

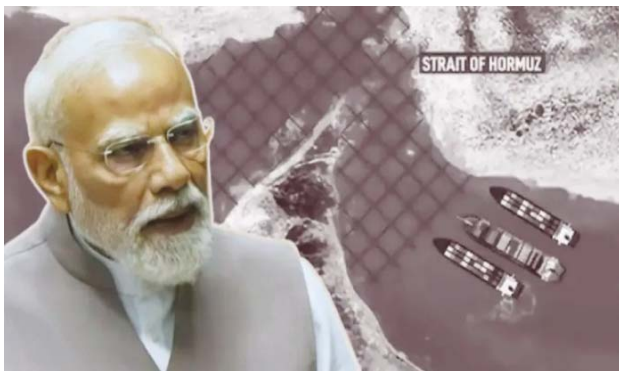
How India Walked The Middle East Tightrope Without Blinking

India's Middle East balancing act does not exist in isolation; it sits inside a larger geometry of partnerships.

New Delhi .(Agency)

When three Indian seafarers were killed in attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz earlier this week, India's response was swift but carefully calibrated: New Delhi summoned the top American diplomat not once, but twice in 48 hours.

It was a pointed signal, and India was the only country to do so through the duration of the crisis. That single act lay the essence of India's foreign policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi: principled, assertive, yet never fully in anyone's corner. The Middle East crisis was India's most demanding diplomatic stress test



in years. At stake were not just strategic partnerships but the livelihoods of nearly nine

million Indian workers across the Gulf, billions in remittances, critical energy supply chains and India's own carefully constructed identity as a global south leader that plays by its own rules.

The Ministry of External Affairs, throughout the weeks of military brinkmanship and missile exchanges, issued statements that were notable as much for what they didn't say as for what they did. Every communicate urged "restraint", called for "protection of civilians", and demanded "dialogue and diplomacy". There was no strong condemnation of any single party.

First Batch Of Women Cadets Commissioned As Officers In Defence Forces

First batch of 17 women from NDA commissioned as officers in Army Navy and Air Force after training

New Delhi .(Agency)

In a historic stride for gender inclusion in the armed forces, the first batch of women cadets trained at the National Defence Academy (NDA) has been commissioned as officers, marking a transformative moment in India's military journey.

This pioneering group of 17 women, who joined the NDA in August 2022 as part of the 148th Course, has completed their rigorous pre-commission training at their respective service academies, stepping into leadership roles with the responsibility of serving the nation.

The Indian Army welcomed nine of these officers during the Passing Out Parade of the 158th Regular Course at the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun, on June 13, 2026. The parade, reviewed by the President of India, stood as a powerful symbol of progress and commitment to equal opportunity.

In the Indian Navy, three officers were commissioned at the Spring Term 2026 Passing Out Parade held at the Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala, on May 28, 2026. Vice Admiral Sameer Saxena, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, reviewed the ceremony.



Short news

From college sweethearts to officers in uniform: Couple's shared journey

New Delhi.(Agency)

As the echoes of the ceremonial march faded and hundreds of young officers stepped out of the Indian Military Academy (IMA) as leaders of the Indian Army, one story stood out among the many moments of pride and celebration at the passing out parade in Dehradun.



For newly commissioned Lieutenant Robin Singh Talan and his wife, Lieutenant Swati Kumari of the Indian Navy, the occasion was not just the

culmination of military training. It was the fulfilment of a dream they had pursued together since their college days.

Years before they donned their respective uniforms, Robin and Swati were students united by a common aspiration: to serve the nation in the armed forces. While many youthful ambitions fade with time, theirs only grew stronger. The journey, however, was far from straightforward.

1 Killed, House Set On Fire As Water Dispute In Uttarakhand Turns Violent

Dehradun.(Agency)

Tensions and chaos showed no signs of abatement in Dehradun for a second day as protests and bulldozer action followed the death of one person in clashes over a water dispute.

The argument on Saturday evening over the supply of water to fields snowballed into a violent fight. Angry over the flow of water into the adjacent field, a group of people reached the victim's house armed with lathis, hammers and shovels. They forced their way into the house and launched an assault, according to. The man died on the spot, while his two brothers and sister-in-law



sustained serious injuries. He was identified as the social media in-charge of the BJP Yuva Morcha's OBC wing.

Arson and retaliatory violence followed. Hindu groups in the area staged a blockade even as the dead man's family refused to let his body be taken from their house until authorities took strict action. Tensions further escalated as a mob threw stones at the residences of the accused and later set one of the houses on fire. Later, authorities demolished the residence of one of the accused identified as Aman Ali. Heavy police deployment was seen in the village as of Sunday even as scores of people gathered to protest against the incident and demand justice.

Special Report: Questions Raised Over Alleged Police-Criminal Nexus in Ahmedabad's Khadia Area

Allegations Surface After Paroled Convict's Return; Traders Demand Action

Mahanagar Metro Desk / Pawan Makan

Ahmedabad. A controversy has erupted in Ahmedabad's historic Khadia locality after serious allegations emerged regarding the conduct of certain police personnel and their alleged links to a convicted criminal currently out on parole. According to local sources, Montu Namdar, a convicted criminal serving a life sentence in the BJP worker Bobby murder case, recently returned to Khadia on parole. Allegations have surfaced that shortly after his release, he allegedly threatened a local complainant, identified as Pavan Gandhi, leading to fear and tension in the area. Following the incident, a police complaint was reportedly filed. However, the matter took a controversial turn when allegations began circulating that certain individuals associated with the local police administration may have attempted to influence the handling of the case. Local discussions and source-based claims have pointed toward alleged involvement of individuals identified as Narendra Singh and Digubha. Critics allege that efforts were made to shield the accused from legal consequences. Unverified claims further suggest that financial dealings may have taken place



involving persons connected to the accused. Some local residents have also alleged that attempts were made to influence senior officials. These allegations have not been independently verified, and no official confirmation has been issued by authorities. The con-

trovery has also reignited complaints from traders operating in Khadia and the Soni Bazaar area. According to local business owners and source-based accounts, concerns have been raised regarding alleged extortion, pressure tactics and the existence of illegal ac-

tivities in parts of the locality. Several traders claim they have been facing intimidation and are demanding a fair and transparent investigation into the matter. No official findings have yet been released regarding these allegations. The incident has sparked public debate over accountability and law enforcement transparency. Residents and traders are demanding that senior Ahmedabad Police officials and the State Home Department conduct an impartial inquiry into the allegations. Many believe that a transparent investigation is necessary to restore public confidence and address concerns being raised by the local community. As of now, authorities have not publicly responded to the allegations. The matter remains under public scrutiny, with residents awaiting clarification and action from the concerned departments.

Kakoli Dastidar's son sues Mamata Banerjee, seeks apology over ticket row remarks

New Delhi.(Agency)

Trinamool Congress MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar's son, psychiatrist Dr Baidyanath Ghosh Dastidar, has initiated legal action against several senior party leaders, issuing a legal notice to former West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

The legal notice, also served to MPs Kalyan Banerjee, Sougata Roy and Mahua Moitra, along with party leader Sonali Guha, seeks a public apology and retraction over alleged statements claiming that he had sought a party ticket to contest the Barasat Assembly seat and over personal allegations directed at his family. Dastidar has warned that failure to respond appropriately could lead to defamation proceedings.

Earlier this month, Mamata Banerjee, in a

veiled reference, had said during a press conference that "some people" had approached her for an MLA ticket from Barasat, but the party top brass turned them



down. She went ahead and said that while "she" is already an MP, does it mean that everyone from her family should be an MP or

an MLA? In a notice filed by Advocate Pooja Shukla, Dastidar categorically denied that he had ever expressed interest in contesting elections from Barasat or seeking an MLA nomination from the constituency.

He described claims suggesting that political disagreements involving his mother stemmed from his alleged electoral ambitions as "false".

He also strongly rejected remarks allegedly made by Sonali Guha claiming that he, his brother and his mother, Barasat MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, regularly consumed alcohol. Dastidar termed the allegations baseless and defamatory. The legal notice states that Dastidar is a medical professional with an established academic and clinical background and argues that public references to him have caused reputational damage. Dastidar "neither sought nor desired any

Baidyanath Ghosh Dastidar has said that he will initiate defamation proceedings against top TMC leaders if they failed to respond appropriately to the legal notice served by him.

nomination" from the Barasat Assembly constituency and rejects any suggestion that political developments involving his mother were linked to denial of a party ticket, the notice said. At the same time, the communication makes a counterclaim, stating that representatives associated with political consultancy activities repeatedly approached him to consider contesting from Barasat.

News box

Woman head constable held taking Rs 50k bribe, SHO transferred

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The state anti-corruption bureau (ACB) on Friday arrested a woman head constable posted at Manesar women's police station for allegedly accepting a Rs 50,000 bribe to drop family members of an accused from a marital dispute case. The following day, police commissioner Sibash Kabiraj transferred the station house officer (SHO), Neha Rathi, of the police station to Police Lines and ordered a departmental inquiry into supervisory lapses. The accused, head constable Kavita, was caught in a sting operation after a man complained to ACB that she had demanded the money to remove the names of his brothers, Balram and Mukesh, from a case his wife had registered against him and other family members at the women's police station. After verifying the allegations, ACB laid a trap and arrested her while she was allegedly accepting the money. ACB registered a case against Kavita under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act (demanding or accepting bribes) and Section 308(2) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (extortion). She was subsequently produced before a court and remanded to judicial custody. Police said Kabiraj viewed the incident as a failure of supervision at the station level, and that the departmental inquiry would examine the circumstances of the alleged bribery and determine whether any supervisory lapses occurred or whether further action is warranted against other personnel. "The department follows a zero-tolerance policy against corruption. Strict departmental action will be taken against any police personnel found involved in corruption or irregularities," Kabiraj said.

3 held for ruckus at toll booth, thrashing staff

Noida.(Agency)

Three men were arrested Friday for assaulting a toll booth employee at Luharli toll plaza on NH-91, where a 35-vehicle convoy accompanying a history-sheeter released from Bulandshahr jail had refused to pay toll and broken through the lanes on June 10 night. When toll employee Lokman and his colleagues tried to stop the convoy, a fight broke out. Lokman sustained serious head injuries and collapsed at the scene. Acting on intelligence, a team from Dadri police arrested Karan Yadav, Saurabh and Akash, all residents of Wave City in Ghaziabad, from Kot village. Police said the three assaulted and threatened Lokman and also destroyed the toll barrier. Four vehicles, including two black Scorpions



and a black Thar without number plates and a white Brezza bearing UP registration, which were part of the convoy were recovered based on disclosures by the accused. A case was registered at Dadri police station on a complaint filed by the toll plaza manager. Further investigation is underway to identify and arrest others involved in the incident, police said.

How to reach Noida airport? Police chip in with route advice

Noida.(Agency)

With Noida International Airport opening for passenger and cargo operations on June 15, the district administration and traffic police have issued a comprehensive traffic and parking plan covering private vehicles, commercial cargo carriers, taxis, buses and auto-rickshaws arriving from across UP, Delhi and neighbouring regions. The airport is approximately 65 km from Noida City Centre, 70 km from Ghaziabad and around 80 km from Delhi's Mayur Vihar. Travel times are expected to range between 75 and 120 minutes depending on traffic, with the Yamuna Expressway providing a largely signal-free high-speed route. While 110 electric buses and four hydrogen-powered city buses will serve airport connectivity, cabs and private vehicles are expected to be the primary mode of access. Vehicles from Greater Noida West and Surajpur will reach the airport via the Yamuna Expressway through Pari Chowk and Zero Point, entering through Gate 1. Those arriving from Delhi via Chilla and the DND Flyway will travel through the Noida and Yamuna expressways, entering Gate 1 via the expressway interchange. Passengers from Agra, Mathura and Aligarh will access the airport through the Yamuna Expressway after crossing Jewar toll plaza and Sabota underpass. Vehicles from Bulandshahr, Khurja, Gahana and Jahangirpur have similar arrangements, while travellers from Jewar, Tappal and Palwal can approach through the Jewar township route. Commuters from Meerut, Hapur and Ghaziabad using the Eastern Peripheral Expressway have been assigned a dedicated route through Sirsa toll, Kasna and the Yamuna Expressway before the airport interchange. Commercial and cargo vehicles will use separate routes to avoid interference with passenger traffic. Cargo carriers from Agra and the Noida Expressway side will use Jewar-Jhajhar Road and enter through Gate 2 near Kishorpur village. Dedicated routes have also been designated for vehicles from eastern and western Uttar Pradesh. The airport has designated four parking zones: Zone A for general parking, Zone B for app-based cabs and pick-and-drop operations, Zone C for staff vehicles and Zone D for passenger vehicles. Taxi operators must remain in designated zones and move to pickup points only after receiving a booking.

