



Delhi CM's push to get youth to play active role in nation-building

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta urged over 6,000 young achievers at the Youth for Viksit Bharat Convention to harness their talent and energy for nation-building, describing the youth as India's greatest strength in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Bengaluru.(Agency)
Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Saturday urged young Indians to become drivers of change and active contributors to nation-building while addressing the 'Youth for Viksit Bharat - MY Bharat Youth Convention' at Thyagaraj Stadium.

Calling the youth the country's greatest strength, she encouraged them to channel their energy, talent and innovation towards building a developed India by 2047.

The convention, organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, brought together more than 6,000 young participants from across the country, including entrepreneurs, sportspersons, artists, content creators, UPSC aspirants and other achievers.

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya, Youth Affairs

Secretary Pallavi Jain Govil and several distinguished personalities from various fields were also present at the event.

Addressing the gathering, Gupta described the convention as a celebration of India's

excellence across entrepreneurship, sports, arts, governance and education.

"When young entrepreneurs, athletes, artists, public representatives, content creators and those who have succeeded in highly competitive examinations such as the UPSC come together on one stage, it becomes a powerful reflection of India's diverse talent and limitless potential," she said. The Chief Minister praised the initiative and congratulated Mandaviya for creating a platform that not only recognises young achievers but also encourages them to contribute meaningfully to the country's progress.

She said the convention demonstrated that India's youth are prepared to shoulder greater responsibilities in shaping the nation's future.

Highlighting India's demographic advantage, Gupta said the country's young population remains its greatest strength.

She noted that Indian youth have made significant contributions in fields ranging from sports and entrepreneurship to technology, arts, content creation, education and public administration. Their achievements, she said, are driven by hard work, discipline and determination.

Urging young people to become active partners in national development, Gupta said that every step taken by an individual contributes to the progress of the country as a whole.

She stressed that the youth would play the most crucial role in realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat-2047'.

Delhi CM also added that while not everyone may get an opportunity to die for the country, everyone has the opportunity to live for it and contribute to its growth and prosperity.

She expressed confidence that India's youth would emerge as the strongest pillar in the journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047.



youth power and said the presence of talented young achievers from diverse backgrounds reflected the country's vast potential.

She remarked that the event felt like "stars on earth", with participants representing

AMC Wakes Up Only After Delhi Takes Notice: New SOP Says Action Within 6 Hours Only After Five Complaints From Same Area

Smart City Ahmedabad's Development Claims Under Scrutiny as Residents Battle Contaminated Water Crisis

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Mekan Mehsana . The much-publicized claims of Ahmedabad being a World Heritage City and a Smart City have come under serious scrutiny amid growing complaints of contaminated drinking water across several parts of the city. Residents have alleged that sewage-mixed and chemically contaminated water has been flowing through municipal pipelines for an extended period, raising concerns about public health and the efficiency of civic administration. Despite repeated complaints from citizens, critics allege that the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) remained largely unresponsive. However, after the issue reportedly



attracted attention at higher levels and sparked wider political discussion, the civic body has now announced a new Standard Operating Pro-

cedure (SOP) aimed at addressing complaints of contaminated water. Under the newly introduced SOP, AMC officials will be required to resolve complaints within six hours if at least five complaints are received from the same locality regarding contaminated water supply. The decision, however, has generated fresh criticism from residents and civic activists. Citizens are questioning whether action should depend on a minimum number of complaints and whether a single affected family is not reason enough for immediate intervention. Many argue that public health risks should be addressed as soon as the first complaint is received rather than waiting for multiple house-

holds to report similar issues. The controversy has also triggered political debate. Critics point out that despite Ahmedabad being governed by the ruling party for years and despite massive municipal budgets allocated for infrastructure and public services, several neighborhoods continue to face basic issues such as unsafe drinking water. Public anger was visible in various parts of the city, where residents, including women carrying empty water containers, staged protests against the alleged failure of civic authorities. Demonstrators raised slogans against local representatives and questioned the accountability of elected officials.

He's commendable: Ex-Bengal CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharya's wife on Suvendu Adhikari

Mira Bhattacharjee praised the new BJP government in West Bengal for quickly acting on its election promises. She also defended the Left Front's record and said Bengal's revival would be welcomed.

Kolkata .(Agency)

Mira Bhattacharjee, wife of former West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, has praised the newly elected BJP government in the state, saying its swift implementation of election promises has left a positive impression on her.

In an exclusive interview with Aaj Tak Bangla, Mira Bhattacharjee said the new administration had moved quickly to fulfil commitments made to voters during the election campaign. "The way the new government has worked within just a few days is highly commendable. I am happy to see that they are implementing their promises so quickly," she said.

Congratulating the government led by Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, she pointed to the rollout of welfare measures such as free bus travel for women as evidence of its intent to act on its promises. "The new government is making a sincere effort to implement the promises it made before the elections.



HYDRAA inspired by Hitler: Revanth Reddy's remark on encroachment drive triggers row

Speaking on Saturday at a conclave in Bengaluru, Reddy asserted that the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) drew its name and concept from the German dictator's alleged fondness for the word 'Hydra.'

New Delhi .(Agency)

Telangana Chief Minister and Congress leader Revanth Reddy has sparked a major political row after claiming that the name of the state's anti-encroachment task force was inspired by Adolf Hitler. The remarks drew sharp criticism from opposition forces, including the BJP and the Bharat Rashtira Sanhita (BRS).

Speaking on Saturday at a conclave in Bengaluru, Reddy asserted that the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) drew its name and concept from the German dictator's alleged fondness for the word 'Hydra.'

"Hydra, the word is Hitler's favourite word. His



core team was called Hydra, who could assassinate anyone. So, I have taken inspiration from Hitler and named it Hydra," the Chief Minister stated during an interview at the event. Historical experts quickly noted that there is no

factual evidence supporting Reddy's assertion linking Hitler's inner circle to the word "Hydra," pointing out that the term actually referenced a British Royal Air Force bombing mission against Nazi Germany.

EMERGENCY MINDSET OUT AGAIN IN PUBLIC, SAID SHEHZAD POONAWALLA

Following the remark, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla launched a blistering attack against the Congress Party and the Telangana Chief Minister.

The BJP leader accused Reddy of displaying a dangerous Hitler and Emergency mindset and questioned whether Congress leader Rahul Gandhi would take action against him. In a post

Can't abandon my Hindu identity or faith, says Karnataka CM DK Shivakumar

Tumakuru.(Agency)

Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday said that he cannot abandon his Hindu religion and set aside his identity. He underlined that he respected all religions and that observing Hindu rituals during his oath-taking ceremony was a reflection of personal faith rather than politics.

"Politics is not important to me. What matters is the relationship between an individual and God. Temples and faith are about that relationship. I have reverence for institutions of all religion, whether Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists or Hindus," he told reporters when asked about following Hindu traditions and rituals during his oath-taking ceremony on

June 3.

The chief minister said people of every faith observed religious customs and sought blessings on important occasions, adding that he had similarly sought the blessings of all religious leaders before assuming responsibility for the state.

"Can I stop any religion in this state? Can I change my name and abandon my faith? No one can simply give up their religion, irrespective of what faith they belong to," he said.

Referring to the development of the region, Shivakumar said discussions had been held with local bodies and the Kadu Siddeshwara Math on further improvements required in the



area. "Development works worth Rs 35 crore are already under way in the sacred Mallaghatta region. We have discussed with representatives of local bodies and the Kadu

Siddeshwara Math authorities about what more needs to be done for the area's development. Necessary assistance will be provided after taking everyone's suggestions," he said.

The CM said he had visited the historic Gangadhareshwara Temple at Mallaghatta several times over the years and described the area as a place that brought him peace and happiness. "I have been observing this region for the last 25 years, and whenever I come here, I feel peace and happiness. Several development works, including a canal system, community hall and guest house, have been undertaken for the benefit of farmers and the surrounding population," he said.

Karnataka CM DK Shivakumar reaffirmed his Hindu faith, saying it is a matter of personal belief rather than politics, and that the Hindu rituals performed during his oath-taking ceremony reflected his faith, not a political message.

News box

NSG commando suffers bullet wound 'during drill', dies

Gurgaon.(Agency)

An NSG commando died after suffering a gunshot wound during a training exercise at the force's Manesar campus on Friday, sources said. The constable-rank commando was identified as Rahul Singh Jaggi (32), a resident of Roorkee in Uttarakhand. According to a source, Jaggi was undergoing a training session on combat firing, during which he sustained the injury. "The family members of the deceased have been informed in keeping with the procedures. Police were also informed and are conducting their investigation," the source said. Jaggi, sources said, was rushed for medical help soon after the incident, but could not be revived. Police suspect the injury may have been accidental. "Details of the incident are being examined. The body has been shifted to the mortuary and the family was informed," a police officer said. An autopsy was ordered, but its report is awaited. An internal inquiry is also expected to be conducted to establish how the injury occurred and whether safety protocols were followed.

Repeated calls to the DCP, ACP and station house officer of Manesar did not elicit a response. The NSG, headquartered in Manesar, had not issued an official statement at the time of filing this report, and attempts to reach senior officials for confirmation and details were unsuccessful.

MCG camps closer home for tax payments, birth certs & Ids

Gurgaon.(Agency)

MCG on Saturday launched citizen facilitation centres (CFCs) and common service centres (CSCs) in 10 wards across the city, aiming to make services more accessible. Residents can use them for services such as property tax payments, Aadhaar-linked services, birth and death certificates, and more.

The centres have been set up in wards 2, 3, 10, 13, 18, 22, 23, 25, 29 and 30, including the mayor's camp office. The civic body currently has only three CFCs located in its offices. Mayor Raj Rani Malhotra inaugurated the centres from the mayor's camp office in Bhim Nagar in the presence of MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya, councillors and senior officials. Speaking at the launch, Malhotra said that the corporation is committed to delivering simpler, time-bound services and that ward-level centres will make essential services more accessible to residents. Commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said, "The centres will function as single-window service points and support faster and more transparent delivery of civic services through digital platforms."

Additional municipal commissioner Ankita Chaudhary said trained personnel were deployed at the centres to assist residents and facilitate timely service delivery.

Officials said the initiative is expected to strengthen the city's ward-level service delivery system and improve access to govt services through decentralised and digital mechanisms, and would also reduce the footfall at the MCG offices. Residents welcomed the move. "Earlier, even simple tasks meant taking time off work and visiting municipal offices. Having these services available at the ward level will save residents a lot of time and make government services much more accessible," said Lalit Suraj Bholra, a resident of Sector 9A. "Senior citizens, homemakers, and working professionals often struggle to travel to municipal offices for basic services. A facilitation centre in the ward would make these processes more convenient and citizen-friendly," said Ravi Kumar, a resident of DLF-4.

Highrise fires reveal condo safety grey areas after handover is done

Gurgaon.(Agency)

When flames and smoke billowed from a tower at Ivy County on Friday, the incident rattled residents far beyond the Noida condominium. For many living in the NCR's rapidly growing high-rises, the fire underscored an uncomfortable reality: while residential towers are rising ever higher, the systems meant to protect them have not always kept pace.

Residents, welfare bodies and safety experts say the latest blaze has exposed familiar concerns — from lax enforcement of fire norms to firefighting equipment that often cannot reach the upper floors of the region's tallest buildings. The incident has renewed calls for tougher oversight, regular audits and investment. Under Noida Authority rules, a fire NOC is a non-negotiable precondition for obtaining a completion certificate or occupancy certificate from the development authority. The NOC is issued only after a fire inspection verifies that the building complies with the National Building Code and local building by-laws. Inspectors assess active firefighting systems — automatic sprinklers, wet risers, down-comers, and fire hose reels — alongside smoke and heat detectors, fire alarm panels, dedicated underground and overhead water storage tanks, fire pumps, clear escape routes, fire staircases, refuge areas, and emergency lighting. In UP, as in most states, residential buildings are required to renew their fire NOC every three to five years, with renewal requiring updated maintenance logs and a fresh inspection filed through the state fire service portal. In practice, however, compliance effectively ends at the point of initial handover to the apartment owners' association. Residents say follow-through on fire system upkeep after that milestone becomes sporadic and largely reactive. "Fire NOCs seem to be a joke. Even after inspections, no concrete action is taken against builders or AOAs," said Amit Gupta, a resident of Prateek Wisteria in Sector 77. Investment in modern rescue technology. Residential highrises in Noida routinely rise 25 to 30 floors, but the city's four hydraulic ladders can only reach up to 42 metres (14 storeys). A resident of Ivy County's Tower B2 said that while the complex's fire systems had functioned during the Friday morning fire and helped contain the blaze, the structural gap in the fire department's aerial reach was again put to the test. "Given the amount a homebuyer invests in premium apartments — between Rs 2 and 3.5 crore in a complex like this — it is still appalling that mandatory safety norms are not enforced," he said. Evacuation faster and more hazardous.

Armed gang holds family hostage, flees with Rs 9 lakh

Gurgaon:(Agency)

Four armed men stormed into a first-floor house in Palam Vihar's Sector 23 after disabling a CCTV camera in the early hours of Thursday, held a family hostage at knifepoint and fled with jewellery, cash and valuables worth about Rs 8-9 lakh. Inside the same three-storey building, the houseowner's elderly parents on the ground floor and a senior citizen tenant upstairs did not realise a robbery was unfolding. The house belongs to Vikas Jain (48), a product compliance consultant and son of a retired Army colonel. Police said the incident took place between 2.20am and 3.15am. Jain said the gang approached from the rear, using a neighbouring house beside a vacant plot to reach his balcony. CCTV footage showed one of the men doing a quick survey around 2.20am before pushing a rear camera towards a wall.

"One of them turned the CCTV camera

towards a wall and began cutting the iron grille. They spent nearly 40 minutes at it. The room they entered through was vacant, and the AC noise made the cutting sound feeble," Jain said. After slicing through the grille of a rear window, the men climbed into an unoccupied room and moved deeper into the flat. Jain said four had handkerchiefs tied across their faces and were dressed in T-shirts, lowers and sports shoes. They carried a knife, screwdrivers and pipe wrenches, police said. The intruders first reached the room where Jain's wife (45) and their daughter (11) were asleep. "They held my wife and daughter at knifepoint and forced my wife to remove the jewellery she was wearing. They kept demanding to know where other valuables were kept." The gang took diamond earrings, rings, bangles and a nose pin from her, then rummaged through the house and found more jewellery stored in

pouches in a dressing table. Police said the stolen items included five diamond rings, four sets of diamond earrings, a gold mangalsutra, three gold chains



and other ornaments. They also took about Rs 5,000 from Jain's wallet, cash from a ladies' purse, and some identity documents. Jain, who was asleep in another room, was woken up and forced into the room where his wife and daughter were being held.

