nations. Ivory Coast, returning to the World Cup after a 12-year absence, have a blend of pace, physicality and attacking threat that could make them serious contenders for a place in the last 16. Curacao arrive as the group's surprise package. The smallest nation ever to qualify for a World Cup, they have already created history and will look to make the most of their debut on football's biggest stage. Germany's pedigree makes them favourites to top the group, but nothing is guaranteed. With Ecuador and Ivory Coast

eyeing a place in the knockout rounds and Curacao eager to prove they belong, Group E could remain undecided until the final round of matches.

GRUPE: MEET THE TEAMS

GERMANY

Germany arrive at the 2026 World Cup seeking to end a decade-long slide that has dented one of international football's most successful teams. Four-time champions Germany have not progressed beyond the group stage in either of the last two World Cups, with their 2022 exit in Qatar marking the lowest point of a prolonged decline. Hansi Flick survived

only six more matches before a run of three consecutive defeats ended his tenure. The pressure will be on once again in North America, but Germany look better equipped this time. Head coach Julian Nagelsmann has blended experience with youth since taking charge ahead of Euro 2024. Hosts Germany reached the quarter-finals before losing narrowly to eventual champions Spain, a campaign that restored belief around the national team. Veteran goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is set for his fifth World Cup at the age of 40, while Bayern Munich youngster Lennart Karl represents the next generation. Captain Joshua Kimmich remains the heartbeat of the side, with the midfielder continuing to draw comparisons with German great Lothar Matthäus. With renewed confidence and a talented squad, Germany will expect to challenge deep into the tournament.

IVORY COAST

Ivory Coast return to the World Cup for the first time since 2014, eager to make their mark after years away from football's biggest stage. While they no longer boast icons such as Didier Drogba and Yaya Toure, the Elephants remain a dangerous side packed with players from Europe's leading leagues.

Manchester United owners Glazer family considering sale of stakes at club

Members of the Glazer family are discussing whether to sell some or all of their Manchester United shares, according to a report from Bloomberg. The talks could reshape control at Old Trafford after Jim Ratcliffe's investment and years of supporter anger.

MIAMI. (Agency)

The Glazer family's long association with Manchester United could be heading toward a significant turning point, with Bloomberg reporting that some members are considering selling their shares in the club. According to people familiar with the matter, discussions have taken place among various family stakeholders over

the possibility of offloading part or all of their ownership. The report prompted a positive market reaction, with Manchester



United's stock climbing 7 percent in after-hours trading. While early conversations reportedly revolved around individual family members cashing out, there is now an effort to build wider support within the family for a larger-scale sale. The talks come more than two years after INEOS founder Jim Ratcliffe acquired close to a 29 percent stake in the club. Although the Glazers retained majority control, the

agreement handed Ratcliffe authority over football-related operations at Old Trafford.

The Glazers and Manchester United declined to provide comments on the matter, according to Reuters. Since completing his investment, Ratcliffe has overseen several changes aimed at improving the club's fortunes, including cost-cutting measures, job reductions and ticket-price increases.

The Glazers, meanwhile, have remained a divisive presence among supporters. Fans have frequently criticised the family for the club's debt levels, questionable spending decisions in the transfer market and a perceived lack of investment in infrastructure. Manchester United's fortunes on the field have improved this season under Michael Carrick, with the club finishing third in the Premier League to secure a return to the UEFA Champions League after missing out on the previous two campaigns. Shares of Manchester United closed at \$21.11 on Wednesday, valuing the club at approximately \$3.64 billion, according to LSEG figures.

England vs New Zealand: Full schedule, squads, livestreaming and all you need to know

New Delhi (Agency)

England will begin their home summer with a three-Test series against New Zealand, starting at Lord's on June 4. The series is part of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) 2025-27 cycle and comes at an important juncture for both teams.