A good life without death is not possible

P. Moraribapu's Shri Mukhethi 'Manas Mrityulok' started in Kochi, Kerala



Velavdar.
(By Takhubhai Sanders)

The 979th story of the series of stories from P. Moraribapu's Shri Mukhethi was started in Kochi, Kerala. This story was named 'Manas Mrityulok'. The Mangalacharan of the story was organized on June 13 by the family of late Ramaben Jasani. Expressing the welcome, the daughters of the



family presented their feelings in Hindi and Gujarati. In it, they said that Pujya Moraribapu has changed our lives and the lives of our family through the Ram Katha. His grandmother is Pujya Ramaben Jasani give it value. They expressed their gratitude to Pujya Bapu for making the story Manorathi. Entering into the dialogue in the story, pu. Morari

Bapu said that here we give the name of this story 'Manas Mrityulok'. Here the story was sung 42 years ago, stories about heaven and death have also been sung and narrated before. This land is Shankaribhoomi, where Lord Shankaracharya appeared, the place is just a little far from here. 'Mangal Karni Kali Man Harni' means that which does good and takes away Kali Man Harni, which is taken away from the mind. The feces are destroyed but its root is not destroyed. The root means that it is necessary to be destroyed so that the sprouts of evil do not flourish! Without death, there is no taste of life, so death is inevitable. Everyone should ask for death, Moksha,

immortality, as the Vedas also say. Through death, we enter into the great death. The mind says, improve your own mind. He talks about improving his life, not about teaching others! If Brahma is in Brahmalo, Vishnu is in Vaikuntha, then Lord Mahadev is in Mrityulok. Bapu also established the importance of the five peaks, which include Kailash, Girnar Abu, Kamadgiri and Govardhan. Journalist Saurabh Shah, Dr. Manoj Joshi, Dr. Bhadraru Vacharajani and Nitin Vadgama etc. were present in today's story. Nilesbhai Jasani of the Manorathi family and all are making very beautiful arrangements at this natural place.

Showers cool Gurgaon, but relief only short-lived; temperature to rise 4-6 degrees

Noida.(Agency)

Thunderstorms and light rain brought respite from warm and humid conditions on Saturday, bringing down the minimum temperature by around two degrees Celsius. IMD, however, has predicted a gradual rise in maximum temperature by 4-6 degrees Celsius over the next five days, with no major change expected thereafter.

On Saturday, the minimum temperature at Gurgaon KVK settled at 22.1 degrees Celsius, down from 24.4 degrees Celsius recorded a day earlier. At the Gurgaon AWS, the minimum temperature dropped to 20.1 degrees Celsius from 22.3 degrees Celsius on Friday. Similarly, NorthCap University recorded a minimum temperature of 22 degrees Celsius, compared to 23.3 degrees Celsius a day before. The overnight weather activity also brought light showers across parts of the city. Till 8.30 am on Saturday, Gurgaon AWS recorded 6.5 mm of rainfall, while

NorthCap University logged 2.5 mm.

Meanwhile, maximum temperatures witnessed a slight increase. Gurgaon AWS recorded a maximum temperature of 34.8



degrees Celsius, up by 2.6 degrees Celsius over the previous day. Gurgaon KVK registered 34.6 degrees Celsius, a rise of 2

degrees Celsius, while NorthCap University recorded the highest maximum temperature among the city's stations at 36.2 degrees Celsius, which was 2.6 degrees Celsius higher than on Friday.

According to IMD, a western disturbance persists as a cyclonic circulation over north Haryana and adjoining areas. Another upper-air cyclonic circulation, earlier positioned over central Pakistan and adjoining northwest Rajasthan, now lies over central Pakistan and adjoining west Rajasthan. "Rainfall activity is likely to become more isolated in the coming days, with only a few places expected to receive light showers and thunderstorms. The intensity of thunderstorms will reduce compared to the previous spell, and temperatures are expected to gradually rise, although brief spells of rain at isolated locations cannot be ruled out. No severe weather event is anticipated at present," an IMD official said.

WFH may come back as Haryana looks to expand fuel austerity to corporates

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The work-from-home routine that became normal during the Covid-19 pandemic may return to parts of Haryana's corporate sector, with the state govt preparing to ask industry bodies to help firms revive remote working wherever feasible. The push, along with staggered office timings, is aimed at easing gridlock and cutting fuel burn and energy demand. The proposal is an extension of austerity steps the state has already rolled out for its own departments and agencies. The measures include limiting vehicle use and relying more on virtual meetings — something the govt wants the private sector to adopt as well. If implemented, the city — home to offices of several Fortune 500 companies and headquarters of major Indian firms — would feel its effect the most. According to some estimates, nearly five lakh cars enter the city every day from

Delhi, Faridabad and other NCR areas, then head back after office hours, making daily commuting a dominant source of traffic. "If vehicles of officegoers are taken off the roads, they will appear significantly less crowded. A majority of the city's traffic comprises daily commuters travelling to and from workplaces," a govt official said. A notice issued by chief secretary Anurag Rastogi said the step was prompted by continuing disruptions to global supply chains linked to the conflict in West Asia, which have pushed up fuel prices and added pressure to imports and the wider economy. "The industries department has been asked to engage with industry bodies such as Nasscom, CII and Ficci to encourage work-from-home arrangements wherever feasible and introduce staggered office timings to reduce traffic congestion and fuel consumption," the communication

said. Nitin Sahini, president of Foqal Analytics, said his firm prioritises efficiency, cost, effort and the environment, and backed the govt's approach as sensible. "For knowledge-based industries, hybrid working has proven that productivity and client service can be maintained effectively while reducing commuting time," said Sahini, adding that the gains could include lower fuel use, lighter congestion and cleaner air as well. He said adoption will differ by sector, but companies that can offer flexibility should weigh it seriously. "Responsible use of resources benefits employees, businesses and society alike," Sahini said. Pramod Singh, who works with a global company, said businesses operated fine with WFH during Covid-19. "It has no impact on productivity. In fact, employees and companies save on rental and office expenses," he added.

DTCP to resume crackdown on illegal builds in DLF phases next week

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

The department of town and country planning (DTCP) will resume enforcement action against illegal constructions in DLF Phase 3 after the Punjab and Haryana high court, in a May 29 order, limited an earlier interim restraint to only those property owners impleaded as additional respondents in the matter. Final restoration orders were issued on June 12 and 13 for properties not covered by any stay or status quo directions, and owners have been directed to voluntarily remove deviations from sanctioned building plans. The department is now set to expand into a large-scale drive across DLF phases 1 to 5, beginning with Phase 3 next week.

The campaign will be led by district town planner (enforcement) Amit Madholia and will subsequently cover phases 1, 2, 4 and 5. The action will target illegal extensions, constructions in stilt parking areas, structures raised in violation of sanctioned building plans, and unauthorised commercial establishments — including paying guest



accommodations and guest houses — operating from residential properties. The enforcement push follows the high court's clarification in the DLF City Residents Welfare Association case that its Nov 26, 2025, interim order would henceforth protect only those who had been formally impleaded. According to department

records, more than 3,500 properties across the five phases are no longer covered by judicial protection and are therefore eligible for action. DTCP had earlier issued notices to 5,099 property owners for violations, with details listed on its website. Property owners who have joined the court proceedings have been granted

time until July 6 to file their replies. Speaking orders have already been passed in cases where owners submitted responses to departmental notices. Enforcement action against properties outside judicial protection, however, has already begun: the district town planning and enforcement (DTPE) office issued final restoration orders to more than 300 properties in DLF Phase 3 on Friday and Saturday. Beyond structures, the drive will also target encroachments on roads and right-of-way areas. Dedicated enforcement teams have been formed and machinery and logistical support put in place. "I appeal to all property owners to voluntarily remove illegal constructions and rectify violations immediately. Failure to do so will invite strict action, including demolition and sealing, under the Haryana Urban Areas Development and Regulation Act, 1975, and other applicable provisions," said Madholia. He warned that no requests for relaxation would be entertained and that any attempt to obstruct officials on duty could result in FIRs for hindering govt work. The drive is expected to be one of the most extensive enforcement exercises in DLF colonies in recent years, as authorities move to restore planning norms and curb the growing misuse of residential properties for commercial purposes.

Short news

Cracks on elephant corridor flyover in along NH-55 in Odisha's Sambalpur sparks safety concern

SAMBALPUR.(Agency)

A major mishap was averted after a crack was reportedly seen on the elephant corridor flyover along NH-55 near Rairakhol in Sambalpur district on Friday night, raising concerns over the structural integrity of the recently commissioned structure.

The matter sparked public outrage after photos and videos of the crack went viral on social media. As per sources, the flyover was opened to traffic around six months back, while the elephant corridor was completed around a year ago.

The appearance of structural damage within such a short span has drawn triggered question about the quality of construction and monitoring of the project.

Members of the Rairakhol Citizens' Committee on Saturday staged a road blockade at Bhima Bhoi Chhak, alleging that poor-quality construction was responsible for the crack. They demanded a thorough investigation into the matter and action against those behind the lapses.

Local residents claimed that both execution and supervision of the project were inadequate. They alleged that authorities concerned had failed to ensure proper monitoring during construction, resulting in premature deterioration of the structure.

Official sources said, the administration and police immediately barricaded the affected stretch and informed officials of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). Alternative traffic arrangements were being planned, while efforts were underway to repair the damaged portion in the morning.

Expressing concern, senior Congress leader Assaf Ali Khan alleged the repair work was carried out in a hurried manner without any technical assessment or detailed inspection. "The authorities must conduct a thorough structural audit, fix accountability for any lapses, and ensure that such incidents do not recur," he demanded.

Madurai's midnight dogfather: The councillor who feeds 600 stray dogs every night

MADURAI.(Agency)

Every night, after all restaurants in the city of Madurai have drawn their shutters, a giant vessel brims with rice, chicken, pumpkin, beetroot, and spices in a modest kitchen in Arapalayam. The feast is prepared for hundreds of special customers who place no orders, leave no reviews.

Nearly 600 abandoned four-legged souls wait instead at street corners, beneath shuttered shops and under poles of amber streetlight, ears pricked up for the familiar whirr of a two-wheeler. At a time when India's stray dogs have become the subject of heated public battles and courtroom debates, K Jayachandran (37) has chosen a quieter form of revolt. For seven years, he has been spending his nights feeding hundreds of community dogs beyond his neighbourhood of Arapalayam, travelling up to 30 km to Duraisamy Nagar, Alagappan Nagar, Madakulam, and Singarayar Colony. This is not the work of an NGO flush with funds. It is the sole, stubborn mission of a city councillor who believes that caring for the voiceless is the most profound form of public service. The councillor of Ward 62 in Madurai began with feeding just two adopted strays outside his home. Over time, the small pressure cooker gave way to a much larger pot, and eventually to a colossal vessel. Today, two separate kitchens operate daily – one catering to around 150 dogs, and the other, to nearly 450 – churning out 40 kilograms of rice, or as Jayachandran puts it, "almost like making biryani," seven days a week, without exception.

History in skies: NDA's first women batch joins IAF in Telangana's Dundigal

HYDERABAD.(Agency)

Marking a significant milestone in the armed forces' journey towards greater gender integration, the first batch of five women cadets from the National Defence Academy (NDA) was commissioned into the Indian Air Force (IAF) during the Combined Graduation Parade (CGP) of the 217th Course at the Air Force Academy (AFA) in Dundigal on Saturday.

The women officers had passed out from the NDA on May 30, 2025, before undergoing branch-specific training at the Air Force Academy. Of the five officers awarded wings, two will join the fighter stream, while the remaining three will serve in the maintenance and ground duty branches.

Reviewing the parade, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hailed the growing role of women in the armed forces and said their increasing presence was making the IAF stronger and more balanced.

"With the increase of women's strength, our Air Force is becoming more balanced and stronger. This reflects the strength of our inclusive force," he said.

The ceremony saw a total of 231 Flight Cadets receive the President's Commission after successfully completing their pre-commissioning training. The graduating batch comprised 194 men and 37 women across various branches of the IAF.

Guaranteed seat, no surprises: The premium bus boom reshaping Mumbai's office commute

Mumbai.(Agency)

For decades, Mumbai's public transport system has been anchored by its suburban railways, public buses and, more recently, metro networks, carrying millions of commuters across the metropolitan region every day. While these systems continue to dominate the city's mobility landscape, a quieter shift is underway among Mumbai's white-collar workforce.

Across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), lakhs of office-goers are increasingly opting for app-based premium bus services, citing convenience, predictability and comfort. But even with one of the world's most affordable and extensive public transport systems at their disposal, why are commuters willing to pay significantly more for these services?

The hidden cost of a 'cheap' commute

Western Railway (WR) currently operates 1,414 AC and non-AC suburban train services daily, while Central Railway (CR) runs 1,820 services across its network. Together, the two

corridors ferry over 70 lakh passengers every day. Fares range from Rs 5 to Rs 20 for non-AC travel and Rs 35 to Rs 115 for air-conditioned services.



Yet, for many commuters, the train journey is only one component of a much longer and more complicated commute. Reaching workplaces often involves multiple interchanges, long walks, crowded stations and unpredictable waiting times. To bridge these gaps, commuters rely on a mix of services including buses

operated by BEST, Navi Mumbai Municipal Transport (NMMT) and Thane Municipal Transport, along with metro networks in select areas, auto-rickshaws, shared taxis and app-based ride-hailing services.

It is within this fragmented transport ecosystem that premium bus operators such as Cityflo and Chalo have found a growing market. For 40-year-old Vihang Karnik, a resident of Ghodbunder Road, premium buses have transformed an otherwise stressful commute. "Before Cityflo and Chalo came into the picture, I spent nearly half an hour and an additional Rs 150 travelling from my home to Thane railway station, from where I undertook another tedious hour-long journey to reach my office in BKC," he said.

While his overall travel time has not reduced significantly, Karnik prefers the convenience of a near-doorstep pick-up and drop service over a commute dependent on multiple modes of transport.

'Even if they fly to Japan': 3 Japanese booked in Ludhiana over Rs 61-lakh machinery fraud

Ludhiana. (Agency)

The Ludhiana police have booked three Japanese nationals and two others for alleged fraud after an agricultural equipment manufacturing firm accused them of not returning machinery worth Rs 61.60 lakh that was given "in good faith for field trials" more than two years ago.