The robbers kept all three under watch as they continued searching. "They looked disappointed and kept asking where more valuables were kept. We told them we are a small, non-business family. These ornaments were our savings over decades," Jain said. The building has three storeys — Jain's first-floor home, his parents on the ground floor, and a senior citizen tenant on the second floor. The third floor is vacant. Despite spending over an hour on the premises, the gang targeted only Jain's floor and did not enter the other portions. Before leaving, they snatched the family's mobile phones to stop them from calling for help and tossed them onto the rear balcony. Twice, Jain said, a PCR vehicle passed the stretch during the ordeal. "We heard the police siren twice close to our house. We couldn't raise an alarm, because they were armed and threatened to hurt our

CID Arrests Manhar Patel in Alleged Multi-Crore Godhra Municipality Scam

Alleged Fake Bills, Bogus Cheques, and Misuse of Political Influence Under Investigation

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Godhra, Gujarat: In a major development, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID Crime) has arrested local political figure Manhar Patel in connection with an alleged multi-crore financial irregularity case linked to the Godhra Municipality. The arrest follows an extensive investigation into allegations of fraudulent billing, forged financial documents, and the alleged misuse of political influence to facilitate the release of public funds. According to sources familiar with the investigation, Patel is accused of orchestrating a scheme involving fake agencies, fabricated invoices, and questionable financial transactions related to various municipal development projects. Investigators allege that several payments were approved for works that either remained incomplete or were never executed on the ground. Fake Billing Network: Investigators claim that sub-

stantial amounts were allegedly disbursed against invoices submitted for projects that reportedly had little or no physical execution. Cheque Manipulation: The probe has reportedly uncovered evidence suggesting that municipal funds were transferred through questionable cheque transactions and accounting procedures. Misuse of Political Influence: Officials are examining allegations that political connections were allegedly used to influence decision-making

and facilitate the approval of payments. CID Probe Intensifies: Following multiple complaints regarding financial irregularities within the municipality, the matter was handed over to CID Crime for detailed investigation. The agency reportedly examined municipal records, financial documents, accounting files, and project-related paperwork before taking action. Officials involved in the probe stated that the investigation uncovered sufficient preliminary ev-

idence to warrant Patel's arrest. Further questioning is expected to focus on identifying additional individuals who may have been involved in the alleged financial misconduct. Political Reactions and Public Response: The arrest has generated significant political discussion across Panchmahal district. Local residents and civic activists have welcomed the investigation, stating that public funds must be protected irrespective of political affiliations. Many citizens

have called for a transparent inquiry and strict action against all individuals found responsible for any misuse of taxpayer money. Further Investigation Underway: CID Crime is expected to seek custodial interrogation as part of its ongoing investigation. Authorities believe further questioning could reveal additional details regarding the alleged financial network and the possible involvement of other officials or associates connected to the municipality.

Ghaziabad to start eviction drive in illegal colonies along Hindon

Ghaziabad:(Agency)

Days after the UP govt informed the National Green Tribunal that 258 unauthorised colonies in Ghaziabad were discharging untreated sewage daily into the Hindon, district magistrate Ravindra Kumar Mandar on Friday directed officials to launch a coordinated drive to identify and remove encroachments along the river. The directions, issued at a meeting with officials from the Loni SDM's office, irrigation department, GDA and municipal bodies, require teams to cross-reference revenue records, irrigation data and maps against ground conditions to pinpoint illegal occupations. In an affidavit, filed by state chief secretary Shashi Prakash Goyal on April 28, UP had told the NGT that 888 unauthorised colonies across six districts — 30% of them in Ghaziabad — discharge nearly 40 million litres of sewage daily into the Hindon. The affidavit was submitted in compliance with an NGT order dated Dec 9 last year. The affidavit also flagged 51 open storm drains in the basin carrying an estimated 1,067 MLD of water, sludge, industrial discharge and sewage into the river and its tributaries. It also said the colonies —



which collectively house a population of over 3.8 lakh — are unauthorised, they lack planned drainage infrastructure and allowed most sewage flows into open or stormwater drains before reaching the river.

At Friday's meeting, Mandar reviewed the status of encroachments along the

riverbanks and original riverbed land of both the Yamuna and Hindon.

"Officials have been instructed to identify illegal occupations by matching revenue records, irrigation data and available maps with ground conditions. Effective action must be taken against illegal occupations on riverbed land in

accordance with rules. No form of illegal construction or encroachment in river areas will be tolerated," he said. Karhera, Ator-Nagla and Kanawani have consistently been identified by officials as among the most heavily encroached stretches of the Hindon floodplain in the district, but enforcement has so far been piecemeal. Any large-scale anti-encroachment drive along the riverbank awaits completion of floodplain demarcation. Mandar, meanwhile, also ordered a special campaign for environmental conservation and rejuvenation of the two rivers, calling them crucial to the region's ecological balance. Officials have been directed to submit regular progress reports to the district administration.

Clearing encroachments from river areas was among the govt's priorities, DM said, adding that unimpeded river flow was essential to containing flood risk ahead of monsoon. "Obstruction to the natural flow of rivers increases the possibility of economic losses and danger to residents during monsoon-related disasters, making it necessary to remove encroachments on priority," he added.

Andhra farmers to get quality seeds at subsidised rates as Kharif season nears

The distribution drive has already commenced with green manure seeds, which are in demand among farmers for improving soil fertility and enhancing crop productivity.

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

With the Kharif season fast approaching, the State has initiated a comprehensive seed distribution programme to ensure that farmers have timely access to quality seeds at subsidised rates. Through the network of Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs) across the State, the government is making arrangements to supply seeds for major Kharif crops well ahead of the sowing season.

As part of the State Development Plan for 2026-27, the government has allocated Rs. 240 crore for the distribution of 6.72 lakh quintals of seeds through the Andhra Pradesh State Seeds Development Corporation Limited (APSSDCL).

Officials said the programme is aimed at supporting farmers with quality inputs and facilitating smooth agricultural operations during the season.

The distribution drive has already commenced with green manure seeds, which are in demand among farmers for improving soil fertility and enhancing crop productivity.

Against the proposed distribution of 0.92 lakh quintals, APSSDCL has so far positioned 47,312 quintals across various districts. Of this, around 11,000 quintals have already been distributed to farmers. The seeds are being supplied at a 50 per cent subsidy, and distribution is



continuing through RSKs. Groundnut seed distribution is also underway. The government has planned to supply 2.21 lakh quintals of groundnut seed under a 40 per cent subsidy programme. So far, 4,398 quintals have been positioned by

APSSDCL and are being supplied to farmers through designated centres.

The government has proposed the distribution of 1.62 lakh quintals of paddy seed through RSKs.

As many as 39,842 quintals have already been positioned at various centres across the State. As per the information, paddy seed distribution will commence next week to meet the requirements of farmers preparing for transplantation and cultivation activities. Apart from paddy, groundnut arrangements have also been completed for the supply of pulses and millet seeds.

Distribution of these seeds is scheduled to begin from June 15, ensuring that farmers

cultivating rainfed and diversified crops have access to quality seed material in time for sowing.

App-based fertiliser sales in State from tomorrow

The AP Agriculture department will introduce app-based sales of urea and DAP fertilisers across the State from Monday, with all transactions to be carried out through the APAIMS App. The move is aimed at ensuring transparent distribution. State Director of Agriculture Manazir Jeelani Samoon said the new system would be implemented in 24 districts, while Krishna and Kakinada districts are exempted as they are part of Centre's fertiliser app pilot project.

Short news

Karnataka-Telangana land dispute leaves Shadipur villagers in limbo

KALABURAGI. (Agency)

A land dispute involving villagers of Karnataka and Telangana has affected the livelihood of the SC/ST community at Shadipur in Chincholi taluk.

The Karnataka government had sanctioned 188 acres of land (Survey No 126 and 127) of Shadipur village to 54 people, including SC/STs, land holders and ex-servicemen at Shadipur in 2002. They were also given 'pahani' (Record of Rights, Tenancy and Crops -- RTC) in their names.

However, neighbouring villagers of Umla Naik tanda from Vikarabad district in Telangana dispute this. A team of officials, including Assistant Commissioner of Sedam Prabhu Reddy (under whose jurisdiction Chincholi taluk falls), Chincholi Tahsildar Subbanna Jamakhandi, Deputy Director of Land Records Mahesh and police officials, visited Shadipur village to demarcate the land on June 3. But the villagers from Umla Naik tanda threw stones, saying the land belonged to them.

Villagers of Shadipur told the officials that mining of red soil is going on illegally on Survey No 126. The team had returned without carrying out its work. Sources said the Chincholi tahsildar has written to the Sedam assistant commissioner, seeking a joint survey of the land in dispute by officials of revenue, land records and mining departments of Karnataka and Telangana. Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Ikram Shariff told TNSE that the dispute will be resolved through talks. If needed, the issue would be brought to the notice of the revenue commissioner, he added.

In Gujarat, Parsi woman married to Muslim 'denied funeral rights' by their communities given Hindu cremation

Surat. (Agency)

A 55-year-old Parsi woman who was married to a Muslim man and died on Thursday after a brief illness earlier this week was cremated as per Hindu rituals after her own community and her husband's allegedly denied the family permission for their respective customary funeral rituals.

Sources told The Indian Express on Saturday that the woman was married to a 70-year-old retired professor of Gujarati literature who hails from Junagadh but settled in Navsari nearly 35 years ago.

The professor had taught at a local college affiliated to the Veer Narmad South Gujarat University where he met the Parsi woman, who was then studying for a Bachelor's degree in Gujarati language in the same college. She hailed from Vansda town near Navsari and her father worked in a private firm while her mother was a government school teacher in Navsari. The professor and the student grew close and decided to get married.

A close family source said that when she told her parents about marrying the professor who was nearly 15 years older than her, the parents initially did not agree for fear of being excommunicated.

"Seeing her adamant nature, her parents gave in and the couple married," the source said. The couple lived in a house in Navsari town, but the woman was not allowed to take part in any of the Parsi community's social gatherings.

Amaravati Runners inspire Vijayawada residents to embrace fitness, friendship and active ageing

VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

At dawn, when most of Vijayawada is still asleep, the city's roads belong to a different crowd: one where strangers become friends, setbacks become motivation, and age proves to be just a number.

What started in 2016 with just five fitness enthusiasts has grown into Amaravati Runners, a community of nearly 300 members today. Their bicycling events, and social initiatives have not only transformed mindsets but also proved that fitness can be fun.

For 66-year-old cyclist and Amaravati Runners President Ramesh Ravi, the journey is personal. A decade ago, a series of knee surgeries led to complications that affected his spine. Doctors warned that he could be permanently confined to a wheelchair. Yet today, he is back on the saddle, motivating fellow riders with the belief that limitations are often more mental than physical. He says "age is just a number" and firmly believes that 60 is a golden age, "when responsibilities reduce



in life, people should start living for themselves instead of withdrawing from it".

Another member who embodies this spirit is 70-year-old Basaveshwara Rao. A cardiac patient, he took up endurance activities after retirement. What began as morning walks evolved into marathons and cycling events. Its influence goes beyond fitness. Nishikant, a member who oversees bicycling events, recalls joining Amaravati Runners in 2022. An Audax-style endurance cycling enthusiast, he says that many participants in these events have little to no knowledge of endurance sports.

Mumbai is getting a pod taxi. But can it actually fix BKC's last-mile nightmare?

Mumbai. (Agency)

Every weekday morning, thousands of commuters pour out of Kurla and Bandra railway stations and head towards Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai's premier business district. For many, the train journey is only half the battle.

The last few kilometres often mean long queues for shared autorickshaws, arguments over fares, packed vehicles, and traffic-clogged roads leading into one of the city's busiest commercial hubs. For the four to six lakh people estimated to enter BKC every day, the "last mile" remains one of Mumbai's most persistent transport headaches. It is this problem that the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) believes it has found a solution for.

By 2028, if all goes according to plan, BKC



will become home to India's first large-scale pod taxi network, a personalised rapid transit (PRT) system in which small automated pods carry passengers directly to their destination. The system promises air-conditioned rides above traffic, minimal waiting time and direct connectivity within the business district. But while transport planners broadly agree that BKC suffers from a severe last-mile

connectivity problem, they remain divided over whether pod taxis are the answer.

Why BKC?

On paper, BKC appears tailor-made for a pod taxi system. Unlike suburban railways or metro lines designed to move large numbers of people over long distances, pod taxis are intended to solve short-distance connectivity gaps. BKC's road network is congested, its pedestrian infrastructure remains uneven, and much of the area's daily traffic consists of commuters travelling only a few kilometres between transit stations and office complexes.

The initial phase of the project will cover 3.36 km with eight stations connecting major entry points and commercial destinations.

Came to spend vacation, teen dies after drowning at Juhu beach

Juhu Beach drowning incident claims the life of a 16-year-old UP teenager who was visiting Mumbai for vacation when strong waves swept him away.

Mumbai. (Agency)

A 16-year-old boy from Uttar Pradesh, who had come to Mumbai for a vacation, drowned after being swept away by strong waves at Juhu Beach on Friday evening. Despite rescue attempts by his friends, the teenager could not be saved.

"My cousin brother and I were swimming near Sarfaraz Khan at Juhu Beach on Friday. We were not very far from the shore when suddenly huge waves started hitting one after another. Sarfaraz was dragged deeper into the sea. He screamed for help and raised his hand. We tried to rescue him, but the current was so strong that we too began drowning. Somehow, we managed to push ourselves back towards the shore and survived," said 23-year-old Takalluf Khan, a friend of the deceased.

The victim, Sarfaraz Khan, was a school dropout and a native of Budaun district in Uttar Pradesh. He had arrived in Mumbai two weeks ago to spend his vacation with

his cousin, Kharman Ali, 35, a fruit vendor residing in the Sakinaka area.

Kharman Ali was asleep at home on Friday afternoon when Sarfaraz left with his friends. At around 3 pm, Sarfaraz, along with Mohammed Kaif Khan, 23, his twin brother Takalluf Khan, 23, and Zababul Hasan, 21, travelled by autorickshaw to Juhu Beach, reaching there around 4 pm. While Kaif remained on the shore to watch over their belongings, Sarfaraz, Takalluf and Zababul entered the water. Around 4.30 pm, Sarfaraz suddenly began shouting for help after being caught in strong waves, said Kaif.

"When Takalluf and Zababul failed to reach him, they ran towards people nearby seeking assistance. Lifeguards rushed to the spot and pulled Sarfaraz out of the water after a search of a few minutes, but by

then he had stopped breathing," said Kaif. The incident occurred near the JW Marriott Hotel at Juhu Chowpatty. An ambulance



was immediately called and Sarfaraz was rushed to Cooper Hospital. However, doctors declared him dead upon arrival.

The Santacruz police visited the spot, conducted a panchnama and registered an accidental death report. Following a post-

mortem examination at Cooper Hospital, the body was handed over to the family.

"Sarfaraz had come to Mumbai to spend his vacation. He was my paternal aunt's son. I was sleeping when he left home; otherwise, I would not have allowed him to go. It is a very tragic incident. I have informed his parents, and his body will be taken to our native village for the last rites," said Kharman Ali. Senior Inspector Yogesh Shinde of Santacruz police station said, "Beachgoers are repeatedly warned against entering the sea during unsafe conditions. Police personnel and lifeguards had asked people not to enter the water.