England head into the series looking to put behind them a disappointing Ashes campaign in Australia. Ben Stokes' side came under intense scrutiny following the heavy defeat, but the leadership group of director of cricket Rob Key, head coach Brendon McCullum and captain Stokes has remained intact as England looks to rebuild. There have already been notable changes to the playing squad. England have moved on from top-order batters Zak Crawley and Ollie Pope, handing opportunities to Durham opener Emilio Gay and young batter Jacob Bethell. Gay has impressed in the County Championship this season, while Bethell arrives after scoring his maiden Test century during the Ashes. New

Zealand, meanwhile, arrive in England full of confidence after their dominant innings-and-79-run victory over Ireland in Belfast. The Black Caps are currently second in the



WTC standings and will be hoping to strengthen their position with a strong showing in England. One of the major talking points for the visitors will be the return of fast bowlers Kyle Jamieson and Will O'Rourke. The towering pair are expected to feature together in a full-

strength New Zealand pace attack for the first time in Test cricket after recovering from back injuries. There is also significant attention on Kane Williamson. The former

New Zealand captain opted out of a central contract in 2024 and has managed his international commitments on a series-by-series basis. With Williamson turning 35 and admitting this will be his fifth and final Test appearance at Lord's, speculation continues over how much longer he will remain available for New Zealand.

The last time these two teams met in a Test series, England secured a 2-1 victory during their tour of New Zealand in 2024.

WTC POINTS AT STAKE

The series forms part of the ICC World Test Championship 2025-27 cycle. New Zealand currently sits second in the standings with two wins from three matches, while England are seventh after playing ten Tests.

Vinesh Phogat one-ups WFI again as Supreme Court rejects federation's petition

The Supreme Court dismissed WFI's petition against Vinesh Phogat's participation in the selection trials, calling it infructuous.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Vinesh Phogat has scored another point in her tussle against the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) as the Supreme Court on Thursday, June 4, dismissed a petition from the governing body aimed at the star wrestler, calling it infructuous. The SC stated that WFI's challenge to the Delhi High Court's order permitting Vinesh Phogat to participate in the selection trials has become



infructuous due to subsequent developments. Vinesh competed in the 53 kg category and went all the way to the semi-final before losing to Meenakshi Goyat. Following this, the Olympian vowed to make a stronger comeback and kept on fighting. The counsel for the WFI argued to the

supreme court that while Vinesh was allowed to participate in the national trials, she created havoc at the event. The counsel also argued that the HC judgment from para 31 onwards has to go. The Delhi High Court strongly criticised WFI, describing its actions against Vinesh as "vindictive" and

"retrograde". In its May 22 ruling, a Division Bench led by Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya noted that Phogat failed to meet the federation's "exclusionary" selection criteria only because she was on maternity leave, stressing that motherhood cannot be used to sideline female athletes. The court also slammed a show-cause notice issued to Phogat as "deplorable". The notice reportedly labelled her Paris Olympics disqualification for being overweight a "national shame", with the court saying the language reflected clear mala fide intent.

However, the Supreme Court decided to dismiss the petition, saying that they don't want to reiterate the findings from the Delhi HC once again. The bench also said that all the issues are being kept open. "In view of subsequent developments, this SLP is rendered infructuous. This court will not be taken as having to reiterate the findings and observations of the high court. The issues are kept open," read the verdict from SC.



war between Ukraine and Russia. Since Russia's invasion in 2022, Ukrainian players have refused to shake hands with Russian and Belarusian opponents, and Thursday's semi-final is expected to be no different. While the political context inevitably adds another layer to the contest, Kostyuk will be focused on extending her winning record against Andreeva and continuing her impressive run in Paris. The Russian, meanwhile, has quietly established herself as one of the brightest young talents in women's tennis and now stands two victories away from a maiden major title. The second semi-final will see Russian Diana Shnaider take on Polish qualifier Maja Chwalinska. Both players have enjoyed breakthrough tournaments, with Shnaider stunning Sabalenka in the quarter-finals and Chwalinska becoming only the second women's qualifier in the Open Era to reach the Roland Garros semi-finals. Having won eight matches in a row in Paris, Chwalinska is playing with immense belief, while Shnaider enters the contest buoyed by the biggest victory of her career. With none of the four semi-finalists having previously won a Grand Slam singles title, the stage is set for a new champion to emerge in Paris.



Parineeti Chopra

Shares Glimpse Of Life With Baby Neer, Says 'It's The Little Things That Made May'

Bollywood actress and new mommy Parineeti Chopra took to a social media account on Wednesday morning to offer adorable sneak peak into her life in the month of May. She shared a series of pictures that captured 'little moments' from the month of May that made it all special for her.

The carousel post shared by Parineeti on her social media account reflected a lot of self-care moments, homemade treats, rainy day views and her baby boy Neer's toys. Taking to her social media account, Parineeti captioned it as, "It's the little things that made May," followed by house and blue heart emoticon.