The FIR against the representatives of M/s Maruyama Mfg India Private Limited, a Japan-based company working in the agriculture machinery sector with its local office in Gurgaon, was registered on Thursday at the Dehlon police station under Indian Penal Code sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating), and 120B (criminal conspiracy).

The accused are the company's managing director, Munenori Ohta; deputy director Takayuki Saito; company functionary Toshio Kondo; and two managers: Harmeet Singh and Ritwique Das.



Alleging major fraud and breach of trust, Jagjit Singh, owner of Ludhiana-based Jagatsukh Industries Private Limited (which makes agricultural and garden sprayers and implements), said the Japanese firm's representatives contacted his firm expressing a "willingness to build a business partnership to work together for agricultural advancement", especially in Punjab and Haryana. "They wanted to test our high-value boom spray machines in the field, and we trusted

them. We provided them not only with machinery but also an office space in our factory. It was all in good faith. The machines were delivered to them in 2023 on the condition that they had to be returned after trials. More than two years later, the machines have still not been returned. We had developed the machinery after our own R and D (research and development). We are not going to give up on this till justice is served. Even if they fly to Japan, the law is going to catch them," said Jagjit Singh. "They have since then dishonestly retained the said machines and kept them for their own use." The FIR registered states, "From in or about the month of August 2023 onwards, the accused persons, holding themselves out as the duly authorised personnel of Maruyama India, repeatedly approached the complainant company, and represented that they required machines for the limited purposes of demonstration, testing, exhibition.

Shimla: School executive shot dead by bike-borne men, police say probe on

Chandigarh.(Agency)

A 41-year-old executive of Saraswati Paradise International Public School, Manisha Mittal, was shot dead outside the institution in Shimla's Sanjauli by bike-borne assailants at around 6.50 pm

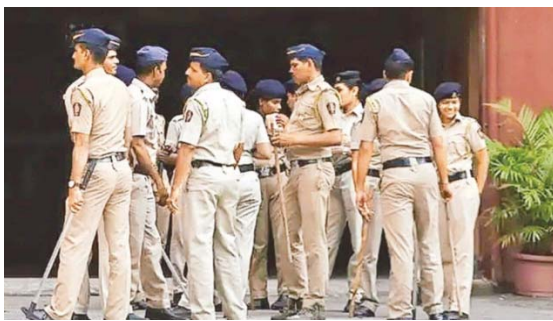
on Saturday, police said. The assailants fired more than two bullets before fleeing, police said.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), Shimla, Abhishek, said, "The entire area was cordoned, and a team of forensic experts was called on the spot. The victim died on the spot."

Police said the victim, Manisha, was a resident of Rewari district in Haryana. She and her minor daughter had been staying in a residential house on the school premises for the past 1.5 months. Police also said Manisha's husband, Subhash Yadav, was informed about the incident.

Although police officials declined to

comment on the ongoing police investigation, sources said the victim was in a dispute with her relatives about the school. Manisha's parents had founded the school two decades ago. The litigations were also pending in the



courts in Shimla.

Last month, the victim was allegedly live on her Facebook page and alleged mistreatment with her and an alleged threat to her life, the sources claimed. "Later, another video was shared widely wherein a man from Haryana reportedly

claimed that the dispute involving Manisha Mittal and her relatives was resolved."

Sources also claimed, "In the purported live video on her Facebook page, the victim had alleged that her father founded the school, but one of the close relatives wanted to bar her from getting ownership of the school." Upon receiving the information, a police team reached and inspected the crime scene.

Sources said the assailants were riding on a two-wheeler. "Before firing the bullets, one of the assailants asked the victim about an address and, in the meantime, shot her," sources said. The school is situated adjoining the main road in Sanjauli, they said.

Officials said police have also secured the scene and collected forensic and other evidentiary material. Police have registered a murder case at the Sanjauli police station and have initiated a thorough investigation to examine.

Vizag Steel Plant explosion death toll rises to 10

VISAKHAPATNAM.(Agency)

After the state government's Ladki Bahin scheme transformed Maharashtra's political landscape, Mumbai's newly elected civic body has proposed its own version for women working in the informal sector, The Indian Express has learned.

Three months after taking office, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has sent a proposal to the state government seeking approval for 'Swabhiman Nidhi', a monthly illness, old age and sudden financial emergencies often push them into precarious situations as most of them do not have any form of social security or assistance," Pednekar wrote in her letter.

In 2024, the state government launched the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, under which eligible women receive a monthly direct benefit transfer of Rs 1,500. According to government data, the scheme currently has around 1.7 crore beneficiaries and costs the state exchequer approximately Rs 2,500 crore every month.

Unlike the Ladki Bahin scheme, the proposed BMC initiative is aimed specifically at women employed in the informal sector, such as domestic workers and cooks, and would not have an upper age limit for eligibility. The incident has renewed concerns over safety practices at the steel plant, with trade unions raising issues relating to manpower shortages, maintenance standards and workplace safety.

A three-member external expert committee headed by the Director-in-Charge of Bokaro Steel Plant is conducting an inquiry into the accident to ascertain its cause. Meanwhile, it is learnt that RINL management has placed 22 employees under suspension pending investigation. The suspended personnel include employees from the Steel Melt Shop, Material Management and Quality Assurance departments.

No foul play in 23 Palakkad children deaths: Police to Kerala High Court

KOCHI.(Agency)

After the deaths of 23 children in Palakkad district between 2003 and 2023 sparked alarm and prompted the Kerala High Court to seek a CBI probe, Kerala police have now concluded that none of the cases involved foul play. According to the force, 16 of those deaths were by suicide while seven were accidental. Some involved boys, while the remaining were of girls aged 13 and below.

According to a report filed with the HC, investigations revealed the suicides were the result of psychological distress, including emotional disturbance, frustration arising from unmet desires, fear of parental reprimand and other age-related vulnerabilities. Police stated that no evidence emerged warranting charges of abetment of suicide or any other cognisable offence.

The remaining seven deaths were conclusively determined to be accidental, based on inquest proceedings, postmortem examination and corroborative forensic evidence. "In none of these cases were any element of criminal culpability detected so as to attract penal provisions under the Indian Penal Code," the report said.

The first case was reported in March 2003 at Mannarkad police station and involved a 13-year-old boy who died by suicide after hanging himself from the ceiling fan in a bedroom of his house. The report filed by Palakkad district police chief Ajit Kumar said that after completing investigations into the 23 child death cases, final reports were duly submitted before the respective sub-divisional magistrate courts, seeking sanction to dispose of the cases due to the absence.

Supreme Court clears Reliance's plan for Mumbai's Coastal Road seafront public space

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The Supreme Court on Thursday effectively removed the final hurdle to the development of the 130-acre public open space along Mumbai's Coastal Road South, allowing work on the promenade and allied amenities to proceed with certainty while noting that ticketed attractions on up to 15 per cent of the total area.

The court directed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to consider Reliance Industries' master layout plan in accordance with its earlier orders, paving the way for the development of what is expected to become one of Mumbai's largest waterfront public spaces.

Reliance Industries, which was appointed by the BMC to landscape and maintain the reclaimed seafront land under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, had

approached the court after formal approval to its revised layout plan remained pending. The company through advocate Shardul Singh argued that the delay was holding up the project and was against public interest. Reliance stated that while it wrote to BMC on May 18 seeking its in-principle approval for modified Master Layout, its landscaping committee discussed that SC's approval for commercial or ticketed activities was required. Dismissing Reliance's application, a bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Atul S Chandurkar noted that despite the Landscaping Committee directing that the proposal be placed before higher authorities, "in the absence of the so-called approval by the Supreme Court, the matter has not proceeded further." The bench ordered: "In view of the above and since



there is a tentative approval of the Layout Plan by the BMC, we direct that the Master Layout Plan shall be considered by the BMC without violating this Court's earlier order dated January 12, 2026."

During the hearing, Reliance informed the court that the vast majority of the reclaimed land — including promenades, gardens, parks, maidans, cycle tracks and jogging trails — would remain freely accessible to

the public. Only a limited portion would host ticketed "iconic" attractions, it said, with fees intended to cover operation and maintenance costs.

The court took on record Reliance's assurance of capping the area that could be used for such ticketed attractions at 15 per cent of the total open space.

Order would enable the development of ancillary amenities: BMC official

Speaking to The Indian Express, a senior BMC official said the order would now clear the way for the development of ancillary amenities that had remained in limbo pending judicial clarity.

"After the order of the Supreme Court, the issue of ancillary activities and amenities which are being developed alongside the open space will be resolved. These amenities will encompass facilities.

Making engineers who can engineer nation's success

Harish N Dixit, Anurag Tripathi

Every year, India mints roughly 15 lakh fresh engineering graduates. Add to this the fact that one in every six humans on the planet is Indian. By a reasonable arithmetic of talent, we may aspire to have roughly one in six of the world's most valuable deep-tech companies founded on Indian soil. Why is that not the case?

As artificial intelligence absorbs more routine cognitive work, the engineers whose value endures will be those who build. Now imagine a pavilion under which a nation of builders can invent, design and make. Such a structure can be raised by four pillars—standing for four reforms—bearing equal load. Erect three to perfection and leave the fourth unraised, and the roof never goes up. Raise even one weakly, and the whole structure tilts. Each of these four reforms addresses a different stage in the making of an engineer. Signal that building matters: Entrance exams to India's elite engineering institutions—most prominently, the IITs' Joint Entrance Examination—are analytically demanding. The challenge is that they stand today as the only signal reaching students, parents and schools—and that signal asks nothing about building, making or the hands-on work that defines an engineer. This signal shapes the behaviour at every level in society.

We propose a 'maker portfolio' as a supplementary admissions component. Structured documentation of sustained, hands-on work—a project designed and built, a device assembled, an experiment run. It need not be sophisticated, but it must be real. Candidates would still clear the JEE; after that threshold, the portfolio would carry meaningful weight—as a tie-breaker, bonus or a dedicated pathway for a small number of seats. Once that signal lands and behaviour changes, students tinker, parents stop dismissing making, schools create spac for projects.

Forming builders in schools: The science curriculum in grades 9-12 is heavily weighted toward abstract theory and examination-ready content. Real-world applications—the very hook that makes science truly exciting for a 12-year-old—appear as sidebars rather than entry points. Imagine, instead, a classroom where every student winds a coil and watches the small motor they have built begin to spin, or aligns lenses into a working telescope and turns it toward the moon. The brushless DC motor was conceived by engineers who had spent years with motors in their hands, not invented in a lecture hall.

School science textbooks for the grades should be reimagined around four principles: every concept grounded in a real-world application, regular open-ended projects rather than only confirmatory labs, every student producing a tangible artefact and non-essential topics excised to free classroom time for what matters. These artefacts feed directly into the maker portfolio—what you build in school can help you reach an elite engineering institution.

Forging teachers into builders: Most of India's school science teachers were themselves trained in the same theory-heavy, examination-oriented system within which they now teach. Many entered the profession before hands-on pedagogy was widely emphasised. They are part of a system that asked one thing of them in training and now asks something different in their classrooms.

We propose a national, mission-mode teacher training initiative anchored by the IITs and National Institutes of Technology. Their faculty would design and lead modular, practice-based programmes—low-cost experiments and the facilitation of open-ended student projects—through in-person workshops paired with sustained online mentoring. Teachers who have built become teachers who can teach others to build. Making engineering colleges engineer: Suppose a student arrives at an engineering college genuinely excited to create. What do they typically find? More theory. More examinations. More lectures. Laboratory sessions, where they exist, are largely confirmatory—in a typical electrical engineering lab, students do not assemble circuits on breadboards but encounter pre-built apparatus on which they may only turn knobs and press buttons.

A coup in TMC, not rebellion

Mamata faces the daunting task of rebuilding authority in a hostile landscape

Shikha Mukerjee

THE low cost of dissent and rebellion in the Trinamool Congress is striking. The strategy revolves around persuading elected TMC MPs to quit their party and join the NDA, where they can "work for the people" as well as "work for the constituency." Several MPs, including those once close to Mamata Banerjee, like Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, seem to be falling in line. Defeat has given these men and women the push they need to form breakaway huddles, for the moment within the Trinamool Congress. That's the first step. The next will be to claim the name and party symbol as the breakaway Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde and Nationalist Congress Party leader Ajit Pawar successfully did in Maharashtra in 2023. The Election Commission and the judiciary, as well as the Speaker in Maharashtra enabled Shinde and Pawar to take over party brand names that evoked loyalty among voters and were familiar and popular to the public.