However, after officers moved to another part of the beach, some of them went into the sea. The victim did not know how to swim and had come to Mumbai from his native place for a visit. The body has been handed over to his family.

5 ideal Table top plants

to make your work desk lively



A work desk not only sets up the mood of a working environment but is also a reflection of one's personality. Considering the space crunch with piles of paper and stationery on the desk, decking up your workstation with minimal accessories is the way to go. And what's better than jazzing up your desk with table-top plants, making the place look lively.

To know more about the plants which would be ideal for an office environment, we spoke to Sanya Ahuja, Founder & CEO of Greenish-a plant gifting company. "Table-top plants require minimal maintenance and do not occupy a lot of

space—they are less than half-a-foot tall, thus making them suitable for the office desk. An ideal plant is chosen on the basis of whether it acts as an air purifier i.e., absorbs toxins from the environment, beautifies or is easy on maintenance. They are mostly priced between INR 450-600," said Ahuja.

Read to know more about the five ideal table top plants, according to Ahuja, and pick the one which would make your desk look lively at work:

1. Golden Pothos

Golden Pothos belongs to the money plant family and is very easy to maintain too. This is an air purifying plant which means it absorbs toxins from the air apart from producing oxygen. They are tolerant of low light conditions and erratic watering—they need to be watered only when its soil starts to dry. It needs to be kept in the sunlight only once a week. The beauty of this plant lies in the texture of its leaves.

2. Syngonium

There are six to seven shades of Syngonium of which pink and green have a greater demand.

These air-purifying plants are preferably grown using organic manure instead of soil. Organic manure is light in weight, has more nutrients than plain soil and it also tends to retain moisture for a longer time. Thus, this plant needs

to be watered and kept in the sunlight only once a week, making them an ideal choice for the busy bees.

3. Philodendron

The beauty of this plant lies in the 'cut' of its leaf—the fast growing Philodendron hybrid has red leaves and extremely attractive foliage. It requires bright but indirect exposure to sunlight once a week to get the best foliage colour and should be watered only when the soil dries up. The brown leaves could be cut or trimmed as per the need.

4. Sansevieria

Interestingly known as mother-in-law's tongue, these are air purifying plants and are available in different types like straight, golden and green. These plants have hard-textured leaves and hence are perfect for beginners. Sansevieria needs to be watered once in few days and are also ideal to be kept in bedrooms as they are known to produce oxygen even at night.

5. Chlorophytum

This again is an air-purifying plant. They have dark green leaves with white margins and are extremely tolerant to harsh conditions—thus making them an ideal choice for beginners or forgetful owners.

How to use white for home decor

Different colours can be used to make an all-white home look

White is the colour of elegance and simplicity. An all-white home looks great when you know how to maintain it well. Many homemakers who are passionate about this colour would agree. It is not easy to keep it spotless and you also run the risk of making your home look too bland with the lack of colour. Here are a few points you need to keep in mind...

Using dark brown tiles or a wooden floor for your living room if the rest of your home is white, can really set it apart.

Walnut shelves that also acts like your entertainment zone with the television, home-theatre system, books and other knickknacks can give a break to your white wall.

White sofas and white upholstery on your chairs can be offset with dark-coloured cushions to give it a fresh look.

The monotony of white can be broken with different-sized cushions in brightest hues. You curtains can have other colours too even though you would want its base to primarily be white. Stripes and checks in a light shade can work well.

A rug or carpet that belongs to the brown or beige family can add to the charm if you don't want a too-bright colour.

When you have opted for white for your kitchen walls you should keep something in the room that contrasts it to bring out the beauty of pure white. Maybe your refrigerator can be bright to add colour.

So, go right ahead and experiment with white and you will be amazed at the way your home looks.



How to use technology to manage your home better

Helpful ways to make your home eco-friendly!

Technology encompasses every aspect of our lives today, from smartphones to tablets, and even smart home appliances. Karan Bajaj explores easy ways to incorporate tech into your home and lifestyle.

LIGHTING

Most people still stick to the standard white lighting for their homes, even though you can now have mood-based lighting that can change colour instantly on demand. The Philips LivingColors table lamp is one option that lets you choose from 16 million colors. There are also LED bulbs offered by companies like Syska, Eng and IOTA that can be plugged into normal sockets. You can change their colours using free apps on your smartphone.

SECURITY

There are two ways to enhance your home's security using tech. One is to set up a security camera. Buy a wireless IP camera that supports two-way audio communication (priced at ₹5,000 onwards), place it on a flat surface or mount it on a wall and connect it to a power outlet, then configure the camera with your Wi-Fi network using the smartphone app and you can access the camera feed via the app or a browser. The other way is to install a smart door lock. There are various options available, including pin-code locks, fingerprint locks and Bluetooth locks.



HOME AUTOMATION

Getting a home automation system integrated into your house can be a tedious job and it's better to do it during construction. However, now there is a simpler way to do it, thanks to a plug-and-play option offered by Oakter. It comes with a central hub that connects to your home WiFi and enables the remote control of plugged-in appliances. Oakter's Smart kit (priced at ₹10,000) includes a few leaves to plug in your devices and allows you to add more, if required. Once it is set up, the system lets you control all connected devices using a smartphone app.

SOUND

When it comes to audio, what will set you apart is having a speaker in your shower. The Kohler Moxie Showerhead has a built-in magnet that holds the waterproof Bluetooth speaker in place. It has a rechargeable battery and pairs with your phone or tablet to play music. There is a similar offering by Eng called Opera. Another option that is available is LED bulbs with built-in speakers, which connect to your smartphone via Bluetooth for playback. Most of our handled devices today use USB charging cables. So, instead of looking around for a charger every time, why not just get a wall outlet with built-in USB charging ports for your home? Havells offers a switch plate under their Crabtree brand that replaces an existing switch with a USB port to plug in charging wires directly.

With the rising temperatures, global warming is making its presence felt, making it the right time to develop an eco conscience.

Did you know that small modifications at home can make your living space eco-friendly? TOI helps you go green with these simple tips...

Switch to CFL lights

They may not be as soothing as incandescent lights, but CFL bulbs save a lot of energy. For those who complain about them being too bright, there are several options available in the market these days so that you get the effect you desire. What's more, CFL bulbs are light on your pocket.

Plant a herb garden

Many of us like having potted plants at home, but instead of growing decorative flowers, plant a herb garden. They don't require a lot of effort since they are easy to grow. Plus, it's great to know that your herbs are pesticide-free and that what you are eating is healthy.

Make a compost bin

Composting is a great way to turn household trash into nutrient-rich supplement for plants. Take a bin (such as an old bucket) and make a couple of holes on the side and bottom. Layer this with



broken bricks and sprinkle some water. Now place bagasse (the residue of sugarcane once the juice is squeezed out) and place it on the bricks. Sprinkle more water. Add a fistful of compost and the pit is ready.

Stop using plastic bags

The reason you have to pay for plastic bags at stores is to discourage its use.

Keep a reusable bag in your handbag or car so that it comes in handy whenever you go shopping—be it at the grocery store or the mall.

Use cloth instead of paper to clean

Find yourself always reaching out for

kitchen towels or tissues to clean up a mess? Break the habit and use cloth instead. And you don't have to go out and buy fancy towels either; simply recycle and make rags out of old T-shirts or towels.

Use low flow shower heads

Replace your existing shower heads with low flow ones as this can save around a 100 litres of water a day (depending on use). Also ensure that your water heater is insulated well to save energy, or replace it with a solar heater.

Switch off all lights at home

Most Indian families leave at least one light on at night as people believe that a house must not be draped in darkness.

But this is a criminal waste of electricity and is really not required.

Plug leaks

Have a leaky faucet? Get it fixed! You may think that

the single drop of water that drips every few seconds isn't some thing that you must bother about, but that single drop accumulates into several litres a day. Pay a plumber a nominal fee to fix a leak and to save water and see a marked difference in your water bill.

Live an unplugged life

Electric appliances like TVs, computers and iPod docks continue to consume large amounts of energy even when they are in standby mode. So ensure that you switch them off completely and even take the socket out of the plug point.



Setting up a new-age

Office?

Read this now!

According to a study, an office worker spends 5 years sitting at a desk. Imagine! If you spend so much time sitting at your workstations, do you not deserve a spacious, comfortable and a desk that boosts our productivity? But this is definitely not what most of the workplaces provide. It is vital that the workplace is designed to nurture the physical, cognitive and emotional needs of the employees.

However, only the right kinds of spaces can make this happen and thus we got in touch with Praveen Rawal, Managing Director, Steelcase (design consultant to the offices of Google, IBM, Deloitte, Accenture, TATASky and many more) to understand some ways to build a progressive and adaptable workplace which will boost employee productivity and engagement at a workplace.

1. Optimism: Fostering creativity and innovation

Optimistic employees tend to be more productive in today's economy. They influence a wide range of behaviours such as seeing the big picture, exploring ideas, being open to others, taking more risks, facing difficult tasks and being open to change. These workers need to feel a sense of individual influence and control over their environment, versus feeling quashed by

standardization and rigidity. behaviours such as seeing the big picture, exploring ideas, being open to others, taking more risks, facing difficult tasks and being open to change. These workers need to feel a sense of individual influence and control over their environment, versus feeling quashed by

2. Cultivating mindfulness in the workplace

Mindfulness means balancing the intense pace of life with being fully present in the moment. Today technology presents many opportunities for multitasking, which allows people to be physically present in a meeting, but mentally lost in email. Workers need physical spaces that help them manage the cognitive overload of their daily lives and be fully present in the moment.

Design Considerations for such employees:

1. Allow choice and control over where and how people work.
2. Create spaces that allow personalization and individual customization, instead of tightly enforced workplace standards.
3. Offer settings and affordances that help employees feel supported in their work.
4. Design for transparency, so that people can see and be seen and build trust.

2. Cultivating mindfulness in the workplace

Mindfulness means balancing the intense pace of life with being fully present in the moment. Today technology presents many opportunities for multitasking, which allows people to be physically present in a meeting, but mentally lost in email. Workers need physical spaces that help them manage the cognitive overload of their daily lives and be fully present in the moment.

Design Considerations:

1. Create spaces that help people connect with others one-on-one and eye-to-eye and not just through their technology devices.
2. Design areas that allow workers to

control their sensory stimulation and choose if they want to amp it up or down.

3. Offer places that are calming, through the materials, textures, colors, lighting and views.

4. Create areas where people can connect with others without distractions or interference.

4. Cultivating interactive furniture settings

Research shows that providing spaces that support collaborative and heads-down activities increases engagement and productivity. Giving workers choice and control over where they work gives people a

sense of ownership and allows them to work in ways that feel authentic and natural to them.

Design Considerations:

1. Collaborative spaces, with or without walls, and single-use focus rooms give users a variety of spaces to choose from and be comfortable with.

2. Place sofas and soft benches for lounge posture and stools for.

5. Cultivating vitality in the workplace

How we experience a place affects our actions. Investments in the workplace can completely change the attitude and behavior of employees, creating a new spatial vibe that boosts their motivation and performance within a relatively short time.

Design Considerations:

1. Design areas that give people choices for controlling the level of sensory stimulation around them.

2. Provide easily adjustable furniture to fit a range of sizes, needs and preferences and to promote movement throughout the day.

3. Include cafes with healthy food choices and displays.

4. Bring nature in with daylight, views, ventilation, patios, etc.

5. Support active, healthy lifestyles with centrally located stairways, outdoor walking paths, bicycle racks, etc.

These spaces can provide employees options for different modes of work and promote individual employee wellbeing—and thus improve retention—as well as advance other business goals.

Natural air Fresheners for your home

Whether it is the stink of damp clothes inside the house during monsoon or leftovers from the kitchen spreading a foul smell — you immediately try to reach for the room freshener.

Thus, we bring you easy tips to refresh your home with these do-it-yourself (DIY) eco-friendly ideas to ensure a warm, cozy, clean and scented house at all times.

SPRAY Vinegar works best to disinfect the air naturally and destroy bacteria. Take an empty spray bottle and fill it with one part white vinegar to four parts water and spray it into the air to freshen any room. To remove cooking smells from the kitchen, place a bowl of vinegar in the room. You can add lemon or orange peels to it but remember to dispose it off by the end of the day.

SPRINKLE

The good old baking soda comes handy to combat smell of any kind. It is also considered to be an all-round deodoriser, but it works best as an odour neutraliser by getting rid of those smells associated with acidic substances like pet urine or sweat. To remove the dampness in fabrics, carpet or upholstery — sprinkle some fresh baking soda on the area and leave it overnight. Just vacuum it the next morning. Sprinkle those foul-smelling



shoes, socks or smelly gym clothes with this magic potion.

BAKE

This works best to get rid of kitchen odours. Just slice two lemons, and bake them in an oven for an hour or more. Turn off the heat and leave the oven door open for the soothing smell to spread into the rooms. The next best thing is to bake a batch of brownies. The warm aroma will waft not only in the kitchen but through the entire house.

SIMMER With just a few ingredients in the kitchen, you can create your own natural air freshener. Take spices like star anise, nutmeg, cinnamon sticks, cloves along with orange peels and lemon peels. Put them with water in a

pot to boil for an hour. As the liquid evaporates, the stale kitchen air will give way to a lovely aroma. After the liquid cools down, strain it into a spray bottle and use it as and when required.

Make Your Own POTPOURRI

Potpourri not only makes for a nice decoration but is also acts as a pleasant air freshener. It gives the entire house an uplifting, spicy-citrus scent and can be used to fight strong cooking smells. You can customise yours by adding dried fruit, herbs, spices and essential oils. For homemade fruit and spice potpourri, thinly slice an orange or an apple and bake them for an hour and a half till they dry up. Once they cool down, add cinnamon sticks, cloves and transfer it to an airtight jar and leave it for 24 hours before using.

Coffee acts as a perfect diffuser - Grind it, brew it or bake some coffee beans in the oven. The aroma can absorb strong odours while enlivening your senses.

- To drive away offensive odours, put small bowls of freshly ground coffee in corners of your house.

- You can also place ground coffee in the bottom of the garbage bag to keep foul smell at bay.

6 Easy tips to turn your balcony into an inviting sit-out

Space is at a premium in urban homes so every square inch matters. If you're lucky to have a balcony, you could convert it into a sit-out to make up for the garden you've always wanted. Here's how.

1. You can plan your sit-out when your apartment is getting constructed by getting special tiles laid, getting the balcony floor water proof, getting electrical points fixed and if you're receiving the harsh light of the sun, perhaps even an awning. If not, don't worry. It's never too late to start.

2. Seating: depending on the size of your balcony, choose furniture - two chairs and a table or a bench. Cane or seasoned wood is best. If you have the luxury of space, consider a day bed or even a swing.

3. Plants: Potted plants can convert even the most

boring balcony into an inviting place. You can go with a mix of wall-mounted pots, balcony planters and pots for your foliage. Keep a mix seasonal flowers and perennials.