The first picture shows the actress posing elegantly in an off-shoulder white outfit. Another picture features a delicious mango dessert topped with cream and white chocolate shreds.

Another picture captures a beautiful long area drenched in rain.

Another click offers a glimpse of a red bunny-shaped toy resting on a Mickey Mouse-themed play mat.

Talking about Parineeti Chopra, the actress post her sabbatical from work after embracing motherhood, has been seen returning to work.

For the uninitiated, Parineeti launched her own chat show, 'Mom Talks With Parineeti Chopra', where she invites celebrity parents to discuss their parenthood journeys and challenges.

On the personal front, Parineeti and husband politician Raghav Chadha welcomed their first child, a baby boy, on October 19, 2025. Announcing his arrival on social media, the couple, in a joint post, had written, "He's finally here, our baby boy. And we literally can't remember life before! Arms full, our hearts are fuller! First we had each other, now we have everything... With gratitude, Parineeti & Raghav."

A month later, the couple revealed their son's name as Neer. For the uninitiated, Parineeti and Raghav tied the knot in a grand ceremony in Udaipur on September 24, 2023. Professionally, the actress was last seen in 'Amar Singh Chamkila.'



Will Vicky Kaushal Follow Katrina Kaif And Build A Brand? Actor Says, 'She Has Great Business Acumen, If I...'



Katrina Kaif has been away from films for a while now, especially since welcoming her son, Vihaan. However, she is focused on her brand, Kay Beauty, which is quickly becoming a sensation as one of the few successful Bollywood celebrity brands in India. Will Vicky Kaushal also follow in Katrina's footsteps and start his own brand? Vicky Kaushal told The Nod Mag, "The more I see how hard she works on every aspect of Kay Beauty, the more I feel that I'm not meant to run a business. At least not right now." The actor added, "Katrina has great business acumen. She is driven. I have tremendous respect for her. But if I get into a business, I would first have to learn the ropes."

"And it would have to be an extension of me. As of today, I only see myself being creatively stimulated [as an actor]," the actor said. While Vicky Kaushal may not be starting a brand soon, he leaves no opportunity to promote Kay Beauty. Just a few months ago, he turned into an unofficial ambassador for Kay Beauty on Instagram.

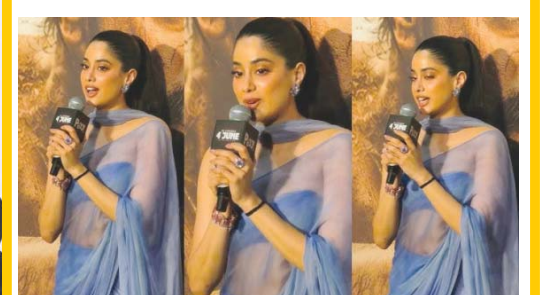
The actor took to his Instagram Stories to promote the brand's new product, in his signature cheeky style. Sharing a selfie holding a jelly lip and cheek wand after applying it to his face, he wrote, "Caffeinated cheeks for caffeinated me! What a wow," and tagged Katrina and Kay Beauty. He went on to joke, "I tried my best, but sadly, not a paid promotion."

The new mommy, Katrina, was quick to repost his story and react to it. She wrote, "Best for sleep-deprived dads." Their playful banter has grabbed everyone's attention online, leaving their fans in awe. In 2024, the actress shared a video in which Vicky told a stuffed toy, "Buddy, I think I just found the most hydrating lipstick." He also added, "It's not kay to be so good." When the camera flipped towards Katrina, she added, "But it's Kay to be you." Meanwhile, on the work front, Vicky Kaushal was last seen in Laxman Utekar's Chhaava, co-starring Rashmika Mandanna. He is currently shooting for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Love and War, which will reunite him with Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor.