First-time MP Saayoni Ghosh, whose spitfire attacks on the BJP on the eve of the Assembly election went viral, has reportedly declared "there is no future in TMC." Her comment gives rise to the question, would these MPs have taken the same decision if the party had a "future"? Rajya Sabha MP from Assam's Barak valley Sushmita Dev, who resigned from Parliament and from the party, after feeling let down, has made it clear that she sees no future for herself after the TMC's defeat. Dev has since found Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to be her friend, philosopher and guide, after years of attacking the BJP. The other Rajya Sabha MP to quit the Parliament as well as his party, Sukhendu Shekhar Roy, is equally transparent. He hung on to the Trinamool Congress, despite his vocal criticism against Mamata Banerjee and her misgovernance after the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital rape and murder of a junior doctor last year. After her defeat last month, he evidently felt it was time to cut and run. As rumours circulate of retired cricketer Yusuf Pathan and Kolkata Municipal Corporation leader Mala Roy jumping ship, it seems that rumours about the BJP being in close touch with dozens of Trinamool Congress leaders prior to the elections, is true. The BJP, it is now clear, did not encourage elections on the eve of the election because it did not want to carry any baggage. The putschist Leader of the Opposition in the state assembly, Ritabrata

Banerjee, was nominated to contest on the party's symbol. The TMC MPs who are defecting are a unique bunch; they have defected, but for the moment not to another party. The putschists are in effect declaring their no-confidence in Mamata Banerjee's leadership. Since all the defectors, both MPs, MLAs, councillors of municipalities and corporations, even panchayat functionaries, say that they were disapproving of the way in which the Trinamool Congress functioned, with power and decision-making concentrated in the Mamata Banerjee-Abhishek Banerjee's hands even as no dissent was tolerated, it suggests that they were prepared to go along if the going was and would have continued to be good. Otherwise it is difficult to reconcile their silence and tolerance of corruption, intimidation, violence and abuse of power when they and their party, the Trinamool Congress, was in power. The fight over who is the real



Trinamool Congress is now in court. Or at least one part of it. On June 8, the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress filed a case against the recognition of Ritabrata Banerjee as Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal state assembly. On June 11, the Calcutta High Court in the same case granted Abhishek Banerjee interim protection from arrest, though it directed him to appear before the CID looking into the charges of forged signatures on the same day. His compliance with the High Court's order, after days of playing hookey, is a sign that he is under pressure to do the right thing. The weaker and more vulnerable Mamata Banerjee feels, the less likely it will be that she will make any drastic decisions

about her problematic nephew. She is being pressed to sideline him or dump him; the "us versus him" tension has reached a flashpoint. Her loyalist and designated chief whip in the Lok Sabha, Kalyan Banerjee has erupted in rage: "I'm fighting for Mamata. I'm not fighting for anybody else. I'm fighting for the people of West Bengal and for the party. And who is he?" he has said, referring to Abhishek Banerjee.

Still, there is not much Mamata can do about the past, beyond accepting that the Trinamool Congress had committed every malpractice in the book. A party that grew exponentially after she won power by defeating the Left in 2011, was bound to acquire opportunists who saw in its disorganised and decentralised structure prospects of making money, wielding power and lording it over locals. Truncating the Trinamool Congress has certainly been a big blow, at a time when she is looking for ways to explain the defeat. More coup than rebellion, the exit of the majority of TMC MLAs, who continue to be coy about being named, were elected on the Trinamool Congress ticket and hailed Mamata Banerjee as the champion leader. As speculation snowballs about how she will tackle the break up by people elected in her name, the rumours of a TMC merger with the Congress are designed to make her look pathetic. Mamata's meeting with Sonia Gandhi has acquired a different meaning—that she went crawling and crying for sanctuary, because she was in trouble.

It is unlikely that Mamata will wither away, no matter how fervently the putschists and the BJP and other parties that opposed the Trinamool Congress may want it. How much of a fight she can put up is the question. The political environment in West Bengal is hostile to her existence; after the police denied her permission to hold a rally in Kolkata and insisted she relocate to a cramped channel and the Criminal Investigation Department turned up at her residence and office

in search of evidence linked to forged signatures of MLAs in the Leader of Opposition case, it is obvious that her freedom to function will be constrained. Her party workers and leaders are in hiding; councillors and corporators of municipalities have been arrested; kangaroo courts have sprouted dispensing punishment and cash seized from corrupt TMC leaders. Leading a new party into a political battle against the CPI(M)-led Left Front was entirely different from the battle that Mamata Banerjee will have to lead to rebuild the Trinamool Congress. The BJP is a different party; it makes no bones about leaving as little space as possible to the opposition.

Judicial reminder : Security and rights must coexist

The exercise of State power must remain subject to due process and judicial scrutiny

TWO recent rulings of the Delhi High Court—quashing the Delhi Police and Enforcement Directorate proceedings against NewsClick and granting bail to Kashmiri human rights activist Khurram Parvez—underscore a fundamental constitutional principle: the exercise of State power must remain subject to due process and judicial scrutiny. NewsClick editor Prabir Purkayastha was accused of financial irregularities. By setting aside the cases against him and terming them a "gross abuse of the process of law", the court underscored the need for investigative agencies to act within the bounds of legality. Investigative agencies undoubtedly have a duty to probe wrongdoing. However, criminal prosecution cannot rest on vague allegations or be used as a substitute for regulatory action. Equally important is the court's recognition that arbitrary action against media institutions risks stifling



independent journalism, a cornerstone of democratic accountability. The Khurram case involves a UAPA case linked to allegations of terror funding. It highlights

another troubling reality: the phenomenon of incarceration without conclusion of trial. Stringent laws such as the UAPA impose formidable barriers to bail. But prolonged detention, stretching over years while trials inch forward, raises profound concerns about the right to personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. Bail is not an acquittal, nor does it negate the seriousness of the charges. It merely affirms that the criminal justice system cannot permit the process to become punishment.

These rulings do not weaken the State's authority to investigate crime or safeguard national security. Rather, they reinforce the principle that such objectives must be pursued within the framework of the law. In a democracy, courts serve not merely as arbiters of guilt and innocence but as guardians against executive excess.

Publishing in post-truth world

Publishers who matter think like incubators of culture, not risk managers. The recent withdrawal of Joe Sacco's graphic narrative on the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots fits the latter description. Some publishers have shown the gumption to put out texts despite push-backs

Pratik Kanjilal

In 2014, Penguin Random House India (hereafter, Penguin for convenience) settled out of court with Dinanath Batra, the ageing general secretary of RSS school network Vidya Bharati and founder of an organisation committed to purging Indian education of foreign influences. It was unconditional surrender—Penguin agreed to withdraw and pulp all copies of Chicago scholar Wendy Doniger's *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. It capitulated in the face of the familiar charges of hurting religious feelings, besides safety concerns. There was dismay. Someone had waved a stick at the most powerful Indian publisher and it had surrendered. How would smaller publishers fare after this? Now, under the same leadership in India, Penguin has reprised its dubious triumph. It has dropped plans to distribute in India graphic reporter Joe Sacco's 2025 book, *The Once and Future Riot*, which cuts through the fog around the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013. Once more, it is a rout—apparently, Penguin wanted Sacco to remove "red flags" and update a map to risk-proof the distributor, and he wouldn't. Once more, there is dismay. Ram Guha calls the drawdown "pusillanimous". Arundhati Roy hopes Sacco finds "a braver distributor".

The dismay over Doniger's book was in context. It was February 2014, a prelapsarian time—the last days of Manmohan Singh's government, when people were still confident that they had freedom of expression and the ability to defend it. Why is there dismay now, when some of us actually have even more freedom of expression? As the rupee inches towards the 100 mark against the dollar, a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the PM

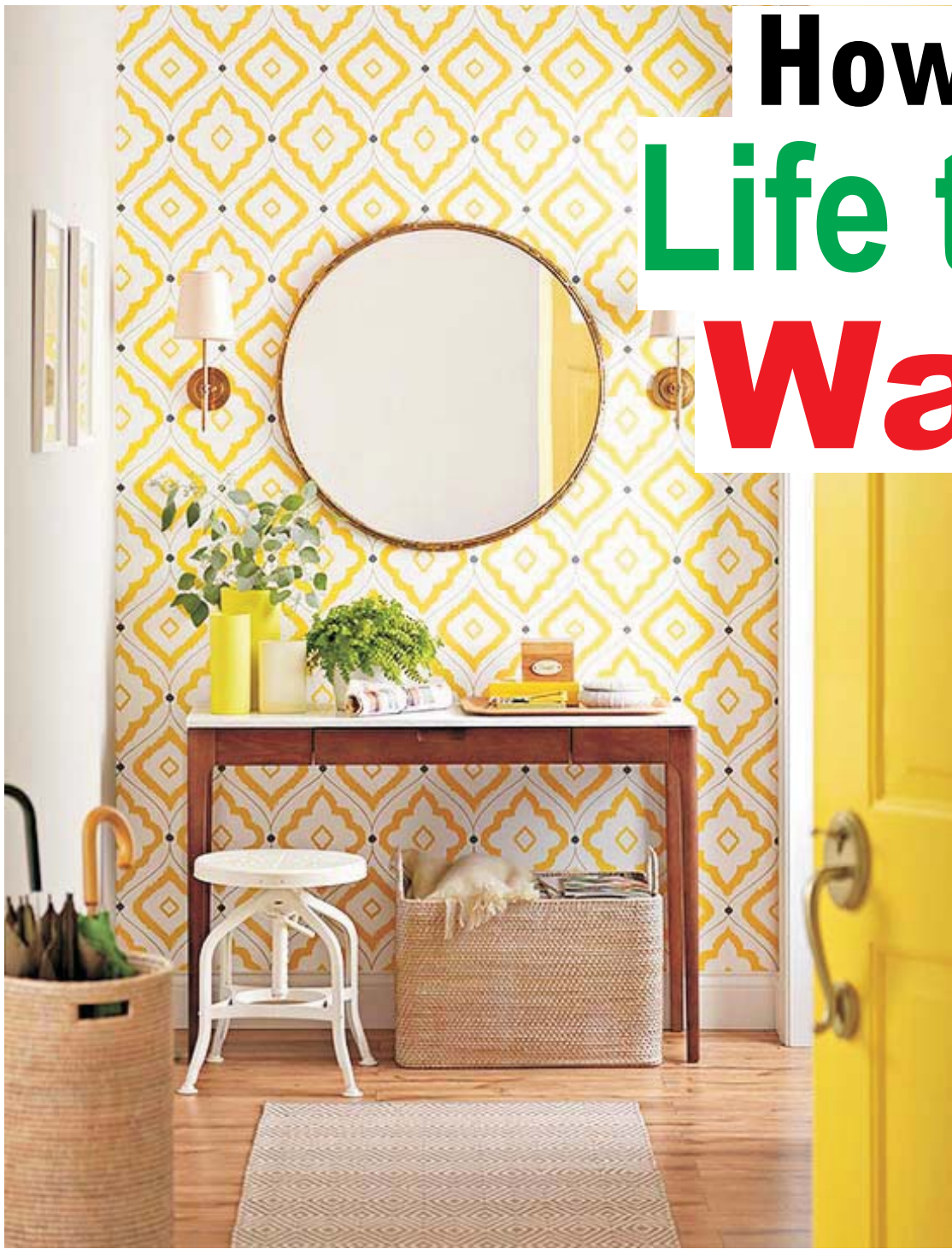
says that it's "just a number". Much earlier, the finance minister said that her family does not eat onions, so they have no experience of inflation. There is celebration of Narendra Modi's victory over Jawaharlal Nehru in an endurance contest that was unheard of until he became 'India's longest-serving PM'. The claim is true with this technical qualifier: "continuously elected". But who remembers these details? Salient facts are being ignored—that Nehru's tenure was terminated by Death, who does not contest elections, and that if Nehru were alive, he would have laughed at this childish contest. But it's 2026, and we must not let facts interfere with a good narrative. Now, we have complete freedom of expression because fact and fiction are no longer exclusive categories. Being able to say anything at all, even to freely lie and be lied to, represents untrammelled freedom of expression. Even Voltaire failed to soar this high. Enjoy responsibly, as the liquor ads overseas say. When people overseas think unapproved thoughts about us, their freedom of expression is endangered. Doniger was rubbished as a bad scholar with a dirty mind. The first charge is for other scholars to decide. The second, fortunately, is selectively applied. Popular mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik, who often ponders sexuality in Indian myth, has escaped unpleasant attention. Bhagwan Rajneesh drew on sexual narratives in Indian mythology and Tantra, and conflated them with European psychology. But he was Osho, and the public culture wasn't so grumpy then. Returning to Sacco's book, Penguin was horrified by a little map of the subcontinent at the time of Partition, no bigger than 2x2

inches, which depicts Pakistan Occupied Kashmir as Pakistani territory. That falls foul of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1961, which criminalised a certain kind of mapmaking. But this is India, so there's jugaad—customs officials cover the map with a black patch, often seen in imported copies of *The Economist*, a



serial offender. Earlier, a government-issue rubber stamp was used, which hectored: "The external boundaries of India as depicted are neither correct nor authentic." The 1994 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* went undistributed for months because in every copy, a map of India had to be stamped by customs officials who could have been gainfully employed catching smugglers

instead. Like so many Indian solutions, the stamp is an ugly jugaad, but it works. It could have worked for Penguin. The *Once and Future Riot* is a graphic book. The communal violence it depicts is, by default, graphic. But it depicts reality, so it is not more graphic than videos on social media, YouTube channels and TV. And the 'red flags' that Penguin balked at are criticisms of public figures, the ruling party and society which are routinely expressed across media. What's the problem, then? "We are trying to reach a riot... The riot happened more than a year ago," writes Joe Sacco in the first chapter, 'The Great Untruth'. "But what we seek isn't just the fading memory of an actual event: we want the fiction, the myth, the imposter that is taking its place." In a post-truth world, that's a dangerous manifesto. Publishing has a public function. It can light the flarepath to a brighter, more humane future. Publishers who matter think like incubators of culture, not like risk managers who got confused on the way to a rewarding but obscure career in merchant banking. After being pulped by Penguin, Doniger's book was published in India by Speaking Tiger, a discerning publisher with only a fraction of Penguin's resources. Perhaps Sacco will find a "braver distributor", and in hindsight, our only takeaway will be that Penguin India has a native talent for bad publicity. There is such a thing, if you're talented enough to seek it out.



How to add Life to your Walls

Be a little creative and add more colour and vibrancy to your wall Walls with a dash of colour and imagination can change the look of your room. And there are simple not so expensive ways to add more life to your walls. Just let your creative juices flow. And then see the change.