4. Accessories: Over time you can add accessories to your balcony. Wind chimes, hanging plants, fairy lights, garden accessories, wall brackets etc to give the space character.

5. Weather proof: You can choose to weather proof your balcony by closing it with transparent glass shutters, so you enjoy the rains while you stay dry and warm on the balcony.

6. Privacy: If you want privacy but don't want to feel walled in, fabricate a mesh and let climbers grow on it. It can shield you from your nosy neighbour and make a pretty neat addition to your balcony.



Clock tower near Talkatora Stadium set for completion by month-end

New Delhi.(Agency)

The upcoming clock tower at Shankar Road-Mandir Marg junction near Talkatora Stadium is set to be transformed into a landmark gateway to the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) area, with civic authorities planning a host of smart and aesthetic features around the structure.

NDMC vice-chairman Kuljeet Chahal said nearly 80% of the civil work has been completed and the agency is targeting completion by June 30. Once construction is done, the focus will shift to developing the site into an iconic attraction on the lines of New York's Times Square and similar

global modern structures.

"We plan to install a large LED display wall around the clock tower. The screens would provide real-time information, such as air pollution levels, temperature forecasts, nearby attractions and public messages. The system will be supported by AI-enabled equipment to enhance information dissemination and visitor engagement," Chahal said after a recent inspection.

"We don't want it to look like any other conventional clock tower. It should represent 'Viksit NDMC'. A detailed discussion has been held with officials, who will come up with an updated plan soon," he added.

NDMC's beautification plan includes projector lighting to illuminate the clock faces on all sides, 5-6-metre-high decorative poles fitted with 70-watt post-top lights, and bulkhead lighting inside the tower to illuminate stairways. Wall-mounted fans will also be installed at the premises.

Officials said all electrical installations inside and outside the structure, along with associated accessories, will be properly earthed to ensure safety and operational efficiency. In addition, horticulture work has also been planned around the tower.

From an engineering perspective, the clock tower is being designed to withstand both wind and seismic



forces. "Internal electrical installations, along with colourful linear façade lighting, will be among the other features," an

official said.

The structure comprises a reinforced concrete framework supported by RCC raft foundations. Its exterior will feature wire-cut brick cladding in line with the approved architectural design, giving it a distinctive and durable finish.

The foundation stone for the project was laid in Aug 2025 by former LG V K Saxena, with the initial deadline set as Jan 31, 2026. NDMC missed the target, with officials attributing the delay to GRAP restrictions and challenges encountered during site preparation. Subsequently, the revised April 30 deadline was also missed. Officials later clarified that excavation work took longer

than expected due to rocky strata at the site.

The nearly 27-metre-high octagonal tower, being built at a cost of Rs 1.8 crore, is designed to blend Hindu, Mughal and Colonial-era architectural styles. Stone engraving will be carried out on the façade, followed by polishing and installation of lighting to highlight the detailing during the final phase of construction. Each of the tower's eight sides will measure 1.2 metres.

The clock to be installed atop the tower will feature a modern, weather-resistant design with both backlit and front-lit illumination. It will be mounted using vibration-resistant technology.

Delhi, Punjab populations connected through Sikh gurus, asserts L-G Sandhu

New Delhi.(Agency)

L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu visited several historic gurdwaras in Sri Anandpur Sahib and Kiratpur Sahib in Punjab, highlighting the deep spiritual and historical ties shared between Delhi and Punjab. During the visit, the L-G said the bond between the two regions is closely linked to the lives and teachings of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji, as well as the historic Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib and Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in Delhi.

He also noted that Delhi's large Punjabi and Sikh population, many of whom rebuilt their lives in the capital after Partition, has played a major role in



shaping the city's culture and identity.

The shared history between Delhi and Punjab continues to inspire people with the values of courage, selfless service and unity," the L-G said.

Sri Anandpur Sahib, Sandhu visited Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib, Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib, Guru Ka Mahal and Gurudwara Damdama Sahib. He offered prayers and said the holy land reflects the legacy and sacrifices of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The L-G also visited Gurudwara Patalpuri Sahib in Kiratpur Sahib, where the ashes of his father Sardar Bishan Singh Samundri, mother Dr Jagjit Kaur Sandhu and elder brother Jasjit Singh Samundri were immersed. He paid tributes to their memory and offered prayers for peace, health and prosperity for all.

Delhi University professor's husband being questioned in city, police teams hunt for suspects

New Delhi.(Agency)

Days after a 42-year-old Delhi University professor was found murdered at her residence in east Delhi's Vasundhara Enclave, police have intensified their investigation by questioning her husband and narrowing down on a few suspects.

According to a senior police officer, the husband of the victim, who works in Pune, Maharashtra, came to Delhi on Saturday and is currently being questioned about the incident. Apart from this, some persons have been zeroed in on, and teams have been sent to nab them. Reportedly the woman was an introvert and was in touch with a limited number of people. Her brother also lives in the same society.

Meanwhile, call detail records of the victim revealed that she mostly contacted her sister or mother. Apart from them, she used to speak only with a few college staff members. Police have prepared a list of these contacts and are questioning them as part of the investigation. The incident was reported to the police on Thursday by the sister of the victim.

According to police, the woman was separated from her husband. There was no forced entry sign, due to which the police are suspecting that the deceased might have known the attacker.

The murder took place between 1 pm and 6 pm on Wednesday. The deceased last spoke to her mother around 1 pm, and her maid came around 6 pm. She knocked on the door repeatedly, but the woman did not respond. The police have checked the CCTV footage of the society and put suspicion on 200 people. Later, 13 suspects have not been identified by the society people. Out of them, 10 people have been identified by their name and identity, while three people are still unidentified.

Govt funds, secret accounts, Rs 661 crore diverted: CBI raids multiple locations

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday conducted searches at six locations across Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Delhi-NCR in connection with a massive Rs 661-crore government funds misappropriation case linked to IDFC First Bank and AU Finance Bank.

The raids targeted the premises of senior Haryana government officials alongside Noida-based Vipam Consultancy Private Limited and its director. Investigators suspect deep collusion between public servants and bank officials in illegally opening bank accounts, transferring state funds, and diverting the money for personal gains. According to the central agency, the financial fraud

impacted eight Haryana government departments and two Chandigarh Union Territory entities, specifically the Municipal Corporation Chandigarh and the Chandigarh

public servants.

During the extensive searches, CBI operatives seized numerous incriminating documents, digital devices, and property-related records. Investigators also uncovered evidence suggesting that Vipam Consultancy received direct proceeds of the crime, which were later transferred into the personal bank account of its director.

The probe has already resulted in the filing of a first chargesheet before the Special CBI Court in Panchkula. This initial filing details the alleged roles of officials from the Haryana Power Generation Corporation Limited and the Haryana School Shiksha Pariyojna Parishad. Law enforcement officials stated that further chargesheets are expected to be submitted.



Renewable Energy and Science & Technology Promotion Society.

The agency alleged that the government funds were systematically siphoned off through a well-planned conspiracy orchestrated by bank officials and

Among lowest in the world: Govt defends LPG price hike amid criticism

New Delhi.(Agency)

Hours after domestic LPG prices were raised by Rs 29 per cylinder, the Centre mounted a detailed defence of the increase, arguing that Indian households continue to be protected from the full impact of a sharp rise in global energy prices triggered by the West Asia crisis. The government said the cost of supplying a 14.2-kg LPG cylinder has now crossed Rs 1,600, while a general consumer in Delhi will pay Rs 942 after the latest revision and a Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana beneficiary will effectively pay Rs 642 on eligible refills.

"The Indian household continues to buy cooking gas much cheaper than the household in any neighbouring country, and far below the price paid

in advanced economies such as the United States, Australia and Canada," the government said on June 7.

The latest increase takes the price of a domestic LPG cylinder in Delhi from Rs 913 to Rs 942. It follows a Rs 60



increase announced on March 7, taking the cumulative rise over the past three months to Rs 89.

GLOBAL PRICES HAVE SURGED, SAYS GOVERNMENT

According to the Centre, the main reason behind the increase is the sharp rise in international LPG prices following disruptions in West Asia and the Strait of Hormuz. India imports around 60 per cent of its LPG requirement and domestic prices are linked to international benchmarks, particularly the Saudi Contract Price.

The government said the Saudi benchmark stood at about US\$542.5 per tonne in February, before the crisis intensified. Following the disruption of shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz, the benchmark rose to US\$775 per tonne in April and further to US\$790 per tonne in June.

"The blended LPG benchmark has thus risen by about 46% since the pre-crisis February level," the statement said.

After South Delhi B&B fire, 124 properties sealed in drive against illegal constructions

New Delhi.(Agency)

As part of a citywide drive against illegal and unauthorised structures in the Capital, the District Level Committee of the Delhi government sealed 124 properties on Saturday, officials said. The drive comes in the wake of a fire at Flourish Stay bed-and-breakfast (B&B) in Hauz Rani, Malviya Nagar, which claimed 22 lives.

On Saturday, notices were issued to violators after inspections were carried out at 10 sites each in North District and East District, officials said. While 21 sites were inspected in the West District, the number stood at 13 in the South-West District and 10 in the Central District (North), they added.

"During inspections of 30 sites in South District, 11 premises were sealed while show-cause notices were issued in 19 cases," said officials.

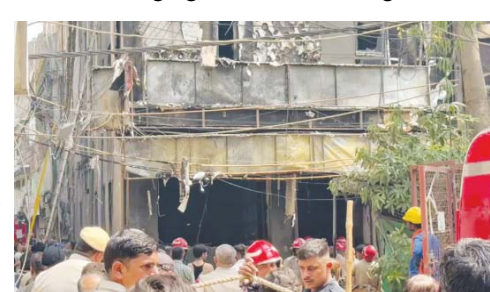
In the North-West District, three

unauthorised buildings were demolished for violating building by-laws. "No violations were found during inspections in the South-East District," said the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) in a statement.

In a separate drive against illegal constructions that began on Monday, MCD officials said demolition action had been carried out against 94 properties and 114 properties were sealed between June 1 and June 6. This drive, however, was triggered by a building collapse at Saiduajab near Saket Metro station on May 30 that claimed six lives. As per MCD officials, 84 show-cause notices were issued in cases of unauthorised construction, sealing notices were sent to 41 properties, and 33 demolition orders were also issued.

"Delhi Government is not limiting itself to

enforcement action but is also working in action mode on long-term solutions to the problem. She has directed officials to explore the possibility of developing a third-party insurance system for buildings, guest houses, nursing homes,



and other public-use structures that witness large public footfall," said the CMO.

According to officials, stringent action will be taken if serious violations of

approved building plans are detected, including removing the concerned architect from the panel and blacklisting them with immediate effect.

Further, DDA's Flying Squad and Quick Response Teams (QRTs) have been asked to intensify the identification and removal of encroachment and illegal construction across the city, officials added.

On June 3, a day after the blaze at the B&B, the Delhi government constituted 13 district-level and 39 sub-division-level committees to conduct a citywide survey of all buildings with six storeys (ground plus five floors) and above, including hospitals and nursing homes, to determine whether they are violating fire safety norms. Officers said the preliminary inspection of the B&B had allegedly uncovered multiple violations, including the lack of

Dogged cockroaches crawl in Delhi corridors of power

Jantar Mantar turns into a vibrant arena of slogans, music and dissent, as supporters carry colourful posters

New Delhi.(Agency)

Hundreds of students, parents, gig workers and activists gathered at Jantar Mantar on Saturday to participate in the Cockroach Party protest, braving the scorching capital's heat to voice concerns over unemployment, examination irregularities and the future of the country's youth.

The protest site turned into a vibrant arena of slogans, music and dissent as young college and university students arrived carrying colourful posters, hand-painted graffiti, caricatures of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and cockroach-themed masks. Elderly men and women also joined the gathering, holding flags, roses and placards in support of the movement.

Many participants said they had attended the protest after being inspired online by people they had never met personally, united by a shared sense of frustration and urgency.

The excitement around activist Abhijeet Dipke drew supporters and curious onlookers alike, while songs and slogans echoed across the protest venue. Behind the visible enthusiasm, however, many attendees spoke of deeper anxieties related to education, unemployment and repeated examination-related lapses.

Mohammad Taj, a computer science student from Wazirabad studying in a Delhi college, said recent incidents linked to examinations had left many students uncertain about their future.

"The youth-led movement inspired me because students are deeply worried about their careers," he said, adding that unemployment among young people continued to rise while authorities remained indifferent. Taj said the large turnout reflected widespread dissatisfaction with the current education system.

Alongside him was his friend Nadeem, a gig worker, who said he had skipped work for a few hours to participate in the protest. "Many parents from poor families spend beyond their means to educate their children, but examination lapses and paper leaks destroy their future," he said. Mamta, a mother of two, said she attended the protest for the sake of her children and other youngsters struggling with uncertainty. She recalled that her daughter had suffered because of examination-related issues during the Covid and eventually moved to Australia for higher studies.

CBI raids six locations in Rs 661-Cr IDFC First Bank-AU Finance Bank fraud probe

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has carried out searches at six locations in Chandigarh, Panchkula and Delhi-NCR as part of its probe into an alleged Rs 661-crore fraud involving the diversion of government funds from Haryana government departments and the Chandigarh administration, officials said on Sunday. The searches, on Friday targeted premises linked to senior Haryana cadre public servants, Noida-based Vipam Consultancy Pvt Ltd, and its director, officials said on Sunday. The action is part of an ongoing investigation into the alleged siphoning of funds parked with IDFC First Bank and AU Finance Bank. According to the agency, the alleged fraud impacted eight Haryana government departments and two Chandigarh administration entities, Municipal Corporation Chandigarh and Chandigarh Renewable Energy and Science and Technology Promotion Society (CREST). "During investigation evidences have surfaced suggesting that the public servants had colluded with bank officials and had facilitated in opening of accounts, transfer of funds and subsequent diversion thereof," the statement said.

The agency alleged that the public servants received undue benefits for facilitating the transactions and failing to flag irregularities. The CBI further alleged that Vipam Consultancy Pvt Ltd received proceeds of crime in its bank account, which were later transferred to the personal account of its director.

"Incriminating documents, digital devices, property documents and other relevant material were seized during the search operations," the agency said.

The case stems from one FIR transferred from the Haryana State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau and two cases initially registered by the Economic Offences Wing police station in Chandigarh.

The agency said the cases pertain to alleged criminal conspiracy, misappropriation of government funds and related offences committed in connivance with bank officials and public servants. The CBI has already filed its first chargesheet before a special court in Panchkula, detailing the alleged involvement of public servants from Haryana Power Generation Corporation Ltd and Haryana School Shiksha Pariyojna Parishad.

Young Indians buying life insurance much earlier than previous generations, says report

Kolkata.(Agency)

There seems to be a growing awareness of the necessity to buy insurance early in life and a recent report indicates that young Indians are buying life insurance cover much earlier than earlier generations. The coverage among people, especially those between 21 and 30 years have surged by more than 60% in FY26, said "Transparency Report 4.0" of Go Digit Life Insurance. "People are significantly widening their safety nets. Digit recorded over 50 per cent growth in the base sum assured this year. Leading this shift are Gen Zs in the 21-30 age group, where coverage amounts surged by over 60 per cent," the report mentioned while observing how it is becoming a financial decision early in one's career. Significantly, in the decades gone by one used to buy insurance policies at the time of marriage or when children came into a family or even later in life.