Ram Charan's Fan Scares Janhvi Kapoor At Peddi Event; Shilpa Shinde Reacts To Harassment Allegations



A video from the recent promotional event of Peddi has gone viral on social media after a fan reportedly breached security and rushed towards actor Ram Charan during the gathering. The unexpected incident briefly created tension at the venue and left co-star Janhvi Kapoor visibly startled. Actress Shilpa Shinde, who became a household name after playing the gullible character of Angoori Bhabhi, has made a startling revelation about her dispute during her exit from the popular show 'Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain!'. She said that the sexual harassment allegations she had levelled against the show's producer were false. For months, rumours linking Trisha Krishnan and actor-politician Vijay have remained a hot topic among fans and on social media. With The buzz



surrounding their relationship has refused to die down. Trisha seemingly had a quiet message for those invested in the rumours surrounding her. Rhea Chakraborty faced a lot following the demise of Sushant Singh Rajput. The actress was subjected to serious social media scrutiny, but even after going through so much, she still chose to believe in love. In a recent interview, Rhea opened up about how she managed to not let the trauma override her life over the last few years. In 2022, businessman Lalit Modi took the internet by storm after he announced his relationship with Sushmita Sen. The former IPL chairman had shared a bunch of romantic pictures with the actress and referred to her as his "better half." Many on the internet believed that the two had tied the knot. However, he later clarified that they were only dating. Recently, in an interview, Lalit Modi spoke about his most-talked-about relationship with Sushmita.

Triptii Dimri

Says Madhuri Dixit Isn't Insecure, Adds 'I Want To Be Like Her'

Madhuri Dixit and Triptii Dimri have teamed up for the first time in Maa Behen, promising loads of laughter and thrills enough to keep the audience on the edge of their seats. As the Netflix film inches closer to its release date, Triptii shared her experience of working alongside the Dhak Dhak girl and showered praise on the actress for her humility and grounded nature.

After admiring the actress from afar, Triptii witnessed an even more beautiful side of Madhuri Dixit while working with her in Maa Behen. "I think there's so much that I've learned from ma'am because growing up, you've always seen her from a distance and admired her. But when you get to know her as a person, there's a completely different, very beautiful side to her," she shared and continued to praise Madhuri's generosity. "I want to be like her. Even if I become a big star of her stature, these are the qualities I would want in me - the humbleness, the kindness, the giving nature. No insecurities, nothing. She is like a zen person, on set and off set," she shared.



"Whatever you give out always comes back tenfold," she said while speaking about Madhuri's enduring popularity across generations and then added, "I'm a true believer of that. And I think this is a pure example of that in front of us. This is why she's so loved by all generations." Madhuri Dixit, when asked about how she would like her admirers to remember her after decades of winning hearts, said, "I want people to remember me by how I made them feel."

The Dhak Dhak girl also shared her thoughts on what makes a relationship last in today's world. "I think mutual respect and taking pride in each other's wins and being there for each other in your losses. There should be respect, love and everything should be there, but I think you should always be together in your goals and make sure that your kids and family are always taken care of, and you're there for each other as well," she said.



NEWS BOX

Nepali Climber Missing On Everest For 6 Days Found Alive

WASHINGTON. (Agency) A Nepali climbing guide who went missing on Mount Everest for six days and was feared dead has been found alive after crawling back to Base Camp, officials told AFP on Thursday. The experienced Hillary Dawa Sherpa vanished on the upper reaches of the world's highest mountain early on May 30. He was found on Thursday morning close to Base Camp by the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC), a Nepali team that helps set routes on Everest and clean up waste left behind. "He was crawling down," Pemba Sherpa of 8K Expeditions, which was overseeing search and rescue efforts, told AFP. "A helicopter has been sent to bring him to a hospital in Kathmandu." Climber Chris Thrall, a former British Royal Marine, said he successfully summited the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak with Sherpa around 5:00 pm on May 29. He posted a video message on Instagram on Wednesday mourning what he thought was the death of Sherpa.

He called Sherpa an "absolute gentle giant of a man and a true 'tiger of the mountains'", in a post that assumed the worst. Thrall described how on May 30 he had begun to descend from Camp Four -- at around 7,950m -- and just below the low-oxygen "death zone". "e said that as he descended, Sherpa stopped. "He sat down for a rest with his backpack, these guys carry huge loads," he said. "And I turned and I said, 'Hillary, are you okay, brother?' He said, 'Yes, yes, fine Chris, please go, go!' This is nothing new, you know, I'd go ahead, he'd go ahead." As Thrall went down he found a Polish climber who was struggling after running out of supplementary oxygen and had suffered frostbite. It had been a long summit push. What should have been five days to the summit and back took us 11 days, that's how challenging the conditions were," said Thrall. "So, do I go back for Sherpa, who's probably going to rock up and be fine, as he has done hundreds of times before?" he added. "Or do I help my fellow climber, who's got no oxygen, frostbite in his fingers, and obviously you're never far off hypothermia up there?"