Art power: Nothing brightens up the wall like a canvas. So, if you have an artwork then display it. Choose the perfect place to showcase it so that it becomes the centre of attraction. And if you don't have the money to buy original art, don't lose heart. You can always buy a print and with a stylish frame, it can change the look.

Colours of life: Interestingly, fabrics add much colour to a wall. India is a country of great textile heritage. So, you can choose from the ikkats to mangalgiris for adding a completely different, vibrant look to your wall. If you have seen the Calico Textile Museum in Ahmedabad, you will definitely know the power of textile in adding a warm rich look. Learn to use saris, dupattas, rugs in adding more colour and texture to your decor.

Stringing memory: Memories are great to have as company in your intimate space. Dig into your album for your favourite family photos and then arrange it to bring in a sense of personal touch to your space. How about being a little different and creative? Write your favourite poem on a nice handmade paper and then frame it. You can also make a collage out of your kids' paintings and then frame it to hang on the wall.

Shelve it: Do you think shelves are boring? Well, you couldn't be more wrong. These days there are many colourful shelves in different shapes available in the market. Even you have an ordinary shelf, paint it in warm colours with different motifs and see the result yourself. Arrange your favourite books, DVDs and knickknacks on the shelf and see the transformation.

Floor colours can enhance your decor



Your floor can add a lot to your room not just by way of dimensions — larger, smaller, wider, narrower — but can also add abstract emotions to it, like making it look warmer and happier. Here are tips to keep in mind when you are doing up your floors....

Light-coloured floors Brighten a dark room using a very light floor. This also makes it look larger. The reflected light will make the room look lighter. Pale floors can make your room look great when paired with dark furniture.

Dark floors Dark hardwood floors can add immense character to a large room and dark floors have the incredible ability to embrace all kinds of decor schemes. You could choose to have light-coloured furniture for a dramatic effect. With dark floors, it would be good to avoid dark walls.

Floor skirts Floors look larger when the skirtings are of the same colour. When the floor skirtings are of the same colours as your walls, it gives the opposite effect.

Floor and furniture Your floor colour should be two shades lighter than your furniture. With dark floors, use furniture that is pale. If needed, use a rug that helps to provide this contrast.

Moods to go with floors Beige or orangish floors that have a yellow tinge, look cozy and are warm and happy. Brown floors are earthy and sober. Dark floors have elegance and character. All white or pale floors can make your home look calm and peaceful.

7 things to help organise your Living area



If you have been thinking to renovate your home and get rid of the clutter for the longest time, then this is the right time to start. However, if do not want to spend a lot and still want your house to look organised, then just get rid of these seven simple things and you can change the look of your living room instantly.

Bills, envelopes and invites:

Most living rooms have a stack of unimportant papers lying everywhere. From various utility bills to credit card statements, and from envelopes to wedding invites, we always tend to dump all this on our coffee table or our TV cabinet in the living room. Get rid of empty envelopes and bills older than three years, and organise the rest in drawers, so that they're hidden.

Extra cushions:

Cushions lend a sense of style to the living room; vibrant coloured and abstract design cushions help the living area come to life. However, too much of anything is a bad idea. Do not overcrowd your living rooms with cushions, limit them to your couch or a bathak. Don't overdo it by keeping them on chairs, window seats, recliners or by simply increasing their number.

Big-size music system and Cds:

That big four-CD-changer home theatre system with four massive speakers covering a complete wall of your living room, might have emotional value, but it definitely adds to the clutter. Simply replace it with a sleek sound bar that would be hardly noticed but has effective sound quality, and you will notice that the room looks less cluttered.

5.Candles:

You definitely had a romantic evening in mind when you picked up those scented candles. However, they are now lying unattended in various corners coated with loads of dust. Get rid of those candles and buy lights that are easy to clean and can be used for a longer duration. Make sure they are all hanging lights so that the floor remains de-cluttered.

Bean bags:

A lot of people buy bean bags to create a relaxed sitting arrangement, however, they are rendered redundant after a while as they trigger back problems. They then just lie there in clumps, occupying a lot of space and we end up dumping things on bean bags which adds to the clutter. Make way for a smart pair of antique wooden or recliners that will occupy less space and will prove useful as well.

Artificial plants:

This is one of the most useless things in anybody's living room, as they do not add any charm to the room whatsoever. In fact, Feng Shui and vastu experts warn about keeping artificial plants in homes as they have some kind of negative energy. Get rid of them as they attract a lot of dust and occupy unwanted space. Invest in real plants instead.

Miniature artifacts:

Not many people can maintain art-house like interiors, as it needs a lot of cleaning. Miniature artifacts and handicrafts enhance the look of your living room and make it look arty. These objects makes your house look dingy and unkempt if they are not dusted and maintained from time to time. If de-cluttering your house means having a clear space, then miniature artifacts need to be got rid off. In fact, a less-cluttered house looks bigger and better.

Ever seen a garden in a bottle? Only a genie might be able to do that, right? Well, not anymore. Even you can conjure one at home now. Don't believe us? Do it yourself...

Commonly used as a form of decoration, a bottle garden is perhaps a brilliant substitute of balcony or terrace gardens for city apartments. A plastic or a glass bottle with a narrow neck is just what you require to get started. Plants are grown inside the bottle with little exposure to sunlight, and can be contained indefinitely inside the bottle. You may wonder how the plants survive without air or water. It's pure science. When the plants are initially planted in a bottle, a small quantity of water is added. The air in the bottle provides the plants with necessary oxygen and carbon dioxide for photosynthesis. Sunlight is used to convert water and carbon dioxide into sugar. Oxygen that is liberated as a byproduct, remains trapped in the bottle and is, in turn, used for respiration by the plants. The cycle continues and thus, the plants can easily survive in a self-sufficient ecosystem.

Green therapy Creating a bottle garden is simple. All you need to do is select a plant with a slender stem, tolerance for lower indoor light, humidity and features of visible interest like appealing leaf colour, shape et al. Get a pretty-looking bottle and you are all set.

- Put a tablespoon of coarse aquarium gravel at the bottom of the bottle. That way you'll be able to see if there is stagnant water below the soil.

- Fill the bottle up to an inch with fine potting soil just above the gravel. Let it settle down by gently adding water, but just enough to moisten the soil.

- To prevent getting water on the mouth of the bottle and to prevent over watering, use an eye dropper. Using distilled water will help limit the amount of salts going into the soil.

- Keep adding soil and water until the level of the soil is correct and all of it is moist.

- Once the stem extends beyond the top of the bottle, gradually add more soil to give the stem and roots time to adjust being covered. With such a small opening, the soil may not be able to take in enough air at times and may sour due to over-watering. Now, that might be fatal to the roots.

- If the bottle is big enough, a layer of brick pieces of about 10 mm thickness should be laid (instead of gravel) at the bottom. This will absorb accidental application of excess water. Preparing the soil.

- The soil mixture should be porous and friable. This helps in aeration of roots. In case of a bottle garden, it is not easy to loosen the soil at regular intervals. Hence porous soil is essential.

- For this, take one part red garden soil, one part crushed brick pieces and one part leaf mould. In case leaf mould is not available, ½ part of well-decomposed manure may be used in the mixture. It is not necessary to sterilise the soil mixture.

- To take care of fungus and insect infection, add a small quantity of fungicide and insecticide to the soil mixture. It is advisable that these chemicals are mixed in water and then added to the soil.

- Making the soil moist has certain advantages.

How to make your own Bottle garden



The dust will not fly while you fill the bottle with soil. And when you plant the saplings, the soil won't crack. Selection of plants

- The plants chosen should be slow-growing because fast-growing plants need frequent pruning, which is bit difficult in case of a bottle garden.

- Herbs like sage, oregano, basil and ferns work quite well for a bottle garden as they usually adapt to the size of their environment be it a small bottle

or a big container.

- Keep the bottle near a window. But direct sunlight must be avoided, or else plants will wilt inside.

How to sow a sapling Place the selected saplings inside the bottle with the help of fork and forcep. Pour a few droplets of water and close the lid of the bottle. The plants start growing inside the closed bottle. You should not water again unless the saplings start wilting. So, what are you waiting for? Happy gardening!

Apart from ensuring that your house is protected during this season, you must also protect yourself from the rains when stepping out of your house. While there are tons of umbrellas which are available in the market during this time of the year, they normally do not provide as much protection from rainwater as that of a raincoat. If you are planning to buy a raincoat, here are a few things that you must keep in mind

The raincoat should not be too tight: Always opt for raincoats that are not too tight for your body. Apart from being uncomfortable, they will also restrict the blood flow in your body, which is dangerous.

Choose breathable raincoats: When buying a raincoat, opt for one that will

prevent sweat and won't cause an odour. Thus, choose a fabric that won't take days to dry out.

Check for durability: It is always advisable to choose a rainwear that will last for a long duration of time.

There are many kinds of rainwear that promise durability, but just after one rain or two wear out easily.

Colours and fabric:

It may seem strange but colours also play an important role when choosing a raincoat. It is recommended to choose bright colours like yellow, blue, red etc. These colours are usually recommended to wear during the night, so that you can stand out. Fabrics in raincoats are also important because of their durability. Choose from fabrics such as Tyvek, coated nylons and Gore-Tex.



How to remove common stains at home

How often have you poured something on your dress and toiled to get the stain out? Even when you run it through water or hand wash it, the stain stays put because every stain is different and must be treated differently. Here are some effective ways to get common stains out.

Stains from drinks like coffee, tea, alcohol, fruit juices and soft drinks: Soak the stain in cool water for 10 minutes and using either a bar of soap, liquid detergent or a paste made with washing powder and water, dab on the stain and rub. Before the paste dries, wash the dress with detergent in hot water.

Chocolates: Try to scrape off as much of it as you can with a blunt-edged knife. Soak in warm soapy water and if a brown stain is still visible, soak in a mix of water with sanitizer and rinse with warm water.

Cosmetics: Before you put the dress for wash, dab on the stain with either a prewash stain remover or a paste of washing powder with water.

Oil: Using a tissue, remove the excess oil. Wet the stain and apply liquid detergent directly on the stain and leave it for 15 - 20 minutes.

Wash with hot water. Alternatively, try putting a paper on both sides of the stain and ironing over the paper.

Things to remember

- Always take the stain out before you wash your dress.
- Always blot the stain, don't rub.
- The longer you leave the stain, the more difficult it is to remove.
- Nail polish stains are close to impossible to remove, so the best thing would be careful about not spilling it on your dress.

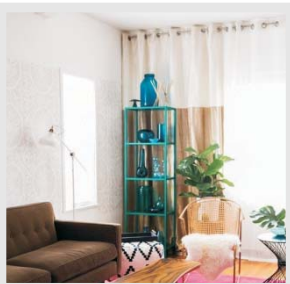


Safe ways to live alone

It may be a little difficult living alone. After staying with family or friends, one can get used to having company all the time. Staying alone can be fun too.

Spending time with yourself and doing what you like to do during this free time is a blessing. Having said that, it is important to keep a few things in mind when you are staying alone.

Investing in a good lock for your doors and windows is a good idea. Make sure that all the latches and door knobs are in a good condition. That should be the main priority and having a good lock will make you feel safer at home. Always have enough groceries and medication stocked up at home. The last thing you want is to go out at night and get something to eat when you are feeling hungry.



Having a stock of medicines for stomach pain, common flu, aches and burns will keep things under control if you fall ill.

Your cell phone should have enough balance at any given point of time to make emergency calls. Fuel up your car or bike and keep them in the best working condition because getting stranded alone is not a great idea after all.

Be aware and alert of your neighbour. Peeping through doors and windows is a good

habit in your case. That will make understand the movements around your apartment.

Always keep a friend informed of your whereabouts. A person close to you or a friend should have an idea of your everyday life. That will only work in your favour.

The last and the most important thing is to never ever hide your keys outside your apartment. That is the easiest thing to do and the most obvious for thieves. It's a better idea to give it to a trusted friend or a relative. Staying at home in your company can teach you a lot of things about yourself. You can finally make space for all those things you wanted to do but never had the time. Indulge in yourself and be safe.



You are all set to go for your annual vacation, but there is something that you can't stop worrying about — your houseplants. How do you ensure that they remain as green and fresh during your absence? So, here's what you should follow before stepping out for your holidays:

Keep it cool

If the plants are not watered regularly, there's a high chance of them wilting away in the scorching sun. Hence, make sure you move your plants to a cooler area. Move them out of direct sunlight as plants placed away from the sun will retain more water while you're away.

Group them together

Since plants release moisture through the process of transpiration, group your plants together in one place to help keep the air around them moist and humid. However, remember that your flowering plants are different from other green plants or bonsais, so space them out accordingly.

Watering options

Keep a small tray or plate of pebbles filled with

Taking care of Your plants during vacation



water beneath each potted plant, this will help the plants stay hydrated for a long time. You can also set up your own sprinkler system by suspending small earthen pots with holes in it, slightly above the plants. Choose the pot depending on the size of each plant, fill them to the brim and leave it. It will water your plants drop- by-drop for a while.

Involve your neighbour or friend

If nothing, then simply keep your plants at a place in your home that is accessible to your neighbour too. A balcony for instance, from where they can water the plants regularly.

And if your neighbour is kind enough, simply shift the plants to their house while you're away. Don't forget to bring back a nice gift as a gesture of gratitude!

TIP:

Soak terracotta pots before planting. Terracotta pots may look attractive, but remember they are made out of baked clay due to which water evaporates quickly. If you want to plant directly in terracotta, be sure to soak the pot in water first, this will help the plant and the soil remain hydrated. In fact, make sure you water the pot as well from the outside, so that it helps maintain a low temperature and not get heated up.