Why the trend to buy insurance earlier

One of the disruptions that triggered early purchase of life insurance coverage seems to be the Covid pandemic. Improving financial literacy is another driver. The report also suggests that concerns around accidents and unexpected risks have also risen. Digit Life's data indicate that the average age of accident victims stood at merely 33 years. More than 33% of the accident-related cases involved people in the age group of 21 to 30 years. "Road safety data remains a sobering reminder to stay alert. The average age of accident victims is just 33 years old, with over one-third of incidents involving those aged 21-30," the report said.

How do NSE EGR and gold ETFs compare on different parameters? Know details here

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold holds eternal attraction for common investors as well as HNIs. Over the past few years, investment strategists have advised people to allocate 10-15% of one's portfolio to gold and silver. The number of instruments where one can invest in gold in a dematerialised way has gone up with NSE (National Stock Exchange) recently launching the EGR or electronic gold receipt. With the rise of digital investing platforms, investors can now invest in gold without purchasing jewellery or coins or bars. Two popular options for gold investing are Electronic Gold Receipts (EGR) and Gold ETFs or exchange traded funds. Let's see how they compare on different cunts.

EGR vs Gold ETF

Ownership: Electronic Gold Receipt offers direct ownership representation of physical gold which is stored in Sebi-regulated vaults. On the other hands, Gold ETFs offer indirect exposure through fund structures. **Trading mechanism:** Both instruments are traded on stock exchanges. While EGRs function as exchange-backed receipts, Gold ETFs operate through mutual fund frameworks. Gold ETFs (and Gold ETF Fund of Funds) are launched by mutual fund houses. **Physical redemption:** EGRs are in fact closed to metallic gold than ETFs. Therefore, it is easier to convert them into gold. Gold ETF redemption usually remains restricted for retail investors since it is possible only if the investor accumulates enough units to match standard gold bars which are usually of 1 kg.

Your flat is delayed. Your EMI isn't. What now?

You're paying the EMI. The builder missed the deadline. With over 5 lakh homes stuck across India, delayed possession has become a financial nightmare for thousands of buyers. Here's what experts say you can do when your dream home doesn't arrive on time.

New Delhi.(Agency)

You booked a flat. The builder promised possession in a few years. You planned your finances around it. Perhaps you took a home loan, started paying EMIs and imagined moving into your new home within a few years.

Then the possession date came and went. The building is still unfinished. The promised handover has been pushed back. You are still paying rent. You are still paying your home loan. And every month, the same question becomes

harder to ignore: what now? For thousands of homebuyers across India, this is not a hypothetical situation. It is a financial reality. While India's housing market continues to see strong sales and new project launches, delayed possession remains one of the biggest headaches for homebuyers. And for many families, the consequences go far beyond inconvenience. Delays can mean years of paying both rent and EMI, missed tax benefits, disrupted financial plans and, in some cases, prolonged legal battles. The good news is that homebuyers today have more rights and legal protections than they did a decade ago. The challenge is knowing what those rights are and when to use them.

DELAYED POSSESSION REMAINS A MASSIVE PROBLEM IN INDIA

If your project has been delayed, you are far from alone. According to PropEquity, nearly 2,000 housing projects comprising 5.08 lakh units were stalled

across 42 cities as of July 2024. That is up from 4.65 lakh stalled units in 2018. More importantly, the problem extends beyond outright stalled projects. PropEquity notes that four out of five under-construction homes that are eventually

previously estimated that 6.29 lakh homes worth Rs 5.05 lakh crore were either severely delayed or stalled across India's top seven cities. More recently, Anarock Capital estimated that over 4.5 lakh affordable and mid-income homes across more than 1,500 projects remain stalled and require roughly Rs 55,000 crore in funding support to be completed.

The numbers make one thing clear: delayed possession is not an isolated problem. It is one of the largest consumer issues in India's real estate sector. **WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS IF A BUILDER MISSES THE POSSESSION DATE?**

One of the biggest misconceptions among buyers is that they have no option but to keep waiting.

That is not the case.

Sneha Suresh Agicha, Advocate at D. M. Harish & Co., says the RERA Act fundamentally changed the balance of power between developers and homebuyers.



delivered still face delays of three to four years. The problem is particularly acute in NCR. Greater Noida alone has 74,645 stuck units. Gurugram has 52,509 units spread across 158 stalled projects, while Noida has 41,438 units across 103 stalled projects. Property consultant Anarock

Early signs of AI trade cooling down likely to trigger forex inflows into India

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Nasdaq crash in the US by about 5 per cent is an indication that the AI bubble may burst and if the AI trade cools down and reverse, that can trigger reversal of foreign portfolio investors (FPI) outflows to the Indian markets, analysts said on Sunday. In May, FPIs net sold equity for Rs 32,963 crore. The sustained selling continued in early June, too. The total selling in June (up to 6th) stood at Rs 42,926 crore, taking the total selling in 2026, so far, to Rs 283,662 crore, as per NSDL data. Considering the significance of FPI inflows to finance the current account deficit and the Balance of Payments gap, the Central Bank and the government initiated several steps to attract FPI. The measures like exemption of interest and capital gains from FPI investment in government

securities from taxation announced by the government, followed by announcements in the monetary policy like the RBI absorbing the hedging costs on FCNR deposits mobilised by commercial banks, increase in forex



swap window, increased access to government bonds through the FAR route and increased limit for NRIs and OCIs to invest in the Indian equity

market will pave the way for forex inflows into India," said Dr VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Ltd.

This has also helped in the stabilisation of the rupee. The rupee which had depreciated to a low of 96.96 has appreciated to 94.94 on June 5. This is a positive development. However, if FPIs are to invest in India, the AI trade which has been the principal driver of FPI outflows away from India should change. There are early signs of this happening," the analyst noted. Markets ended last week lower, with the benchmark indices, Nifty and Sensex, declining amid concerns over geopolitical tensions and uncertainty in global trade. However, supportive domestic macroeconomic cues helped limit the extent of the decline, said analysts.

Govt defends LPG price hike, says India's cooking gas still among world's cheapest

The latest increase follows a Rs 60-per-cylinder hike announced on March 7, taking the cumulative increase in domestic LPG prices to Rs 89 per cylinder this year.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Centre on Sunday defended the latest increase in domestic LPG prices, saying Indian households continue to pay among the lowest cooking gas rates globally despite a sharp 46 per cent rise in international benchmark prices triggered by disruptions in West Asia. The clarification came a day after the price of a 14.2-kg domestic LPG cylinder was raised by Rs 29, taking the retail price in Delhi to Rs 942 from Rs 913. Beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) will continue to pay an effective Rs 642 per cylinder after a subsidy of Rs 300 per refill on the first four refills annually.

The latest increase follows a Rs 60-per-cylinder hike announced on March 7, taking the cumulative increase in domestic LPG prices to Rs 89 per cylinder this year. In a statement, the government said the cost of supplying a



domestic LPG cylinder has climbed to over Rs 1,600 due to soaring global prices following the outbreak of conflict in West Asia and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, a critical shipping route for Gulf energy supplies. India's LPG import prices are linked to the Saudi Contract Price (CP), the global

benchmark set by Saudi Aramco. According to the government, the benchmark has risen by around 46 per cent since February. "India used to import 60 per cent of its LPG requirements, and the landed cost of that import tracks the Saudi Contract Price (CP) that Saudi Aramco sets at the start of each month. This is an external price over which the Indian consumer has no control," the government said. The statement said the Saudi CP for LPG rose sharply after disruptions in West Asia.

"Expressed as the 50:50 propane-butane blend used for India's LPG, the Saudi CP for LPG stood at about USD 543 a tonne in February, before the disruption. Following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz in late February, the April contract price -- the first set after the disruption tightened Mideast Gulf exports -- rose to USD 775 a tonne, with propane at USD 750 and butane at USD 800, and has since edged up further to USD 790 a tonne in June."

Will this country slip into AI control? Digital minister's warning raises concerns

The warning comes as Japan pushes changes to its data protection law to speed up artificial intelligence development.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Japan's efforts to strengthen its position in artificial intelligence have taken a turn after the country's digital affairs minister warned that it could turn into an "AI colony" if it fails to move fast in the international race. Hisashi Matsumoto said Japan must step up investment and innovation in artificial intelligence (AI) or risk falling into a position where it depends on other countries for advanced technology. He urged people to understand the urgency around AI development and support national efforts to strengthen the sector. The appeal comes at a time when the Japanese government is working on changes to its personal data protection law. The proposed revision would allow AI developers to use sensitive data such as medical and

criminal records for training AI models, even in situations where direct consent from individuals is not obtained. Matsumoto argued that the competition in AI has reached a level where countries cannot afford to move slowly. According to him, delays in development could leave Japan dependent on external systems and technologies built elsewhere. He said the country must act in step with international progress to avoid losing ground in important technologies. **Debate over data use and privacy** Opposition parties and privacy advocates have expressed concerns over the proposal, calling for stronger safeguards to ensure the protection of personal data and reduce the risk of misuse. Lawmakers have pointed out that while AI development is important, the use of private medical and criminal records needs strict oversight. Attention has turned to how to balance technological progress with individual privacy rights. The bill has cleared Japan's lower house and is now in the upper house, where further debate is

expected in the coming weeks.

International AI competition sets the pace Japan's move comes against the backdrop of intense competition across the world in artificial intelligence. This competition is led mainly by the United States and China. Both countries are investing heavily in

its position in AI research and infrastructure. Government bodies and private companies are both concentrating on machine learning systems, data processing capabilities and high-performance computing networks.

Rising demand for AI infrastructure

Across the world, the demand for computing power and data infrastructure is rising. Countries are building new data centres and expanding energy resources to support large AI systems. Experts say the competition is no longer limited to software development, but also depends on access to data, computing efficiency and cost management.

Technology analysts say that future leadership in AI will depend not just on better algorithms but also on how efficiently countries can manage energy use and turn AI systems into economic value. This race is pushing governments to rethink how data is collected, stored and used.



large-scale data centres, advanced computing systems and the development of next-generation AI models. The expansion has pushed other countries to rethink their strategies. Japan, which has long been a leader in technology and manufacturing, is working to strengthen

Short news

Eight elephants destroy crops, irrigation systems in Andhra's Manyam

PARVATHIPURAM-MANYAM.(Agency)

A herd of eight wild elephants created havoc by destroying irrigation pump sets in a palm oil orchard and damaging a banana crop on the outskirts of Puliganivalasa village in Salur mandal on Saturday.

The elephants entered Salur mandal from Parvathipuram mandal via Makkuva and caused significant damage to crops and agricultural infrastructure. The herd later moved towards Mavudi village in Makkuva mandal while returning to its traditional habitat in Parvathipuram mandal. Residents said they were afraid to visit their farmlands after witnessing destruction.

The animals destroyed an irrigation pump set and drip irrigation system installed in a palm oil plantation on the outskirts of Puliganivalasa. The herd later entered a banana plantation and destroyed a crop that was ready for harvest. Agricultural labourers working in the palm oil orchard fled the area after witnessing the elephants' rampage.

Speaking to the, Salur Forest Range Officer K Tavtinaidu said, "The herd of eight elephants entered Salur mandal a few days ago. It strayed into palm oil and banana plantations and damaged the irrigation pump system and crops on the outskirts of Puliganivalasa. Upon receiving information from local residents, our staff reached.

Rajasthan Police bust interstate human trafficking, sex racket; five arrested

JAIPUR.(Agency)

In a major joint operation, Jhalawar District Police, in coordination with Bundi, Tonk, and Mumbai Police, have busted an interstate human trafficking and sex racket, rescuing 10 girls, including seven minors.

Police said the gang was involved in trafficking minor girls from economically weaker families, luring them with false promises of employment and a better life before selling them to brokers in Mumbai for lakhs of rupees and forcing them into the sex trade. Five members of the organised syndicate, including a female ringleader, have been arrested, while one more suspect has been detained. The victims were traced to multiple districts, including Jhalawar, Tonk, and Bundi.

Officials said three other accused, believed to be hiding in Mumbai, have been identified and raids are underway to apprehend them.

Jhalawar SP Amit Kumar said that after receiving inputs about human trafficking, police conducted inquiries in local settlements and found that brokers operating in Jhalawar and Tonk were targeting vulnerable families.

He said the accused lured families by promising employment opportunities in Mumbai, but instead trafficked the minor girls to brokers operating in Mumbai's dance bars. The syndicate also allegedly forged identity documents to show the victims as adults before trafficking them across state borders. According to the SP, the girls were subsequently pushed into forced sexual exploitation in Mumbai.

Nor'wester leaves Bhubaneswar without power for hours

CHENNAI.(Agency)

The heat index in Bhubaneswar soared to 50 degree C on Saturday but the sweltering conditions gave way to a dramatic weather change as a severe Kalabaisakhi (nor'wester) accompanied by rain and hail lashed the capital city in the afternoon, causing widespread damage and disruptions.

The thunderstorm damaged electricity infrastructure and disrupted power supply in several parts of Bhubaneswar, including Dhauli, Baliaanta, Mancheswar, Laxmisagar, VSS Nagar, Jayadev Vihar, Brit Colony, IRC Village, Paika Nagar and Raghunathpur.

Residents expressed frustration over the prolonged power outage, with many reporting that electricity had not been restored even five hours after the rain had stopped. In a post on X, TPCODL said the electricity infrastructure in VSS Nagar and Mancheswar had suffered extensive damage due to the storm. "Our teams are reaching out to the affected locations and continuing repair works. Efforts are on to restore electricity supply at the earliest," the utility said.

Consumers also complained of being unable to register grievances over the phone. TPCODL said its call centre operations had been affected by the storm and advised consumers to use the My Tata Power app, website, Roshni chatbot or missed-call services for assistance. Not just power supply, the thunderstorm uprooted trees in Satya Nagar, Mancheswar, Saheed Nagar, Acharya Vihar, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Salia Sahi, near Kalinga Stadium, Janata Maidan and other areas.

Mumbai's GMLR tunnel borers to be named after the city's oldest lakes - Tulsi and Vihar

Mumbai.(Agency)

Tulsi and Vihar. The two Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs), which will excavate the Goregaon Mulund Link Road (GMLR) project's twin tunnels, are likely to be christened after Mumbai's oldest man-made lakes, which cater to the city's potable water supply.

According to Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials, the 6.65-km-long twin tunnels — which will run beneath the Sanjay Gandhi National Park — are slated to come up between Tulsi and Vihar lakes. "Considering the alignment of the tunnels between the two lakes and their rich history, we are keen to name the TBMs after Tulsi and Vihar," a senior official privy to the developments, told The Indian Express. The proposed GMLR tunnels are situated approximately a kilometre away from the Tulsi and Vihar lakes. Speaking to The Indian Express, BMC officials said the first TBM boring the tunnel on the north-side, which will run parallel to

the Tulsi lake, is set to be named Tulsi. "Meanwhile, the TBM on the southern-side is likely to be named after the Vihar lake," an official added.