Ohio University Reaches \$100 Million Settlement With 280 Sex Abuse Victims

world. (Agency) Ohio State University has reached a \$100 million settlement with nearly 300 former students who had accused the school's campus doctor of sexually assaulting them decades ago, the school and a lawyer for the victims said on Wednesday. The settlement with 279 of the 280 former students was ratified by the university's board on Wednesday. It followed years of litigation over accusations of decades of abuse by Richard Strauss.

The abuse occurred from 1978 to 1998, the year he retired from the faculty. "The mediation and its confidentiality are continuing as the parties work to finalize the details of the settlements, and additional information will be shared as appropriate," the school and a lawyer for the victims said in a joint statement. In February, the university reached eight additional settlements, bringing the total to 304 survivors and more than \$60 million. Strauss, who killed himself in 2005, was employed by Ohio State's athletic department and medical staff for nearly two decades. A 2019 report detailing the investigative findings said that Strauss had sexually abused at least 177 men, nearly all of whom were students, and that university staff who knew of the abuse failed to act. The abuse included groping and fondling of the students' genitals and other acts under the guise of a medical examination. News of the investigation and its findings prompted more than 500 plaintiffs to sue Ohio State, alleging they had been sexually abused by Strauss and that the school had shown deliberate indifference.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman Opposes US Approval For AI Model Releases

world. (Agency) OpenAI CEO Sam Altman will advocate against proposals that AI developers obtain US government approval before releasing new models to the public, according to a company statement on Wednesday, as part of a broader effort to shape regulation of the technology. Altman, who is visiting Washington this



week, will ask Congress to increase funding for artificial intelligence testing at the US Department of Commerce. The department already works with companies such as OpenAI and Anthropic to test their models. OpenAI wants the US government to grow that initiative, the company said in a statement, and add scientists with expertise in cybersecurity, biological weapons and national security, among other topics. Altman's visit to Washington coincides with a critical period for the company and the industry. OpenAI is preparing to confidentially file for an initial public offering, Reuters previously reported. Competitor Anthropic, which makes Claude, confidentially filed for a US IPO on Monday.

Israel, Lebanon renew ceasefire, agree to establish security zones free of Hezbollah

BEIRUT. (Agency) Israel and Lebanon agreed Wednesday to renew their fragile ceasefire and create a number of "pilot" security zones inside Lebanon from which Hezbollah militants would be banned. In a joint statement released after a fourth round of US-mediated talks at the State Department, the two sides said the ceasefire "is contingent on a complete cessation of Hezbollah fire and the evacuation of all Hezbollah operatives" from areas south of the Litani River, which is roughly 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of the northern Israel-Lebanon border. It was not immediately clear how the security zones would be established but the agreement calls for the Lebanese army to take full control of those areas. "These steps will enable progress towards a comprehensive peace and security agreement," the statement said. "All countries reaffirmed that the future of the relationship between Israel and Lebanon must be decided by the two sovereign governments. They rejected any attempt, by any state or non-state actor, to hold Lebanon's future hostage." Hezbollah is

not part of the Israel-Lebanon talks, which have been held at the ambassadorial level in Washington since the beginning of last month. "All parties condemned Iran's attacks on countries in the region, and ongoing activities that undermine stability throughout the Middle East, whether through support for proxies and all other acts of aggression," the statement said. A new round of discussions will be held during the week of June 22 with an eye toward "reaching a comprehensive agreement." Hostilities continue earlier in the day, US President Donald Trump said he wanted to separate talks on the conflict in Lebanon and those on the war with Iran. Tehran, however, insists the conflicts are linked and its Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned that any attack on Beirut would trigger a "full-scale resumption" of war. The Israeli military said it intercepted a "hostile aircraft" and two projectiles that crossed into Israeli territory from Lebanon on Wednesday. Hezbollah, for its part, said

that "in response to the Israeli enemy army's violation of the ceasefire", its fighters targeted soldiers in northern Israel with a rocket barrage.

"not accept a partial ceasefire". Paramedics among the Israeli strikes on Wednesday was one targeting a car on the main highway out of the capital, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) said.