What to keep in mind when choosing a Rain Coat



From divorce papers to tears of reunion: Delhi couple ends 5-year court battle

A divorce hearing in a Delhi courtroom turned into a reunion when Shikha tore up the papers and embraced Saurabh. The moment followed Saurabh's help during her father's medical crisis and abruptly ended their five-year legal fight.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Five years of legal battles, heartbreak and bitterness melted away in a matter of seconds when a wife tore up her divorce papers and rushed into her husband's arms inside a Delhi courtroom.

For nearly five years, Shikha and Saurabh

had been locked in a legal fight over the future of their marriage. Their relationship, which began with wedding celebrations in 2020, had soon deteriorated into disputes, allegations and a prolonged court battle. The couple found themselves standing on opposite sides of a courtroom, seeking a legal end to their marriage.

The case had dragged on through endless hearings, legal arguments and mounting emotional and financial strain. According to those familiar with the matter, the prolonged litigation had taken a heavy toll on Shikha's family. Her father reportedly exhausted much of his savings

while supporting the legal proceedings and worrying about his daughter's future.



The situation became even more difficult when Shikha's father suffered a heart attack. Facing financial constraints, the family

initially admitted him to a government hospital. It was at this point, despite the ongoing dispute, that Saurabh stepped in.

Upon learning about his father-in-law's condition, Saurabh reportedly helped shift him to a better-equipped private hospital in Gurugram, where he received timely treatment and recovered. The gesture, made in the midst of a bitter legal conflict, would eventually change everything. The very next day, the couple appeared before the court for another hearing in their divorce case. Lawyers continued presenting their arguments as they had done

for years. Then came the moment that altered the course of the proceedings. When the judge

asked Saurabh whether he still wanted a divorce, he looked towards Shikha and offered a faint smile before responding.

For Shikha, that brief glance seemed to break years of anger and resentment. Overcome with emotion, she tore up the divorce papers in the courtroom and rushed towards her husband. Moments later, the two were locked in a tearful embrace as silence descended across the courtroom. What had seemed destined for a legal ending suddenly turned into a new beginning.

The couple's emotional reconciliation brought an unexpected close to a years-long dispute, transforming a day meant for separation into one of reunion. For those present in the courtroom, it was a reminder that sometimes a single act of kindness can succeed where years of legal arguments cannot.

Delhi deploys 300 Urdu and Sanskrit teachers for Gyan Bharatam manuscript preservation mission

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a move aimed at preserving India's manuscript heritage, the Delhi government has deployed 300 Urdu and Sanskrit teachers to assist in the identification and documentation of manuscripts under the Gyan Bharatam Mission.

According to an official communication issued by the Directorate of Education, the Competent Authority had approved the deployment of teachers for the project being undertaken by the Department of Art, Culture and Languages, Government of NCT of Delhi. However, after reports emerged that some teachers and Heads of Schools had not been informed about the assignment, district education officials have now been directed to ensure that all concerned teachers are notified and report for duty whenever called upon by the competent authority.

The Education Department has also clarified that teachers assigned to the mission during the summer vacation period will be treated as "On Duty" and will be eligible for Earned Leave in accordance with the Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules. The letter, signed by the DDE (Schools), was emailed to schools on June 5 along with the list of 300 teachers selected for the project.

The Gyan Bharatam Mission aims to identify and preserve over one crore manuscripts housed in libraries, museums, academic institutions and private collections across the country.

A source in the Education Department said the participation of Urdu and Sanskrit teachers would play a key role in identifying and cataloguing manuscripts written in classical and traditional languages, many of which remain undocumented.

Centre takes over Jaipur Polo Ground after court denies stay

New Delhi.(Agency)

Officials of the Land and Development Office (L&DO) under the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry on Saturday took physical possession of the 15.20-acre Jaipur Polo Ground in the Race Course area of the national capital, following an eviction order issued on May 20 citing a "larger public purpose".

The order, however, did not specify the proposed use of the land. The Centre has informed courts that the polo ground land and nearby establishments, including the Delhi Gymkhana Club, are proposed to be taken over for public purposes. The development came a day after a Delhi court refused to grant interim protection to the Indian Polo Association (IPA) against the eviction order. Additional Sessions Judge Dhirender Rana, in an order passed on June 12, noted that similar relief had earlier



been denied by both the Principal District and Sessions Judge at Patiala House Courts and the Delhi High Court. "Keeping in view judicial discipline and propriety, I am not inclined to stay the execution of the impugned order even till next date," the judge said.

The court, however, directed the Centre to respond to the appeal and stay application by June 17 before a vacation judge. The IPA opposed the Centre's request for adjournment and urged the court to restrain authorities from executing the eviction order till the next hearing, arguing that otherwise the appeal would become infructuous. The court observed that the appeal against the May 20 eviction order had been filed on June 3 and no interim protection had been granted at that stage either.

On June 8, the Delhi High Court had also questioned the government's plans to take over properties in Lutyens' Delhi, remarking that green spaces in the city were already scarce and "Delhi will choke".

Urgently identify students who failed Class IX twice or thrice, counsel them: Edu dept to Delhi Govt schools

New Delhi.(Agency)

Identify students who have failed Class IX twice or thrice and counsel them and their parents to ensure that they continue schooling: this is what the Directorate of Education (DoE) has directed the heads of the government schools in the Capital as the number of students dropping out of schools after Class IX continues to be a major concern.

The latest direction was issued through a circular, dated June 4, by the NIOS Project of the Education Directorate. The circular was issued after the declaration of Class IX compartment examination results. "There is an urgent need to identify, counsel and guide the students who have failed twice or thrice in Class IX," it said. An "absence of proper guidance and motivation" has been flagged by DOE officials to be causing a "risk of discontinuing" their education. The



department's direction also points to special attention for parents as it states they require "motivation, counselling and assurance that the school will continue to support the child".

The department has described the exercise as a dropout-prevention measure and underlined that the initiative by heads of schools can help "save many innocent students" and that the "ultimate goal" is to ensure that all children complete at least their school education.

Over the last five academic years, 3,20,150 students failed Class IX

After push by L-G, Delhi police launch joint patrols on weekends, two weekdays

New Delhi.(Agency)

Acting on directions from Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the Delhi Police has rolled out a city-wide plan to improve police visibility, strengthen public safety and enhance traffic management through regular joint foot patrols by district and traffic police officers.

According to an official statement, the guidelines were issued following a meeting earlier this week between the L-G, Police Commissioner Satish Golcha and other senior officials. The initiative aims to ensure visible policing, improve police-public interaction and communication, and

address local issues on the spot. The exercise will also focus on the removal of temporary roadblocks, illegal setups



and other civic issues requiring immediate attention on the ground.

A circular issued to all Special Commissioners, Joint Commissioners

and Deputy Commissioners directed district and traffic police officers to conduct joint foot patrols on Saturdays, Sundays and two additional days every week from 5 pm to 8 pm.

The statement said DCPs, Additional DCPs and ACPs from district and traffic formations must remain in the field during the designated hours.

The exercise will be treated as compulsory field duty and not as a routine formality.

"No office work, meeting, conference, or indoor review should be scheduled during the aforesaid time, as far as possible," the statement said, adding that the

period should be devoted to field presence, public interaction, on-spot supervision and immediate corrective action.

Held captive as 'bonded labour' for 2 yrs, tribal woman rescued from Gurgaon flat

Following a coordinated operation by the West Bengal Police, Gurgaon Police, the district administration in Gurgaon, and civil society organisations, she was finally rescued on Saturday, officers said.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Forced to work 16 hours a day, beaten up over minor issues and barred from calling up family members — this is the alleged ordeal a 39-year-old tribal woman from West Bengal's Birbhum district faced for nearly two years as she was held captive as a bonded labourer at a flat in a residential society in Gurgaon's Sector 91. The smart locking system at the home prevented her from stepping outside the residence, said police. It was only after a recent visit by a technician to the house that she was able to raise the alarm and get in touch with her family.

Following a coordinated operation by the West Bengal Police, Gurgaon Police, the district administration in Gurgaon, and civil society organisations, she was finally rescued on Saturday, officers said. After her rescue, officers added, the survivor claimed that consistent physical abuse by her employer had left her unable to lift her right arm or hear from her right ear. She further reported being assaulted so brutally on her head and face on the morning of her rescue that she feared she would die.

The woman, officers said, was brought to Delhi and then Gurgaon to work as a domestic help after an advance payment of Rs 40,000 by the family. The circumstances under which she was handed over are still under probe.

Her employers allegedly frequently locked her inside the house when they went out. According to the survivor's sister, who first approached authorities at Birbhum for assistance in March this year, she faced violent physical abuse almost daily over minor issues, or whenever she requested to return home. When a service technician recently visited the house, the survivor seized the opportunity and convinced him to let her use his mobile phone to call her family, said police. She informed her relatives about her dire situation, prompting them to urgently seek help. On June 4, an FIR was registered at a police station in West Bengal. The case was filed under various sections of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, and relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including Section 127(4), which pertains to wrongful exploitation and forced labour.

Delhi officials probe examines CCTV footage of woman seen entering building before deadly Tughlakabad blaze

New Delhi.(Agency)

A day after a massive fire ripped through a five-storey residential building in southeast Delhi's Tughlakabad area, killing three members of a family, investigators are examining purported CCTV footage showing a woman entering the building minutes before the blaze erupted, officials said.

According to police, the nearly 50-second video allegedly shows a woman entering the parking area of the residential building around 2.23 am on Friday. Moments later, flames erupted, after which the woman was purportedly seen leaving the spot in haste. The authenticity of the footage, however, has not yet been independently verified.

Police officials said the footage was being scrutinised and all possible angles were being investigated. "We cannot arrive at

any conclusion at this stage. The investigation is still underway. We are verifying the CCTV footage and trying to establish the identity of the person seen in the video. Every angle is being examined," a senior police officer said.

The Delhi Fire Services received a call regarding the blaze at 2.25 am. Six fire tenders and a quick response vehicle were rushed to the spot. The fire was brought under control around 3.45 am and completely doused by 4 am. Officials said the fire broke out on the ground floor of the five-storey building where several vehicles were parked.

The incident claimed the lives of Sushila Devi (70), her maternal grandson Pankaj (28), and Pankaj's sister Soni (20). Two



others—Pankaj's mother Guddi Devi (50), who is speech-impaired, and Moni (18)—sustained critical injuries and are undergoing treatment.

Forensic experts and crime team personnel visited the sealed building on Saturday to collect evidence, the officials said. Initial inquiry suggested the fire may have started due to an electrical short circuit on the ground floor, though police said the exact cause was yet to be

established.

While some residents battled smoke and flames to survive, others escaped tragedy because they were away from the city.

Mohammad Sarfaraz, who lives on the third floor, had travelled to Bihar with his wife and children for summer holidays. His sister-in-law Rizwana said the family was informed about the fire over phone.

"By Allah's grace, the entire family was in Bihar. Had they been at home that night, the story might have been very different," she said.

Another resident, Prakash Mandal, who lives on the second floor, said he woke up around 2.30 am feeling suffocated. A 16-year-old girl from a neighbouring building threw a saree towards him, helping him climb down to safety.

8 of India's top-10 valued firms add Rs 1.90 trillion in market value last week

New Delhi, (Agency)

The combined market valuation of eight of India's 10 most-valued companies surged by Rs 1.90 trillion last week, driven by a strong rally in domestic equities.

The positive momentum came as benchmark indices posted solid gains during the week. The Sensex climbed 1,284.61 points, or 1.73 per cent, while the Nifty advanced 256.2 points, or 1 per cent. Market sentiment remained upbeat amid optimism over a possible peace agreement between the United States and Iran, which raised hopes of easing geopolitical tensions and bringing stability to global energy markets. The improved outlook boosted investor confidence and supported gains across several heavyweight stocks. Among the top-10 most-valued firms, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, and Hindustan Unilever recorded gains in their market capitalisation. In contrast, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) witnessed a decline in valuation.

ICICI Bank topped the chart in terms of weekly gains, with its market capitalisation rising by Rs 56,223 crore to Rs 9,61 lakh crore. HDFC Bank added Rs 38,571 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 11.89 lakh crore, while State Bank of India saw its market value increase by Rs 36,138 crore to Rs 9.39 lakh crore. Bajaj Finance registered a gain of Rs 18,367 crore, pushing its valuation to Rs 5.72 lakh crore. Bharti Airtel's market capitalisation climbed by Rs 14,380 crore to Rs 11.11 lakh crore. Engineering and construction major Larsen & Toubro added Rs 13,241 crore to reach a valuation of Rs 5.57 lakh crore, while Hindustan Unilever gained Rs 10,984 crore, taking its market capitalisation to Rs 5.09 lakh crore. On the other hand, TCS witnessed the steepest decline among the top-10 firms, with its market capitalisation falling by Rs 13,296 crore to Rs 7.82 lakh crore. LIC's valuation also slipped by Rs 822 crore to Rs 5.05 lakh crore. At the end of the week, among India's most-valued company includes HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, TCS, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Unilever, and LIC.

Cash & gold at home? If not disclosed in ITR, you may face huge income tax burden

MUMBAI, (Agency)

According to Income Tax rules 2026, if you have cash and gold or other investments that you have not disclosed in your ITR (Income Tax Return), you could be in for major trouble. Under the Income Tax Act, the government can slap a huge penal tax on undeclared income, cash, gold or investments. In some cases this tax can reach up to 78% of the total amount. If the source of income is not proven to the satisfaction of the Income Tax officials, the total tax and penalty can reach up to 86%. Income Tax Department has been cracking down on undeclared assets, cash transactions and benami investments and being aware of the tax rules has become more important than ever.