As an alternative east-west link in the city, the



BMC is undertaking works of the 12.20-km GMLR project which will connect the Western Express Highway in Goregaon and Eastern Express Highway in Mulund. While the project comprises four phases ranging from flyovers to clover-leaf rotary, the 6.65 km-long twin tunnels form a crucial link of

the project. The twin tunnels will be launched near Film City, borrow beneath the SGNP and pass a complex geography of hillocks, forests and the two potable water reservoirs — Tulsi and Vihar.

The story of Tulsi and Vihar

Commissioned in 1860, Vihar lake is the oldest man-made lake of the city whose origin coincides with the growth of erstwhile Bombay.

Dr Madhu Kelkar, who has extensively researched on the history of the water management system in colonial Bombay, said, "Before the lakes were established, Bombay would traditionally draw water from tanks and wells situated across the city. However, after 1845, Bombay witnessed phenomenal growth and a massive shortage of water was felt. Even from the engineering perspective, as growth happened, the corporation felt the need to bring water from outside the island city. Eventually, the Vihar lake was constructed between 1856 and 1860."

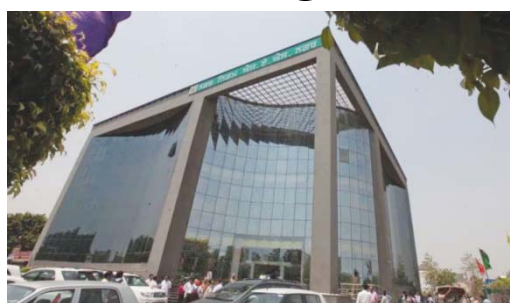
Mohali Mayor, Senior Deputy Mayor polls on May 9 following councillors' oath

Mohali.(Agency)

The process of constituting the new leadership of the Mohali Municipal Corporation will formally begin on June 9, when newly elected councillors take oath before electing the Mayor, Senior Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The AAP secured 27 of the total 50 seats as the party took control of the Mohali civic body for the first time. The Congress, which was in power in the MC, could manage only 12 seats this time. While the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) won four seats, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured three seats.

According to official orders, a special meeting of the Municipal Corporation House has been convened at 3 pm on Tuesday, June 9, in the corporation's meeting hall. The Municipal Corporation elections were held on May 26, with voters electing their representatives to the 50-



member civic body.

During the meeting, all newly elected councillors will first be administered the oath of office and secrecy.

Immediately thereafter, the House will proceed with the election of the Mayor, Senior Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The announcement of the meeting date has triggered intense political activity in Mohali, with parties and independent councillors engaged in consultations and

strategic discussions ahead of the crucial vote.

The election assumes significance as the new civic leadership will steer the city's development agenda over the next five years. Authorities are also making necessary security and administrative arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the proceedings.

'Hill station politics' gains traction

As political manoeuvring intensifies ahead of the elections for Mayor, Senior Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor, nearly two dozen newly elected councillors are reportedly away from Mohali, according to reliable sources. Sources claimed that several councillors have been moved to hill stations and other tourist destinations amid the ongoing political calculations. While some councillors of the Aam Aadmi Party are said to be in Mohali, a few independent councillors are reportedly staying outside the city.

To cut landslide risks, NHAI installs slope drain pipe system on Kalka-Shimla stretch ahead of monsoon in Himachal Pradesh

Shimla.(Agency)

IN A major effort to reduce landslide incidents ahead of the monsoon season, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has introduced a slope drainage pipe system at 83 vulnerable points along the 85 km-long Kalka-Shimla NH-5, one of the most landslide-prone road corridors in Himachal Pradesh.

The intervention, which is nearing completion, forms part of the ongoing slope stabilisation project being carried out between Parwanoo and Kathlighat. Officials said the drainage system was conceived after slope protection measures undertaken earlier failed to fully address the problem of rainwater runoff during intense monsoon spells.

The drainage system involves construction of small water collection points at the top of hillsides. These collection points are connected to a network of pipes and cement-lined drains that channel rainwater directly

to the bottom of the slope. The objective is to prevent water from flowing freely over the slope surface, which often triggers soil erosion, damages protective structures and leads to landslides.



"The initial slope protection work primarily consisted of green mesh netting, standard drilling and anchoring, most of which was completed last year. Subsequently, experts from IIT Bombay and IIT Ropar, who have been advising NHAI on slope stabilisation measures, recommended the installation of

drainage pipes as an additional safety measure for better protection of the slopes and to minimise landslide risks." Yogesh Verma, Site Engineer for the Kaithlighat-Dhali section of NH-5, told The Indian Express.

Officials said the idea emerged after the 2025 monsoon exposed limitations in the existing protection system. Although netting and anchoring had been completed at several sites, heavy rainfall caused large volumes of water to flow down the slopes, resulting in slope failures and damage to mesh structures, anchors and retaining measures. "During the 2025 monsoon, water flowing from the hilltops to the valley in large quantities damaged some of the protected slopes. Experts observed that uncontrolled surface runoff was a key reason behind these failures. The drainage pipe system was subsequently recommended to divert rainwater in a controlled manner," said sources associated with the project.

UP government forms committee to probe KGMU drugs distribution 'irregularities'

Lucknow.(Agency)

The Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday constituted a three-member committee to investigate allegations of irregularities in medicine procurement and other administrative issues at King George's Medical University (KGMU), Lucknow.

According to an official communication, the committee was formed following orders from Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, who also holds the Health and Family Welfare portfolio.

It will be headed by the Additional Chief Secretary (Medical Education) with the Director General and Secretary of Medical Education, and the Special Secretary, Medical and Health as members. The panel has been tasked with conducting a detailed investigation into the matter and submit the report within two working days.

The probe was initiated after the Medical Superintendent noticed a sharp rise in reimbursement claims under the government scheme, under which eligible patients receive medicines and treatment and the state government later reimburses the hospitals.

According to KGMU spokesperson and inquiry committee chairman Prof KK Singh, the increase in monthly claims prompted the university to scrutinise records and constitute an inquiry committee. He said the findings suggested that details of patients available in the hospital's software system may have been accessed and misused.

Maharashtra tells Mumbai gymkhanas: Accept collector on your board, or lose your lease

Mumbai.(Agency)

In recent meetings with administrators of Mumbai's 16 gymkhanas standing on government-owned land, the Maharashtra government has proposed a significantly greater role for itself in the functioning of the clubs as a condition for future lease renewals, including a seat for the district collector on their management committees, making the collector's recommendations binding on the clubs, and allowing government use of gymkhana premises for public programmes and emergencies, The Indian Express has learnt.

The proposals, which have figured prominently in recent consultations between the collector's office and

gymkhana administrators, would mark a significant shift in the relationship between the state and some of Mumbai's oldest sporting institutions. Officials familiar with the discussions said the government has indicated that these conditions would form the basis of future lease renewals for clubs occupying public land.

At present, 16 Mumbai gymkhanas stand on collector-owned land that was leased out by the erstwhile colonial administration during the 19th and early 20th centuries. While the leases of several prominent institutions, including Bombay Gymkhana, Islam Gymkhana, Parsee Gymkhana and Hindu Gymkhana, have already expired and are awaiting renewal,



others are due to expire in the coming years. Among the key conditions proposed by the government is the induction of the district collector as an ex-officio member of the management board of every gymkhana. The proposed framework also states that recommendations made by the district collector would be binding on the

gymkhanas and clubs.

The collector would also be empowered to recommend at least five individuals annually for permanent membership or conversion of service memberships into permanent memberships.

The proposals further provide for the government to hold official programmes and public events on gymkhana premises for up to five days every calendar year. In addition, the state would reserve the right to use the land during elections, natural disasters and other emergencies requiring public use of the premises. According to a report by the Observer Research Foundation, gymkhanas and elite clubs occupy 664 acres — nearly one-fifth of Mumbai's total 3,780 acres of open space.

NEWS BOX

Undesirable to undeniable: Shreyas Iyer's T20I remontada complete with India captaincy

New Delhi., (Agency)

3rd December 2023. This was the date that Shreyas Iyer last played a T20I game for India. On that day in Bengaluru against Australia, the Mumbai batter scored 53 off 37 balls with a strike-rate of 143.24. He was in the squad for the New Zealand series just before the T20 World Cup 2026, but couldn't find a spot for the tournament. All of this would paint a grim picture for the 31-year-old when it comes to future selections with India touring Ireland and England in June and July. But the entire dynamic has changed and Shreyas looks all set to return to the team. And not just as a squad member as the skipper of the Indian team in the shortest format of the game. Sources told India Today that Shreyas will replace his Mumbai teammate Suryakumar Yadav to usher in a new era for the Indian team post the T20 World Cup success. And now, the prophecy has become a reality with Shreyas being given the role. "Shreyas absolutely deserves it. With the bat. Also his performances as captain, having won it once at KKR, couple of really good seasons with PBKS. It was unusual he wasn't part of the T20I squad, but now that he's



found a spot, he has earned it," said Agarkar. Ricky Ponting, who worked closely with Shreyas, detailed why he thought the 31-year-old was going to be India captain one day in T20Is. Pointing out to his maturity as a batter and player, the former Aussie skipper's prediction has now become a reality. "There's a reason I spent as much money as the auction as I did a couple of years ago (on Iyer). He's a ripping guy, very mature player now, very mature leader. More often than not keeps his emotions in check on the field. The respect he has from his players is second to none." "The moment he stands in front of the group and speaks, not a single eye ball leaves a single word he says."

Shubman Gill advised to focus on WTC and ODI World Cup to avoid burnout



New Delhi. (Agency)

The selection committee has asked Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill to prioritise red-ball and 50-over cricket through the 2027 ODI World Cup cycle, despite a fine 2026 IPL, so that he remains fresh for big assignments ahead. On Saturday, T20 squads were announced for the UK Tour and Asian Games and the stylish Indian Test skipper wasn't considered because he has two major ICC assignments on hand in a choc-a-bloc calendar. Gill scored 732 runs in the just-concluded IPL at a healthy strike-rate of 163 plus -- his best over the seasons -- but with Sanju Samson, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi in the squad, it is difficult to slot in another quality top order batter. "The selectors are concerned that there shouldn't be a burn-out case with Gill. The kind of calendar that Indian cricket team has for next 18 months, it is virtually impossible to remain fresh if one plays three formats. Gill has to lead India in nine WTC Tests and also play around 35 odd ODIs before the start of 2027 World Cup," a BCCI source privy to developments told. "The communication is clear that he needs to be fit for these two ICC assignments. Plus he will play the IPL where he leads Gujarat Titans," the source added. While Gill is not in the T20 scheme of things as of now, he is expected to bounce back into contention before the start of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics or the T20 World Cup in Australia. "There is still a lot of time left for the two marquee T20 events in 2028. For Gill, the focus is on immediate future. Two years from now, no one knows which player will be in what kind of form and fitness. So this is the plan till 2027 ODI World Cup," he added.

Alexander Zverev looks to break Slam curse, but Flavio Cobolli aims to spoil the party

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)

Alexander Zverev steps onto Court Philippe-Chatrier for the 2026 French Open men's singles final carrying both opportunity and expectation. For the German star, this is familiar territory, his fourth Grand Slam final, but the stakes are higher than ever as he chases the elusive major title that has so far slipped through his grasp.

Standing across the net will be Italy's Flavio Cobolli, the 10th seed, who has already enjoyed a breakthrough fortnight in Paris. Having reached his maiden Grand Slam

final, the Italian now has the chance to cap a dream run by denying Zverev his long-awaited coronation. Zverev booked his place in the final with a 7-5, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Jakub Mensik in the semi-finals. The world No. 3 has dropped just two sets throughout the tournament and has looked particularly dominant behind his serve.

While several top contenders exited early, Zverev has taken full advantage, displaying the composure and consistency expected of a title favourite. Cobolli's path to the final took an unusual turn when fellow Italian Matteo Arnaldi withdrew from their semi-final due to illness, sending him through without taking the court. Nevertheless, the 24-year-old has been one of the standout performers of the tournament, producing a series of impressive displays to become one of the surprise stories of this year's Roland Garros.

FOURTH TIME LUCKY FOR ZVEREV?

This final represents another defining moment in Alexander Zverev's career. The German

has previously reached three Grand Slam finals, the 2020 US Open, the 2024 French Open, and the 2025 Australian Open, but is still searching for his first major title.

At 29, Zverev is no longer regarded as an emerging talent but as one of the sport's established stars, with a Grand Slam trophy remaining the biggest omission from an



otherwise impressive resume. His run to the final has been built on consistency and composure.

Throughout the tournament, Zverev has displayed a stronger mental edge,

particularly in pressure situations and tight sets. Against Jakub Mensik in the semi-final, he responded well after surrendering the third set, regaining control to close out the match in four sets and underline his ability to handle momentum shifts. Clay remains Zverev's strongest surface. His powerful first serve and penetrating groundstrokes allow him to control rallies from the baseline, while his extensive experience in best-of-five-set matches provides an advantage over first-time Grand Slam finalist Flavio Cobolli. Yet the mental challenge cannot be ignored. Having fallen short in all three of his previous major finals, Zverev will once again have to overcome the pressure that comes with competing for a long-awaited maiden Grand Slam crown.

COBOLLI'S CHANCE TO SPOIL THE NARRATIVE

Cobolli enters the final without pressure but with ambition. The Italian has already exceeded expectations by reaching his first major final, and his fearless style has made him one of the tournament's most exciting players. His aggressive shot-making and willingness to take risks have troubled higher-ranked opponents throughout the event.

Back-to-back IPL titles, 0 caps: Rajat Patidar might never play T20Is for India

At 33, Rajat Patidar led RCB to

back-to-back IPL titles, yet was

ignored for India's T20I reset. It

explores the brutal bias of

potential over maturity and his

stoic, immortal legacy.

MIAMI. (Agency)

When the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced its new-and-improved T20I squad for the fresh two-year cycle, they didn't just unveil a roadmap for the future. They quietly shut the door on one of the most remarkable redemption stories in the modern game. In drawing a firm line between franchise loyalty and international transition, the selectors effectively ensured that Rajat Patidar might never play a T20 International for India. The headline is as jarring as it is cruel: consecutive IPL crowns, zero

international caps.

THE CORPORATE TRAP

At 33 years old, Patidar has run directly into a structural bias that exists far beyond the cricket boundary. In any typical corporate



setup, organisations naturally gravitate towards younger individuals. Youth is equated with runway; it represents potential, a long-term asset that can be moulded, and a higher return on investment

over time. But in prioritising the horizon, organisations often overlook what the veteran brings to the table: immediate maturity, hard-earned experience, and a fully realised, unflappable skillset. Indian cricket is currently brimming with that exact brand of hyper-youthful talent. Every single season of the IPL unearths a new prodigy, each one younger and flashier than the last—personified perfectly by the selection of 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. Yet, this abundance has created a hyper-saturated ecosystem.