A truce to halt the fighting in Lebanon was meant to take hold on April 17, but has never been observed, with both sides justifying their ongoing attacks by the other's alleged violations. Senior Hezbollah official Mahmud Qomati had told AFP on Tuesday that the group would

The NNA also reported strikes on more than 20 locations in the south, some after Israel's military warned residents of several villages to evacuate. The health ministry said an Israeli attack on Al-Hawsh near the city of Tyre killed four Syrians and two Palestinians. But an Israeli military spokesperson told AFP's Jerusalem bureau that "we are not aware of any such attack having occurred in the area". The Lebanese health ministry said an Israeli strike elsewhere in the south targeted an ambulance, killing two paramedics from the Risala Scouts Association, which is affiliated with Hezbollah's ally the Amal movement. The ministry circulated images of a badly damaged ambulance, with medical masks spilling out of the vehicle and scattered on the road.

Israeli strikes kill at least eight in Gaza: civil defence

Despite a truce technically in effect since October, daily violence has rocked the Gaza Strip, over half of which is under Israeli military control in defiance of the ceasefire's terms.

Shati refugee camp to the west of Gaza City, said spokesman Mahmoud Bassal. Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City also reported 15 people wounded in the strikes, he added. Despite a truce technically in effect since October, daily violence has rocked the Gaza



Strip, over half of which is under Israeli military control in defiance of the ceasefire's terms. Israel has killed at

least 936 people since the ceasefire began, according to Gaza's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority and whose figures are considered reliable by the UN. Both Hamas and Israel accuse each other of violating the ceasefire. The first phase of the truce involved the release of the last Israeli hostages held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinians detained by Israel. A transition to the second phase of the ceasefire, which was supposed to involve Hamas's disarmament and a gradual withdrawal of the Israeli army, has been stalled for months. Last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he had ordered the military to take control of 70 percent of the Gaza Strip. The latest head of Hamas's armed wing in Gaza, Mohammed Odeh, was killed in an Israeli strike last week, a month after

US House votes to curb Trump on Iran war as talks stall

World. (Agency) The US House of Representatives has backed a resolution seeking to halt American military action in Iran, a symbolic move that deals a political blow to President Donald Trump as efforts to find a deal with Tehran stagnate. Weeks of complicated talks marked by sharp rhetoric and flare-ups of violence have not managed to reach a deal to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which is essential to oil supplies.

Washington and Tehran have sent divergent messages in recent days, with Iran saying Wednesday "no tangible progress" was made, while Trump again voiced optimism by telling reporters at the White House "it could happen... over the weekend." But in the latest episode of violence, Kuwaiti officials said renewed hostilities on Wednesday included an Iranian drone strike on a passenger terminal at Kuwait international airport that killed one person and wounded 63. In the wake of the flare-ups, four lawmakers from Trump's Republican party joined



Democrats on Wednesday to vote 215-208 in favour of the public rebuke. The resolution was largely symbolic, as the US president can veto the measure if it gains Senate approval. "This is a loud and unambiguous message to Donald Trump on behalf of the American people: it's time to end his deeply unpopular and illegal war of choice in Iran," Democrats posted on X. At a congressional hearing, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Iran's highly enriched uranium stockpiles were at the centre of discussions with Tehran. Washington insists Tehran must turn over its near-weapons-grade enriched uranium, agree to curb its nuclear activities and re-open the Strait of Hormuz, the key shipping channel for Gulf oil and gas, for any peace agreement to take hold. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said lines of communication with the United States were still open but warned that any Israeli attack on the Lebanese capital Beirut as part of its campaign against Iran-backed Hezbollah would trigger a "full-scale resumption" of the conflict. "Communications with the Americans have not been cut off, and messages have been exchanged regarding the need to stop aggression against Beirut, but no tangible progress has been made in the negotiation process," the Tasnim news agency quoted Araghchi as telling Lebanon's Al Mayadeen TV. "Any attack on Beirut will have grave consequences and will lead to a full-scale resumption of the war," he said. "Our armed forces are ready to strike Israel if it attacks Beirut."