Situations attracting IT department action

Under Section 115BBE of the Income Tax Act, a special tax is levied in situations where the individual's income, cash, investments, jewelry or expenses cannot be clearly attributed. This includes cases falling under sections 68, 69, 69A, 69B, 69C, and 69D which include undisclosed cash, undisclosed investments, gold and jewelry, unaccounted expenses, and hundi transactions. Even if an individual proves the source of his/her undeclared income, he/she might have to shell out a base tax of 60%. A 25% surcharge and a 4% cess are levied on top of this. This brings the total tax rate to almost 78%. Considering an individual has undeclared income of Rs 1 crore, he/she might have to about Rs 78 lakh in taxes.

In cases where source is undisclosed

If an individual fails to prove his/her legitimate source of income or assets, he/she could be slapped penalties. In such a situation, total tax and penalty could be as high as 85.8% of the amount recovered. This means that if there is undisclosed income of Rs 1 crore, the individual might have to pay Rs 85.8 lakh in taxes and penalties.

How much cash can one keep at home

According to the rules, there is no set ceiling on the amount of cash one can keep at home. The real point is that the cash one holds must have a legitimate source. If the cash is not declared in your Income Tax Return (ITR) and no record of it is found, or the cash cannot be explained through the legitimate and known sources of income, the department can consider it undeclared income.

Mcap of 8 most valued firms surges by 1.90 trn, ICICI Bank shines

New Delhi, (Agency)

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms surged by Rs 1.90 trillion last week, with ICICI Bank stealing the show, in tandem with a rally in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,284.61 points, or 1.73 per cent, and the NSE Nifty surged 256.2 points, or 1 per cent. "Indian equity markets ended a volatile week on a strong note, snapping a two-week losing streak amid improving global sentiment and supportive measures from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) aimed at attracting foreign currency inflows," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. Investor confidence improved on optimism surrounding a potential US-Iran peace deal, which raised hopes of easing geopolitical tensions and stabilising energy markets, he added. From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and Hindustan Unilever were the winners, while Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) faced erosion from their market capitalisation (mcap). ICICI Bank added Rs 56,223 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 9,61,297.77 crore. HDFC Bank's market valuation jumped Rs 38,571.11 crore to Rs 11,89,314.42 crore, and that of State Bank of India surged Rs 36,137.87 crore to Rs 9,38,661.50 crore.

El Nino likely to impact food prices, inflation projected to settle in 5.2–5.5% range in Fy27

Headline CPI inflation came in at 3.9 per cent in May 2026, lower than BoB Research's estimate of 4.1 per cent and up from 3.5 per cent in April.

Kolkata, (Agency)

There is 80 per cent likelihood of an El Nino event during the June–August period and probabilities for this, to continue until at least November, are near or above 90 per cent, according to a new report. However, the reservoir level is more than normal storage (till June 11) in the country and the arrivals statistics of vegetables are also satisfactory. "Only coming days will tell us whether the supply conditions are sufficient from any incipient shock from food and fuel on inflation or not", said the Bank of Baroda Research note. According



to economist Dipanwita Mazumdar, CPI inflation is projected to settle in the range of 5.2 per cent–5.5 per cent in FY27, assuming some impact from El Nino and an average crude oil price of USD 90–100 per barrel. Headline CPI inflation came in at 3.9 per cent in May 2026, lower than BoB

Research's estimate of 4.1 per cent and up from 3.5 per cent in April. The increase was largely driven by higher food and fuel prices, with food inflation rising to 4.8 per cent. Transport inflation accelerated following the recent petrol and diesel price hikes, while restaurant and

accommodation services inflation also moved higher.

Core inflation (excluding food and fuel) increased to 3.9 per cent, indicating emerging underlying price pressures.

Looking ahead, BoB Research expects inflationary risks from higher fuel costs and weather-related uncertainties, particularly the likelihood of El Nino conditions impacting food prices. "For food inflation, the spillover of higher fuel cost and likely increase in freight cost might feed into further high inflation in the near term. Hence the second-round pass-through needs to be closely monitored, especially when weather-related risks are elevated this year," said the report.

Going forward, "we believe that upside risks to core will intensify as firms might pass through some degree of higher input costs to consumers amidst stable demand conditions. The risks on food inflation is also likely to intensify in the coming days," the report added.

Indian stock market to take cues from global cues this week; Fed meet, Iran deal and oil prices in focus

New Delhi, (Agency)

The Indian stock market is likely to remain driven by global cues in the coming week, with investors closely watching the US Federal Reserve's policy meeting, developments surrounding a potential US-Iran peace agreement and trends in crude oil prices.

Benchmark indices ended the previous week on a positive note, breaking a two-week losing streak amid improving investor sentiment. The Nifty gained 1.10 per cent to close at 23,622.90, while the Sensex rose 1.73 per cent to settle at 75,527.95. The primary focus for global markets will be the US Federal Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting scheduled for June 16–17. While the Fed is widely expected to keep interest rates unchanged, investors will closely scrutinise the central bank's commentary on inflation, economic growth and the future rate trajectory. Any indication regarding the timing of potential rate cuts could influence

foreign fund flows into emerging markets, including India.

Geopolitical developments in West Asia will also remain on investors' radar. Market sentiment received a boost after



US President Donald Trump said a peace agreement with Iran aimed at ending the conflict in the region would be signed on June 14. Investors will monitor the progress of the proposed deal and its implications for global trade and energy markets. The reopening of the strategically important Strait of Hormuz, a critical route for global oil shipments, is

expected to ease concerns over supply disruptions. Any further improvement in regional stability could support risk appetite across global equity markets.

Crude oil prices will be another key factor influencing domestic equities. Oil prices recently fell to their lowest levels since the initial phase of the Iran conflict amid expectations of increased crude shipments through the Strait of Hormuz and optimism surrounding a temporary peace arrangement. Sustained moderation in oil prices could provide relief to India's inflation outlook and reduce pressure on the country's import bill. Meanwhile, investors will also assess the impact of the Reserve Bank of India's latest measures to encourage foreign currency inflows. The central bank has introduced forex swap facilities for eligible external commercial borrowings (ECBs) and fresh FCNR(B) deposits, a move expected to strengthen liquidity conditions and support market sentiment.

Scientific capabilities as a national strategic assets

New Delhi, (Agency)

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi completes a decade in office, it is an appropriate moment to reflect on a leadership journey that has sought to reshape India's development trajectory and redefine its place in the world. History ultimately judges leaders not by their intentions but by the institutions they build, the opportunities they create, and the confidence they inspire in a nation. By those measures, one of the defining features of the past decade has been a strategic belief in India's ability to emerge as a global knowledge economy powered by science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. What distinguishes this period is the recognition that scientific capability is not merely an academic pursuit; it is a strategic national asset. It underpins economic competitiveness, technological

sovereignty, healthcare security, energy resilience and long-term national prosperity. Under Prime Minister Modi's



leadership, science and technology have moved closer to the centre of India's development agenda. Biotechnology: From potential to global promise Over the past decade, India's bioeconomy has evolved from a promising sector into a powerful engine of growth. The vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat has been interpreted not as inward-looking self-sufficiency,

but as the creation of globally competitive capabilities that enable India to innovate, manufacture and lead. The numbers tell a compelling story. India's bioeconomy has expanded from approximately \$10 billion in 2014 to more than \$165 billion today. During the same period, the number of biotechnology startups has grown from fewer than 100 to over 11,000, creating one of the world's most vibrant biotech innovation ecosystems. This growth has been supported by a series of forward-looking policy initiatives. The BioE3 Policy—focused on Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment—the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), and the ₹1 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation Fund are creating the institutional framework needed to translate scientific discovery into commercial and societal impact.

Why your salary is losing the race against home prices

New Delhi, (Agency)

When Abhishek Kumar got married, buying a home felt like the obvious next step. He and his wife had done everything that India tells young professionals to do. They built successful careers, earned well, and together had a combined annual income of more than Rs 20 lakh.

A home in Gurgaon, close to their workplaces and the life they had built there, seemed like a realistic dream. Then came the house hunt. For nearly eight months, the couple searched for a home across Gurgaon. The apartments they liked in the locations they preferred were often priced between Rs 4 crore and Rs 5 crore. The numbers simply did not make sense. Eventually, they moved farther away and purchased a home near Manesar for around Rs 1.5 crore. Even that purchase was not possible entirely on their own. They needed financial support from their parents. The compromise was a significantly longer daily commute to Delhi and central Gurgaon. Abhishek does not regret the decision. He is happy with his home. But his journey raises a question that is increasingly troubling India's salaried class: if a young couple earning more than Rs 20 lakh annually has to move away from the city where they work and depend on



parental support to buy a home, what does affordability mean for everyone else? For decades, buying a house was considered the ultimate sign of financial security in India. That aspiration remains unchanged. What has changed is the maths behind it. Home prices in many Indian cities are rising much faster than salaries, forcing buyers to take bigger loans, move farther away from job centres, depend on family wealth or postpone the decision to buy a home altogether.

ARE HOME PRICES RISING FASTER THAN SALARIES IN INDIA?

The answer, increasingly, is yes.

According to Samir Jasuja, Founder and CEO of PropEquity, urban household incomes in India have been growing at around 5% to 6% annually. Residential property prices, however, have risen at a much faster pace in several cities. Gurgaon is one of the most striking examples. Between 2021 and 2025, residential prices in Gurgaon grew at around 15.5% to 16.5% annually, effectively more than doubling within four years. Bengaluru witnessed annual price growth of around 11% to 12%, while other

major cities including Mumbai, Pune, Chennai and Hyderabad also recorded strong appreciation. The impact of this gap is clearly visible in affordability data.

According to PropEquity, a household in Gurgaon now requires around 15.42 years of gross income to buy an average home. In Mumbai, the figure is around 15.06 years. In Hyderabad, it takes around 7.49 years of income to purchase an average home. Bengaluru requires around 4.90 years, while Pune requires around 3.60 years. The EMI burden paints an even more worrying picture. In Gurgaon, the EMI required to purchase an average home can amount to around 160% of a household's monthly income. In Mumbai, it is around 157%. In simple terms, even before paying for food, healthcare, education or other daily expenses, an average family cannot realistically manage such an EMI. India's overall price-to-income ratio has increased from around 6.6 times in 2020 to around 7.5 times in 2026.

Jasuja says part of this increase is also due to changing preferences after the pandemic, with buyers increasingly choosing larger homes and better configurations.

Lightning strike kills 12-year-old girl, woman in UP's Chandauli

Chandrauli. (Agency)

Two people, including a 12-year-old girl and a 35-year-old woman, died after being struck by lightning during a sudden storm in Uttar Pradesh's Chandauli district on Saturday.

According to officials, strong winds and thunderstorms swept across Chandauli and nearby areas on Saturday afternoon. Amid the changing weather conditions, Ruby (12) and Laxmi (35), residents of Dhanawal village under the Chakia Kotwali area, had gone to a nearby orchard to collect mangoes.

During the storm, lightning struck the area, fatally injuring both victims. They died on the spot, triggering grief and panic in the village. After receiving information about the incident, police reached the spot, took custody of the bodies and sent them for post-mortem examination. Officials from the district administration also visited the village to assess the situation.

Chakia Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Pankaj Yadav confirmed that the two victims died due to a lightning strike. He said necessary administrative procedures are underway and the families of the deceased will be provided government compensation under the provisions of disaster relief assistance.



A 12-year-old girl and a woman died after lightning struck an orchard in Chandauli during a sudden storm. The deaths sparked grief in the village as officials began procedures for relief compensation.

Video: Bihar cop aspirants block trains, throw stones; cops fire tear gas

Thousands of Bihar Police exam candidates blocked tracks at Patliputra Railway Station in Bihar after trains arrived late. The agitation disrupted rail services for hours before officials arranged special transport and cleared the lines.

Banda. (Agency)

Thousands of candidates appearing for the Bihar Police Prohibition Department recruitment examination brought rail traffic to a grinding halt on Saturday after protesting against an alleged shortage of trains to examination centres, triggering hours of chaos, vandalism and police action at Patliputra railway station.

The situation escalated when large numbers of candidates jumped onto railway tracks, stopped train movement and raised slogans, forcing railway and district authorities to intervene. Police later resorted to firing aerial shots to bring the situation under control after tensions mounted at the station.

The cops also fired tear gas shells to disperse the large crowd that was disrupting the railway traffic.

TRAIN SHORTAGE SPARKS PROTEST

The recruitment examination was scheduled to be held in two shifts on Sunday. Candidates had begun arriving at the station late on Saturday night to travel to their allotted examination centres.

According to the protesters, adequate train arrangements had not been made despite the large number of candidates expected to travel for the examination. As crowds swelled at the station, frustration among aspirants grew.

The flashpoint came when candidates attempted to board an examination special train operating between Patliputra and Katihar. Amid a rush to enter the train, confusion and overcrowding led to unrest.

Angry candidates then sat on the railway tracks and blocked the train, raising slogans and demanding immediate transport arrangements.



Homestay manager's daughter molested in Nainital's Kainchi Dham, two cops accused

Nainital. (Agency)

A major controversy erupted in Uttarakhand's Kainchi Dham a day before the temple's annual foundation day celebrations after two police constables deployed on fair duty were accused of molesting a local homestay manager's daughter, triggering protests and public anger against the police.

According to the girl's father, the incident occurred when his daughter and her sister were returning from the temple. He alleged that the two policemen, who were staying at a nearby homestay, misbehaved with the young woman. The father further claimed that both constables were heavily intoxicated at the time of the incident. The allegations sparked outrage among local residents, who allegedly caught the two policemen, assaulted them and took them to a nearby police outpost, where a large crowd gathered and staged a protest.