Much like how India views the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) as the absolute pinnacle of academic scarcity, the Indian senior cricket team has become an elite, nearly impenetrable fortress. There is a staggering surplus of world-class talent within the country who would comfortably walk into the starting eleven of almost any other cricketing nation on earth. In India, it doesn't even guarantee you a ticket to Dublin.

Mirra Andreeva channels inner Roger Federer, flips switch to French Open glory

New Delhi (Agency)

Mirra Andreeva wasn't herself on Saturday. The version of Andreeva fans have come to know in her early career often looked short of the emotional control required to consistently win at Grand Slam level.

As a teenager breaking through on the tour, she would occasionally let frustration spill over when matches started slipping out of her control. Small dips in momentum often triggered visible irritation, whether through body language, rushed decision-making, or moments of audible self-criticism between points. Earlier this year in Indian Wells, she smashed a racket and directed frustration towards the crowd during a third-round exit. She was also in tears after losing the Madrid Open final to Marta Kostyuk just weeks later. But the Mirra Andreeva who stepped onto Centre Court against Maja Chwalinska was different. She was composed, almost unshakable, staying calm even when momentum threatened to swing away from her. Nothing seemed to disturb her rhythm or clarity. She was calm and composed, as if

in a meditative state, showing no signs of panic even when Chwalinska broke her serve thrice. On the big day, it almost felt like Roger Federer had taken over the court



through Mirra Andreeva, an embodiment of his trademark serenity under pressure. And why not? Mirra was, in a way, trying to emulate her idol. The result: a maiden Grand Slam title.

THE FEDERER INSPIRATION

Federer is remembered for his calm, composed, ice-cool presence on court, especially in high-pressure moments. Early in his career, however, he admitted to being

more emotional, occasionally losing control, throwing racquets, and showing visible frustration during matches.

Over time, he worked on refining his temperament and learned to channel those emotions in a more controlled and productive way. For Mirra, Federer has always been an inspiration. Watching his composure under pressure reinforced the belief that a steady mindset can matter as much as technical skill in achieving success. "I watched a lot of Roger's matches here. Obviously I'm never going to have the same aura -- no one's going to have the same aura, but I wanted to try to impersonate the way he behaves a little on court, because I love watching how he used to play," Mirra said after the match. Federer himself has described his mental approach as a balance between fire and ice: the fire being his desire to win, and the ice being his ability to accept mistakes and stay composed under pressure. At Roland Garros, Mirra carried that same duality, fire in her heart to finally taste Grand Slam success.



As he is a small child, he is still a minor. When he is travelling with the men's team, who are all adults, therefore, we deem it proper that his parents or anybody from the family can travel with him to Sri Lanka," Saikia said.

"We will make a request to his parents. If they are willing to go, then they can go. In fact, his father is travelling to Sri Lanka tomorrow. That is our thinking. And after that, if his parents also wish to go to England, BCCI will support that because he is a kid. So, he would need some time to assimilate with the senior boys. So, from that perspective, we are helping. This is not something we allow all parents to do. It is not that, but because he is 15 years old, he should feel comfortable, and he should take some time to adjust to the adult world," the BCCI secretary added.

India outclass Bangladesh to win SAFF Women's Championship after seven years

India defeated Bangladesh 3-

1 in the SAFF Women's

Championship final to clinch a

record-extending sixth title,

ending a seven-year wait and

completing an unbeaten

campaign.

Margao. (Agency)

India clinched the SAFF Women's Championship title for the sixth time after defeating defending champions Bangladesh 3-1 in the final on Saturday, ending a seven-year wait for the regional crown.

Goals from Pyari Xaxa, Sanfida Nongrum and Lynda Kom Serto helped the hosts cap off a

dominant campaign in style. Bangladesh's Ritu Porna Chakma scored the only goal India conceded throughout the tournament, but it proved little more than a consolation as the hosts reclaimed the trophy they last won in 2019. The triumph marked India's first SAFF Women's Championship title since 2019 after they had failed to reach the final in the previous two editions. Bangladesh had emerged champions in both 2022 and 2024, but there was to be no hat-trick of titles as India produced a commanding performance in front of their home supporters. India finished the tournament with a perfect record, winning all their matches, scoring 18 goals and conceding just once.

INDIA DOMINATE EARLY EXCHANGES

The final brought together the region's two strongest sides, with India looking to reclaim their place at the top of South Asian women's football and Bangladesh aiming to defend their title. Manisha Kalyan was handed her first start of the tournament as India sought to impose themselves from the outset. The

hosts controlled possession during the opening stages and fashioned the better opportunities. Sanfida Nongrum was the first



to threaten, firing over from a difficult angle, before Astam Oraon squandered a golden chance in the 16th minute after Bangladesh goalkeeper Mile Akter failed to deal with a long ball from Nirmala Devi Phanjouam. Bangladesh remained dangerous on the counter and nearly found the breakthrough

when Ritu Porna Chakma curled a corner directly towards goal, only for the ball to drift narrowly over the crossbar.

India continued to push forward and were denied again when Mile Akter produced a fine save to keep out Manisha Kalyan's powerful half-volley. PYARI STRIKES AS FINAL BURSTS INTO LIFE

The breakthrough finally arrived in the 42nd minute through Pyari Xaxa.

The forward showed excellent footwork inside the penalty area before getting a shot away. A deflection off Bangladesh defender Surovi Akter looped over Mile Akter and into the net, giving India a deserved lead. However, the advantage lasted only a few minutes.

Deep into first-half stoppage time, Bangladesh struck back through Ritu Porna Chakma. The forward found space down the left flank and drilled a low effort beyond goalkeeper Panthoi Chanu Elangbam to level the scores and hand India their first conceded goal of the tournament.

Dia Mirza

**Says Parents' Split Made Her Responsible:
'My Father Had A Strong Point Of View'**

Dia Mirza has long been among the few actors who have consistently used their public platform to speak about environmental protection, wildlife conservation and conscious living. But for Dia, this connection with nature was not something she discovered after fame. It was shaped early in life by her family, her childhood surroundings and the values she inherited at home. During a conversation with Soha Ali Khan on her podcast, Dia opened up about her parents' separation, the ethical choices that defined her father, and how those early experiences made her more responsible.

Dia Mirza On How Her Parents' Separation Shaped Her

Dia recalled that one of the reasons her parents separated was because her father had a firm moral compass when it came to the kind of work he was willing to accept. She said, "One of the reasons why my parents separated was because my father had such a strong point of view about the projects that he would take on."

The *Rehnaa Hai Terre Dil Mein* actress shared that her father, who was an industrial fair designer, once refused a lucrative project after learning that the factory he had been asked to design was releasing effluents into a nearby river. Even though the family needed the money, he chose not to take it up.

Dia recalled, "I remember one of the most loud fights between my parents was about this, and he said, 'No, I won't do it.' And my mom was like, 'Who's going to pay the bills? I mean, we've got to pay for her school. There's all this expense, and we don't have the luxury to say no.' He said, 'No, we but we always have a choice.'"

Dia Mirza's Childhood Connection With Nature

Dia also spoke about how her love for the environment began in childhood. She remembered spending much of her early years outdoors with her adoptive father, going sailing, trekking and exploring the natural world around her. Growing up in a home surrounded by mango, guava and chiku trees, Dia said she developed a deep appreciation for nature very early in life. Those experiences later became closely tied to her work as an environmental advocate.

Dia Mirza On Taking A Sabbatical At 24

During the conversation, Dia also opened up about a turning point in her career when professional success no longer felt fulfilling. At the age of 24, she decided to step away from work and take a two-year sabbatical.



Akshay Kumar Shows Off His 'Horsepower' To Rajpal Yadav In Hilarious Welcome To The Jungle BTS Clip



Akshay Kumar has once again raised excitement for his upcoming comedy entertainer, *Welcome To The Jungle*, by sharing a fun behind-the-scenes moment with co-star Rajpal Yadav. The actor took to social media to post a clip from the sets, giving fans a glimpse of the madness that awaits them in the much-anticipated film.

Taking to his Instagram handle, Akshay Kumar shared the BTS video in which he is seen teasing Rajpal Yadav. "It was fun showing off my horsepower to @rajpalofficial Welcome To The Jungle is more jungle than you can imagine!! See you in cinemas on 26th June, 2026!" read the caption. One of the fans wrote, "Akshay we proud of you you always down to earth sir." Another wrote, "Nothing, just Akshay Kumar things."

Directed by Ahmed Khan, *Welcome to the Jungle* boasts a massive ensemble cast of over 30 actors, each a benchmark of talent and known for their excellent comic timing—a combination that is a rare sight on the big screen. Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, Jackie Shroff, Raveena Tandon, Disha Patani, Jacqueline Fernandez, Arshad Warsi, Paresh Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, Johnny Lever, Aftab Shivdasani, Lara Dutta, Shreyas Talpade, Tusshar Kapoor, Daler Mehndi, Farida Jalal, Krishna Abhishek, Kiku Sharda, Kiran Kumar, Mukesh Tiwari, Yashpal Sharma, Vindu Dara Singh, Nawab Shah, Urvashi Rautela, Puneet Issar, Arjun Firoz Khan, late Pankaj Dheer, Sudesh Berry, Hemant Pandey, Zakir Hussain, Sayaji Shinde, and many more all come together to deliver an epic entertainer.

AA Nadiadwala and Star Studios present, in association with Cape of Good Films and Seeta Films, *Welcome to the Jungle*. It is a Base Industries Group and Seeta Films production and is directed by Ahmed Khan. The film is all set to hit theatres worldwide on 26th June 2026. News18 Showsha recently spoke to the movie's director, Ahmed Khan, about the film. When asked why the original cast was not retained, Khan shared, "So the thought was very different. If you see *Welcome*, it is a film that is regularly made, and there is nothing like a similar cast."

Did Agent Vinod Flop Because Of Saif Ali Khan And Kareena Kapoor? Co-Star Makes Shocking Claims



Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor are one of the most loved couples in town. They never fail to dish out major couple goals with their adorable chemistry, candid moments, and heartwarming family pictures. Before tying the knot in 2012, the duo dated for several years and shared screen space in films such as *Agent Vinod*, *Kurbaan*, *Omkara*, and *Tashan*. However, *Agent Vinod*, directed by Sriram Raghavan, failed to make an impact at the box office. In a recent interview, their co-star Lalit Parimoo claimed that Saif and Kareena were the reason behind the film's underwhelming box office performance.

In an interview with Siddharth Kannan, Lalit Parimoo claimed that Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor's interference contributed to *Agent Vinod*'s failure at the box office. When the senior actor was asked the reason why *Agent Vinod* did not work, he took the power couple's names. He said, "I think the main reason was that there was too much interference from the stars – Saif and Kareena. The way Sriram wanted to make that film, he couldn't make it that way. He was constantly being told what he should do, so it became a mess. The writing and the direction team... They didn't get to present what they wanted. That was the flaw of the film."

Lalit Parimoo shares a long-standing professional relationship with Sriram Raghavan, having collaborated with him since their television days in the 1990s. He further stated that filmmaking is ultimately a director's medium and that those involved should trust and follow the director's vision. He added, "Film is a director's medium, so if the director has vision, people should just follow that. And if the director has cast any actor, they should only take the actor's suggestions if they are valid. If the actor is suggesting something because they are a star, then it means nothing. These kind of adjustments ruin the film." When asked whether Sriram had ever spoken to him about the challenges he faced during the making of the film, Lalit said that the filmmaker had not gone into detail about his ordeal. However, he recalled Raghavan mentioning the interference he encountered during the project.

Taapsee Pannu

**Returns To Social Media After A Year,
Reveals Pressure To Stay Visible Online**

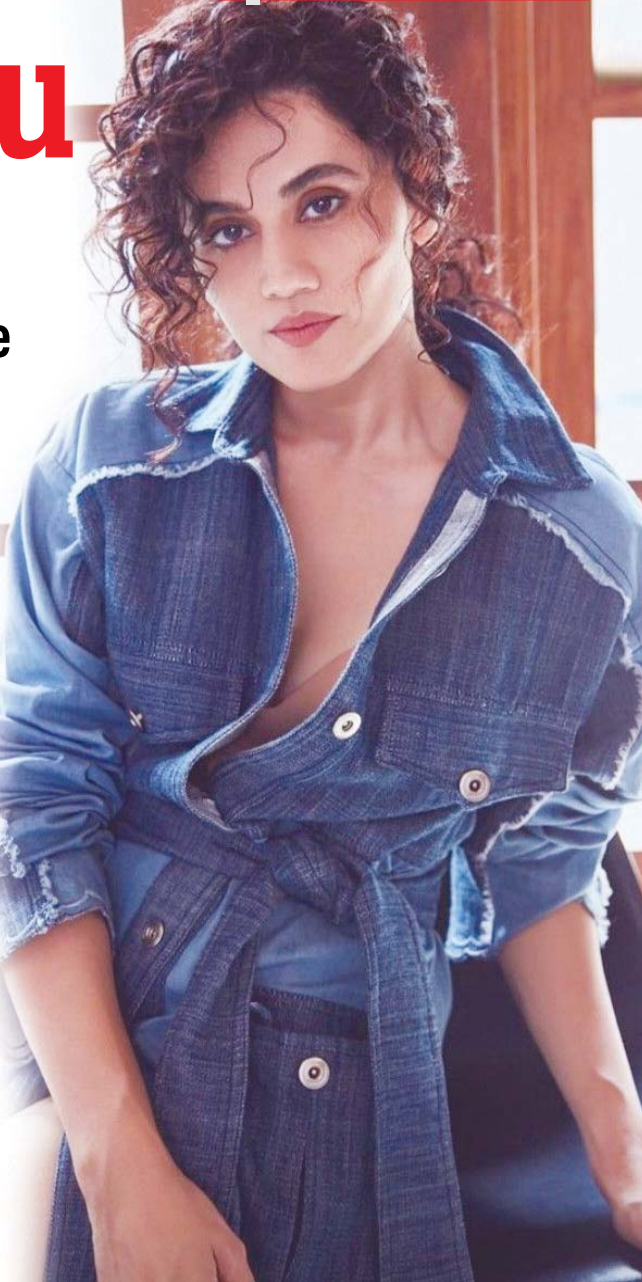
For many celebrities today, social media is as much a part of the job as film promotions and public appearances. But actor Taapsee Pannu recently found herself stepping away from the constant online hustle, choosing instead to focus on life beyond the screen. Now, after spending close to a year keeping a low profile on social media, she has returned to digital platforms, though not without mixed feelings about the expectations that come with it. The actor recently reconnected with followers by asking them what kind of content they would like to see from her. Speaking to HTCity, Taapsee revealed that her decision to become less active online began sometime last year and was driven entirely by personal reasons.

"I did not announce that I would go slow on social media, this was something I did for myself unlike my work. The detox was because of multiple reasons. It felt like you are always in the race of starting trends or participating in trends. It was exhausting. I wanted to live my life and not constantly check social media," Pannu tells us. To make the break easier, she removed social media applications from her phone and only checked them occasionally through her iPad.