US military attacks Iran's Qeshm Island; Tehran targets Gulf countries

SEOUL. (Agency) North Korea on Thursday unveiled a new facility to produce nuclear bomb fuels, with leader Kim Jong Un announcing plans to bolster the country's nuclear forces "at an exponential rate." The official Korean Central News Agency said the facility used "more sophisticated technology" but didn't provide further details, such as where it is located and when it began its operation. State media photos showed what appeared to be a large centrifuge hall, indicating the plant is likely used to enrich weapons-grade uranium. The disclosure of the new facility is in line with Kim's repeated vows to expand its nuclear weapons program to cope with what he called escalating U.S.-led military threats. KCNA said Kim visited the nuclear facility on Wednesday to learn about its operation indices and its long-term production plan. KCNA quoted Kim as saying the urgency for bolstering up the country's nuclear war deterrent, both in quality and quantity, has grown because of confrontations with "the most ferocious enemies," an apparent reference to the United States

and South Korea. Kim cited other unspecified threats and crises as a need to boost North Korea's nuclear capability, it said. Kim claimed that



North Korea's weapons-grade nuclear materials production capacity has more than doubled compared with five years ago, according to KCNA. There are virtually no ways to independently verify his claim. After a meeting at the facility, Kim said that he and other top officials "confirmed the order of priority for implementing the ambitious future plan designed to beef up our state's nuclear forces at an exponential rate." KCNA said. KCNA photos showed Kim walking through narrow aisles lined with dense rows of silver

tubes and pipes, in what appeared to be a centrifuge hall. Another image showed him speaking with senior officials in a meeting room, where a blurred graphic depicting a cone-shaped object was spread across a table. It wasn't immediately clear whether the graphic showed a warhead design. The facility's revelation came less than two years after North Korea unveiled another covert uranium-enrichment plant in September 2024, in its first public disclosure of such a facility since showing one at the country's main Yongbyon nuclear complex to visiting American scholars in 2010. Kim delivered a similar message during his visit to that facility in 2024, calling for an increase in the number of centrifuges to "exponentially" expand the country's nuclear arsenal and urging the development of more advanced centrifuge systems. Last September, South Korean Unification Minister Chung Dong-young said that North Korea was operating a total of four uranium enrichment facilities including the Yongbyon complex, and that they were running everyday.

Over 700 Whales, Dolphins Massacred In Barbaric Viking-Era Grind On Faroe Islands

world. (Agency) More than 700 whales and dolphins were killed near the Faroe Islands during the annual tradition called the grindadráp or grind, turning the sea crimson red. The locals used hooks and knives to herd and beach the Atlantic white-sided dolphins and long-finned pilot whales into shallow bays. Spectators, including children, watched from the shoreline as the animals were horrifically slaughtered and their bodies slashed open. Afterwards, the carcasses were piled together, hauled off, and carved up for distribution. According to Sea Shepherd, a global environmental activist NGO, the killings took place across three hunts on Wednesday (May 27), just 200 miles north of Scotland. 402 pilot whales and four bottlenose dolphins were killed in Torshavn, 168 white-sided dolphins were killed in Skalabotnur, and 132 white-sided dolphins were killed in Hvalvik, taking the total to 706. Reports indicate that it took hunters a long time to kill the animals, which extended the period during which the stranded animals suffered in pain and distress. "The scale of the



killings is without precedent, surpassing two-thirds of all marine mammals killed on the islands in the entire previous year," the NGO stated. "The hunts descended into chaos as whalers admitted there was a shortage of spinal lances, which are mandatory for killing dolphins. Multiple marine mammals were instead killed using knives, only leaving the animals stressed for an extended period before bleeding to

death." Valentina Crast, campaign director for the Faroe Islands at Sea Shepherd, said "nobody can ever justify" the level of intense suffering that was inflicted on the innocent animals. She urged governments across Europe to ban the annual massacre. Dolphins were killed without the mandatory equipment. Animals were crushed against rocks and struck by boat propellers. And when a third, secret grind

began, one deliberately hidden from public channels, marine conservationists were arrested for documenting it," said Crast. Viking-Era Tradition Framed by supporters as a 1,000-year-old Viking-era tradition, the mass slaughter of whales has sparked fierce backlash from animal rights activists, who consider it a barbaric and outdated practice unnecessary for modern survival. However, the Faroese state, an autonomous territory of Denmark, defends the tradition, stating it is a vital cultural practice that provides food for the community. According to Ocean Care, a day before the mass killings, the Faroese Parliament on May 26 chose to rewrite the Animal Welfare Act to exclude hunted dolphins from its protection. "Removing an activity from the protection of the law does not make it humane," said Mark Simmonds, Director of Science for OceanCare. "What the Faroese Parliament has done is not a defence of tradition, it is a deliberate choice to place these animals outside the reach of legal protection, hours before a very large hunt takes place in the capital of the islands."