"I would use it once in three days or less. I started enjoying living real life and it became addictive. Actors are also told not to expose themselves too much. Otherwise, why would people come to theatres to watch you? That logic made sense to me," she says.

According to Taapsee, reducing her online presence also helped her reclaim time that she felt was being lost to the demands of maintaining a digital profile. She noted that the change led to frequent questions from people around her.

"I felt like my day started evaporating. The questions that followed were of all sorts- you have not been around are you okay, where have you vanished. The questions were to an extent that your feed only looks about movies and brands, why aren't you posting?" However, staying away from social media also came with professional consequences. The actor said she was repeatedly told that brands increasingly prefer celebrities who are highly active online.



NEWS BOX

Russian drone strikes kill two in Ukraine

KYIV. (Agency)

Russian drone strikes killed two people in Ukraine, officials said Sunday, as world leaders gathered in London to discuss piling pressure on Moscow over its four-year war. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will meet the leaders of France, Germany and Britain on Sunday for talks on the way forward as Russia suffers military setbacks in the invasion of its neighbour. A Russian drone strike killed a 56-year-old man working as a minibus driver in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine wrote on Telegram on Sunday.

A 59-year-old man was killed in a separate attack in the central Dnipropetrovsk region, when Russian drones and aerial bombs rained down over two districts, regional military chief Oleksandr Ganzha posted on Telegram on Sunday. The attacks wounded a 35-year-old man and damaged infrastructure, Ganzha said.

Ukraine recaptured more territory than it lost to Russian forces in May for the second straight month, AFP analysis of data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) showed earlier this month. Russia's offensive has meanwhile led to rising prices, tax hikes, two-decade-high borrowing costs, business shutdowns and labour shortages, putting the economy in its trickiest spot since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Zelensky proposed a face-to-face meeting with Vladimir Putin in an open letter to the Russian leader on Thursday, saying he was also ready for a "full ceasefire". Putin, speaking at Russia's flagship economic forum on Friday, rejected suggestions the Russian economy had collapsed, saying "we have descended to the same level at which Eurozone countries have been experiencing growth for the past few years."

At least 12 people shot at Ohio festival as search for suspects continues

World. (Agency)

A shooting near a community festival in Toledo, Ohio, wounded at least 12 people, and police said a search for the suspects was ongoing following an outbreak of gunfire that sent crowds scrambling for cover.

Two of the wounded were in critical condition, Toledo Deputy Police Chief Joe Heffernan said. He said it appeared there were at least two people firing weapons who were "probably shooting at each other." The Toledo Police Department said the shooting happened near the Old West End Festival, an annual gathering of live music and home tours in a historic district of the city. The department said an active search was underway for those responsible.

"I am deeply concerned about the situation in Toledo tonight. Summer festivals should be safe spaces for families to spend time together without fear of violence," Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said in a statement. Multiple videos posted to social media showed people running over the sound of gunshots and emergency officials tending to others who appeared wounded.

Kevin Berry said he was sitting in the neighborhood arboretum listening to live music with his friends when he heard a handful of gunshots ring out. "Everybody hit the deck," he said.

When he looked back up, he saw a gun being tossed to the ground less than 50 feet (15 meters) away from him. Police officers who were already on-site for the festival immediately responded to the scene.

Berry, who has medical training and served in the U.S. Navy, said he walked around the area looking for potential victims who might need help. He said he saw at least five people with gunshot wounds.

'Two millennia of legacy': Indian envoy to China hails mutual learning of languages, exchange of ideas

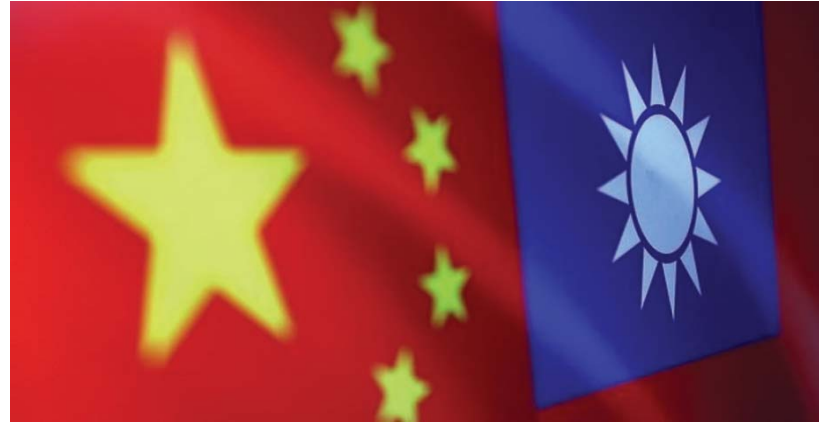
world. (Agency)

Vikram Doraiswami, Indian Ambassador to China, addressing students at Beijing Foreign Studies University, asserted that mutual learning of languages and exchange of ideas over two millennia is a defining aspect of the relationship between India and China. Doraiswami, who took charge as India's envoy to China last month, delivered a lecture on Friday and held a conversation with students and faculty members. BFSU, a premier institution for foreign languages in China, offers courses in 102 languages, including Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit and Urdu. It recently added Punjabi to its list of courses. The languages are taught primarily to Chinese students as well as diplomats and officials. Many of its students go on to work with Chinese foreign-language media organisations, including state radio and television services catering to overseas audiences. During his lecture, Doraiswami, a fluent Mandarin speaker, highlighted how the study of languages, societies and a dialogue of ideas had been a defining feature of India-China engagement for more than two millennia. "Citing examples from the Mauryan period to the modern era, he [Doraiswami] noted how exchanges between the world's two oldest continuous civilisations enriched both societies through the sharing of knowledge, philosophy, artistic traditions, technologies, and innovation," according to a post on X by the Indian Embassy in Beijing. He emphasised that such interactions historically generated mutual benefit and remained more important than ever as both countries undergo profound economic, technological and social transformation," it said. It added, "The lecture also explored the remarkable changes taking place in India today and the need for deeper knowledge, academic engagement, and people-to-people exchanges to better understand each other's contemporary realities."

Taiwan coast guard says deploys vessels in response to China operation

CHIPPEWA FALLS. (Agency)

Taiwan's coast guard said Sunday it has deployed vessels "to respond appropriately" to a Chinese operation in waters east of the island democracy, which it said "violates international law". It comes after Chinese state media reported Saturday that the "law enforcement operation" was in response to talks between Japan and the Philippines to draw a boundary in the affected waters. China, which asserts Taiwan is part of its territory, called the talks "illegal" and has claimed exclusive control over the waters. The Chinese ships have been monitored "throughout the entire process" and Taiwan "has deployed the necessary vessels to respond appropriately," the Taiwanese coast guard said in a statement. Taiwan said it had detected four Chinese government vessels departing from Xiamen port which had sailed outside Taiwanese restricted waters southwest of the island. Taiwan's coast guard dispatched more than five vessels "to assist with surveillance". The Chinese vessels were expected to arrive "in the relevant waters" on Sunday, the



statement said, adding that "China does not enjoy any sovereign rights in the waters east of Taiwan". Tokyo and Manila said last month they would start formal talks "to delimit the maritime boundary" of an economic zone and continental shelf between them, angering Beijing. On Saturday, Beijing's transport ministry organised maritime police from coastal

provinces Fujian and Guangdong to "conduct a special maritime traffic law enforcement operation in waters east of Taiwan Island", state news agency Xinhua said. The report did not give details on the operation, including how long it lasted or whether it was still ongoing, and it did not say whether maritime police dispatched ships to the area. The operation was "a

necessary action taken against Japan and the Philippines' unilateral announcement they would start negotiations on delimiting a maritime boundary" near Taiwan, Xinhua added. Taiwan said Wednesday it should be consulted on the Japan-Philippines talks. Manila and Tokyo's shared grievances over Chinese maritime territorial claims have seen them draw increasingly close in recent years. Japan and China are in territorial and economic disputes in the East China Sea, where coast guard ships from both sides routinely stage tense standoffs.

Beijing has meanwhile deployed navy and coast guard vessels in the South China Sea, in a bid to bar the Philippines from strategically important reefs and islands, leading to a string of confrontations.

Taiwan's coast guard said Saturday that a Chinese survey vessel had joined a coast guard ship in waters around Pratas Island in the northern part of the South China Sea.

The Taiwanese coast guard said it was "the first observed instance of Chinese coast guard and survey vessels acting in coordination to provoke Taiwan".

Pope Leo XIV urges Spain to stop fanning flames of polarization on first papal visit in 15 years

Leo's visit signals a return of papal attention to Europe's Christian roots after Pope Francis largely stayed away from the traditional centers of Christianity in favor of smaller Catholic communities farther away.

Christian roots after Pope Francis largely stayed away from the traditional centers of Christianity in favor of smaller Catholic communities farther away. Leo is seemingly keen to bring his message of peace, unity and human dignity to a continent sorely

people in the once-staunchly Catholic but now secularized country.

During his welcome address, Leo appealed to Spaniards, especially political leaders, to put polemics aside and invest in educating young people to appreciate diversity and complexity rather than shunning them.

"Today, the temptation to gain popularity by fanning the flames of polarization seems to have grown rather than diminished, and human dignity continues to be violated," Leo said. He appealed to Spain's place at the heart of Christian Europe to serve as a model for the rest of the continent, while also recalling the country's 800-year Moorish past, when cities like Toledo and Córdoba became, he said, "centers of dialogue between languages, religions and knowledge."

"For the love of truth, I invite everyone to set aside the divisive and polarizing narratives of your societal reality and history," he said. Doing so will help Europe "overcome sterile simplifications through the fruitful appreciation of complexity."



MADRID. (Agency)

Pope Leo XIV urged Spaniards on Saturday to stop "fanning the flames of polarization" as he arrived in Spain at a moment of political turmoil for the Socialist-led government and a credibility crisis for the Catholic Church. The American pontiff traveled to Spain dozens of times as a priest, but this is his first visit here by a pope in 15 years. And Spaniards turned out in droves to welcome Leo, with an estimated 500,000 people — many of them young — cheering "This is the youth of the pope" at a raucous evening prayer vigil in Plaza de Lima in Madrid, where Leo was treated to a rock star's welcome. Leo's visit signals a return of papal attention to Europe's

polarized over migration, the Russia-Ukraine war and anxiety over artificial intelligence. The pope, known as León XIV in Spanish, opened his weeklong trip in Madrid, greeted at the airport by the country's Catholic monarchs, King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia, and Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. He told reporters, while traveling, that he was particularly heartened by reports of a spiritual awakening among young

North Korea nuclear programme 'absolutely non-negotiable': leader's sister

SEOUL. (Agency)

North Korea's nuclear weapons programme is "absolutely non-negotiable", the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un said in a statement carried by state media on Sunday, ahead of a visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping. Pyongyang has long insisted on its right to a nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programmes although they are forbidden under the terms of UN Security Council sanctions. It enshrined its nuclear status in its constitution in 2023. "Our status as a nuclear power is absolutely non-negotiable," Kim's sister Kim Yo Jong said in a statement published by North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun, adding that the North "will not tolerate any threats". A key player in the country's communications and foreign policy, Kim Yo Jong's statement came on the eve of Xi's visit to North Korea, scheduled to take place from Monday

to Tuesday, according to state media. Beijing is a vital source of political and economic support to North Korea, which is one of the most diplomatically isolated countries in the world and under heavy international sanctions.

Xi's upcoming visit to Pyongyang would be his first in seven years, and comes after he hosted back-to-back summits with US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin last month.

Pyongyang has repeatedly declared itself an "irreversible" nuclear state since Kim Jong Un's 2019 summit with Trump collapsed over the scope of denuclearisation and sanctions relief.

North Korea's leader has since been emboldened by the war in Ukraine, securing critical support from Moscow after sending thousands of troops to fight alongside Russian forces.

He inspected a major munitions factory at the weekend and called for it to boost

production capacity, according to a separate report by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Sunday. This was "in order to supply enough quantity of missiles", KCNA quoted him as saying. False information Kim Yo Jong, in her statement, went on to slam Washington over its comments that the goal of North Korea's denuclearisation had been reaffirmed during last month's summit between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping in Beijing. The White House posted a fact sheet following the summit stating that "President Trump and President Xi confirmed their shared goal to denuclearize North Korea", which Kim Yo Jong said was false. "Some officials in the United States still have yet to awaken from their escapist and anachronistic dream," she said. "This is nothing more than Washington's habitual dissemination of false information."

Israel's permanent state of war comes with economic, social costs

JERUSALEM. (Agency)

The enormous costs of Israel's multi-front war and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's determination to turn his country into a "super-Sparta" of the Middle East are driving up the defence budget and raising fears of cutbacks in education and healthcare. The total cost of the series of interconnected regional conflicts that began with Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 stood at 405 billion shekels (\$138 billion) as of late April, according to the governor of the Bank of Israel, Amir Yaron. "That's a huge figure, more than 17 percent of GDP," he said during a recent economic conference in Herzliya, north of Tel Aviv. Just the military campaign against Iran, which began with a wave of US-Israeli strikes on February 28, incurred an additional cost of 35 billion shekels (\$12 billion) for the state up until a ceasefire took effect on April 8, according to an initial estimate by the finance ministry. Following the adoption of the 2026 budget in late March, the government noted the defence

ministry's budget had more than doubled since October 2023. To support the war effort, the government borrowed heavily on international markets in 2024 and 2025. It has reached the point where public debt now accounts for more than 69 percent of GDP, compared to 60 percent before the war, according to the Treasury.

Taxes and social security contributions have also increased. "Trauma economy" Israelis are "paying twice" for the war, said Esteban Klor, an economics professor at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. The first cost, he told AFP, is via the decline in government social spending and reduced investment in public services resulting from several successive "across-the-board" budget cuts, even as "we are... increasing the debt". Education will suffer, the quality of infrastructure will decline, as will the performance of the healthcare system, he said. The second cost is to economic growth, though this has

been less visible as the Israeli economy quickly overcame the initial shock of the war. GDP had returned to its 2022 level by 2024 and is continuing to grow at an enviable rate.

But the ongoing mobilisation of tens of



thousands of reservists since October 2023 is also taking a toll. Since... many of our workers are in the army rather than at their jobs, this affects production," Klor explained. According to a survey published

on June 1 by the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) think tank, 31 percent of respondents said they had experienced a decline in their wages or income since October 7, 2023.

The phenomenon is hitting the self-employed and lowest-income workers the hardest. At the Herzliya conference, the deputy head of budgets at the finance ministry, Tamar Levy-Boneh, warned against a "trauma economy" -- in which the sense of shock and failure from October 7 lead the military to constantly demand more funding to ensure the country's security. "The security establishment must learn to meet its needs in a way that does not undermine the standard of living and must assume its share of responsibility," Levy-Boneh said.

'Super-Sparta' But Netanyahu advocates the opposite view. In September 2025, he said Israel had no choice but to become a "super-Sparta", a reference to the ancient Greek city-state devoted entirely to war.