Senior police officials rushed to the spot after being informed about the incident. Nainital Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Manjunath TC confirmed the episode and described the matter as serious. He said strict action had been ordered against the accused personnel and assured a fair and impartial investigation. According to local reports, medical examinations conducted on the two constables reportedly confirmed alcohol consumption.

Police are preparing to register a criminal case against the accused personnel. The incident has also intensified resentment among local traders and residents over security arrangements ahead of the Kainchi Dham foundation day fair, which is observed annually on June 15 and attracts lakhs of devotees from across the country.



A golden harvest & bumper sales: How a man tripled his income from Rs 11L to Rs 38L

Jalandhar. (Agency)

Educated youths moving away from agriculture might be a common view.

Amid this increasing distance, Atinderpal Singh (33) has created his brand Samra Turmeric Farm, which has emerged as an example of value created through scientific knowledge, direct marketing and consumer trust. From Barnala's Kattu village, he completed his masters in Agronomy from Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana, in 2015, after which he taught at a college for a year. However, what intrigued him was agriculture — it led him to his family's 15-acre farm. He spent two years cultivating traditional wheat and paddy crops.

Soon after, at the age of 26, he introduced turmeric on two acres in 2019, experimentally.



It soon turned into success, encouraging him to expand turmeric cultivation to nine acres by 2022. His goal? To produce and sell adulteration-free turmeric. His shift from traditional crops to turmeric increased his crop production value from Rs 1.25 lakh to Rs 4 lakh per acre in the first year — more than three times higher.

Earlier, the nine acres of wheat and paddy generated about Rs 11 lakh annually; today the same land with turmeric generates nearly Rs 38 lakh annually with 40 per cent profit margin. Atinderpal's shift to turmeric was driven by his resolve to counter the widespread issue of adulteration. "In 2015, after completing my MSc, I started teaching at a college. However, my heart was always in agriculture... joined my father, Sarabjit Singh, in cultivation."

Ram Temple donation row: SIT formed, employee detained; Vinay Katiyar seeks action

Lucknow. (Agency)

The controversy surrounding alleged irregularities in donations offered at the Ram Janmabhoomi temple has intensified, with the Uttar Pradesh government constituting a Special Investigation Team (SIT), investigators widening their probe, and senior BJP leader and former MP Vinay Katiyar demanding strict action against anyone found guilty. The SIT will examine allegations related to donations and the financial management of the Ram temple trust in Ayodhya.

The issue first gained political attention after allegations surfaced that money from donation boxes at the Ram temple complex had gone missing. The claims triggered a sharp political debate, prompting the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust to seek an independent inquiry to establish the facts and counter

what it described as misinformation aimed at tarnishing the temple's image.

Acting on the trust's request, the Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday formed a three-member SIT comprising Lucknow

conducting a comprehensive investigation and submitting its findings to the state government.

Meanwhile, the investigation on the ground has gathered pace. Sources said several employees associated with the counting of donations are under the scanner. The Special Operations Group (SOG) is conducting an extensive probe, examining CCTV footage and other technical and physical evidence.

As part of the investigation, an individual identified as Lav Kush, a resident of Meenapur Phagoli in the Shujaganj area of Rudauli, has been detained for questioning. Investigators are seeking information regarding his possible links to the case. Sources indicated that some cash has also been recovered during the course of the inquiry, though officials have not



Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, Inspector General of Police Kiran S, and Finance Department Special Secretary Neel Ratan. The panel has been tasked with

A three-year-old boy being treated for leukaemia at AIIMS Bhopal allegedly died after formalin was injected into his vein. An internal inquiry blamed gross negligence by nursing staff, and police have booked two officials.

Cancer patient, 3, dies after nurse injects him with formalin at AIIMS Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh. (Agency)

A three-year-old boy undergoing treatment for blood cancer at AIIMS Bhopal allegedly died after formalin was injected into his vein instead of the prescribed medication, prompting police to register an FIR against two nursing officials months after the incident. The case, which dates back to December 2025, came to light following an internal hospital investigation that concluded the toxic chemical directly caused the child's death and pointed to serious lapses in protocol.

INTERNAL PROBE POINTS TO FORMALIN

The hospital's inquiry later found that the syringe used on the child contained formalin. Formalin is an aqueous solution of formaldehyde gas and is commonly used in hospitals and laboratories to preserve biopsy samples and human tissues. Medical experts regard it as a highly toxic chemical and it is not intended to be injected into the human body under any circumstances.

The investigation further found that another nursing staff member, Anuka Gujarati, had filled the syringe with formalin for laboratory use. Instead of storing it in a secure location as required under hospital protocol, it was allegedly left near a patient's bed.

The inquiry committee concluded that the entry of formalin into the child's bloodstream was the direct cause of death and held nursing staff responsible for gross negligence.

► CHILD WAS UNDERGOING LEUKEMIA TREATMENT

The deceased, Sarthak Yadav, was a resident of a village in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district. Suffering from leukemia, he was admitted to the paediatric ward at AIIMS Bhopal on December 15, 2025, after his condition deteriorated. According to the hospital's internal inquiry, a critical error occurred on the morning of December 17 during treatment.

The report says the child's intravenous line had become blocked. During the procedure, nursing officer Madhubala Sharma allegedly injected a substance from a syringe marked with the letter "F" without properly identifying or verifying its contents. Family members have alleged that Sarthak's father repeatedly warned hospital staff that the syringe did not contain the prescribed medicine. They claim his concerns were ignored and that he was instead reprimanded and asked to remain quiet. Moments after the injection, the child's condition reportedly worsened rapidly. He became unconscious and was rushed to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit.



NEWS BOX

Brazil's quest for sixth star starts with a stumble as Morocco earn 1-1 draw

New Delhi., (Agency)

The FIFA World Cup 2026 had already given fans opening-night drama, red cards and controversies, but this felt like the tournament's first true blockbuster. Brazil were finally taking the field. For many football fans around the world, that alone was reason enough to tune in. Because when Brazil play at a World Cup, the expectation is rarely limited to a result. Fans expect skills, flair, outrageous touches and football played with a samba rhythm. They expect Joga Bonito. It is a promise the yellow shirt has carried for generations. This time, the anticipation was even greater. The most successful nation in World Cup history had handed the reins to Carlo Ancelotti, football's ultimate serial winner. The Italian had conquered Europe with AC Milan and Real Madrid and now stood on the touchline for his first World Cup match as Brazil coach. A victory felt like the minimum expectation. What everyone really wanted to see was what Ancelotti's Brazil would look like. The answer, at least for large parts of the evening, was surprisingly underwhelming. And Morocco were the reason why. The Atlas Lions arrived in New Jersey no longer carrying the tag of outsiders. Ever since



their historic run to the semi-finals in Qatar, Morocco have become one of the most difficult teams to play against in international football. Within 21 minutes, they reminded Brazil exactly why. A clever pass from Brahim Diaz found Ismael Saibari, and the Moroccan midfielder produced a delightful lofted finish over Alisson Becker to stun the Brazilians. Behind the goal, Moroccan celebrations erupted. On the touchline, Ancelotti's eyebrows probably rose for the first time all evening. The goal itself was not the biggest issue. Up until that point, Brazil had offered little evidence of the football everyone had come to watch.

FIFA World Cup: Carlo Ancelotti slams 'nervous' Brazil after Morocco draw

New York, (Agency)

Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti admitted his side were "nervous" and unbalanced after being held to a 1-1 draw by Morocco national football team in their opening Group C match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup on Saturday. In the tournament's first heavyweight clash, Morocco highlighted their credentials as dark horses by matching Brazil stride for stride and exposing familiar weaknesses in the five-time champions. Ismael Saibari's first-half strike put Morocco ahead before Vinicius Junior produced a moment of individual brilliance to level the scores at a sold-out stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. The result leaves Group C finely poised ahead of Scotland's meeting with Haiti, while raising fresh questions about Brazil's ability to deliver under pressure. I don't think we started the match well. The team was a bit nervous, we lost possession too often and lost too many challenges. The first half wasn't good,"



Ancelotti said after the match. "It improved in the second half; it's a tough match because Morocco are a good side. I think there was a bit of nervousness. In the first half they were breaking out of our press and making dangerous counter-attacks."

BRAZIL vs MOROCCO, FIFA WORLD CUP 2026: HIGHLIGHTS

Morocco, who reached the semi-finals of the 2022 World Cup, made the brighter start and repeatedly cut through Brazil's midfield with alarming ease. Teenage midfielder Ayyoub Bouaddi impressed, while Achraf Hakimi and Bilal El Khannouss consistently threatened down the flanks. The breakthrough arrived in the 21st minute when Lucas Paqueta lost possession in midfield, allowing Brahim Diaz to release Saibari behind Brazil's defence. With Alisson caught out by an ill-timed rush off his line, Saibari calmly lifted the ball over the goalkeeper to give Morocco a deserved lead.

NBA: New York Knicks beat Spurs to claim first NBA title in 53 years

The New York Knicks defeated the San Antonio Spurs 94-90 on Saturday to secure their first NBA championship since 1973. Led by a game-high 45 points from Jalen Brunson, the Knicks wrapped up the best-of-seven NBA Finals 4-1.

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

The New York Knicks ended a 53-year wait for an NBA championship on Saturday, defeating the San Antonio Spurs 94-90 in Game 5 of the NBA Finals to secure their first title since 1973. Jalen Brunson delivered a performance for the ages, scoring a game-high 45 points as the Knicks claimed the best-of-seven series 4-1 and completed a dominant postseason run in which they lost only three games. Playing in front of their home crowd, the Spurs looked set to extend the series after racing into an early lead and maintaining control for much of the contest. San Antonio held several double-digit advantages during the game, with Victor Wembanyama and the young Spurs core appearing on course to force But the Knicks refused to go away. New York



steadily erased the deficit in the second half before finally taking its first lead of the night with 3:40 remaining. Brunson led the charge,

repeatedly delivering in crucial moments as the Knicks seized control when it mattered most. a Game 6. The Spurs were unable to

respond, allowing New York to complete another comeback victory and seal one of the most memorable championship triumphs in franchise history. The title ends one of the longest championship droughts in the NBA and marks the Knicks' first Finals triumph since their legendary teams of the early 1970s. It is also the culmination of a remarkable playoff campaign that established New York as the league's dominant team this postseason.

For San Antonio, the defeat brought an end to an impressive season. The Spurs, led by Wembanyama, exceeded expectations throughout the campaign and reached the Finals with one of the youngest rosters in the league, but ultimately fell short against a battle-hardened Knicks side.

Brunson, however, was the difference. The Knicks captain produced his finest display of the season on the biggest stage, ensuring that New York would finally lift the Larry O'Brien Trophy for the first time in more than five decades.

The Knicks won the NBA Finals 4-1, capping a championship run that will be remembered as the season New York returned to the summit of basketball.

1st Indian origin player debuts in FIFA World Cup 2026 as Australia stun Turkiye 2-0

IRVINE, Calif. (Agency)

Indian-origin footballer Nishan Velupillay made his much-anticipated FIFA World Cup debut on Sunday, June 14, as Australia caused a major upset in the tournament. The fast-paced Australian side beat Turkiye 2-0 in their first group-stage match of the tournament, handing themselves a big advantage in the race to qualify for the next stage. Nishan, born to Anglo-Indian mother Gillian Velupillay, came off the bench in the 61st minute and looked solid in defence as Australia protected their 2-0 lead against a strong Turkiye side. Nishan, 25, is one of the brightest young prospects in the Australian team but was not able to show much of his attacking prowess on Sunday. Nishan made his Australia debut in 2024 after progressing through local clubs and Melbourne Victory's academy system. Debuting in a FIFA World Cup qualifier against China, Nishan scored seven minutes after coming on to help seal a 3-1 victory.



That goal proved to be the start of a rapid rise. Velupillay has since earned eight caps (including Sunday's appearance) and scored three times, with all of his goals coming in World Cup qualifiers. Those performances convinced Australia coach Tony Popovic to include the 25-year-old in Australia's final 26-man squad for the tournament. On Sunday, Nishan became the first Indian-origin footballer to play in the FIFA World Cup's 2026 edition.

AUSTRALIA CAUSE BIG UPSET IN FIFA WC 2026

Australia spoiled Turkiye's return to the World Cup stage after 24 years by securing a 2-0 victory in their Group D opener. Nestory Irankunda destroyed the Turkish defence with a sublime finish on the counter-attack in the first half before Connor Metcalfe scored the second goal in the 75th minute. Australia got the opener on the break when Irankunda controlled a ball over the top, took it past a defender and finished inside the near post in the 27th minute.

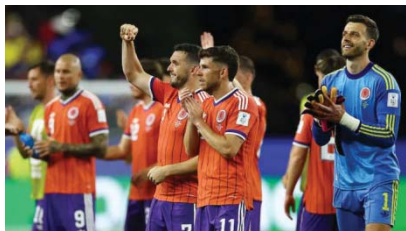
FIFA World Cup: Scotland beat Haiti 1-0 to end 36-year wait for World Cup win

England's build-up to the 2026 FIFA World Cup has been disrupted after training equipment was stolen while being transported to the team's base in Kansas City, just days before their opening match against Croatia.

IRVINE, Calif. (Agency)

Scotland ended a 36-year wait for a FIFA World Cup victory with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Haiti in their Group C opener on Saturday, thanks to a first-half strike from John McGinn. Steve Clarke's side moved to the top of the group after securing their first World Cup win since defeating Sweden at Italia '90, while Haiti's long-awaited return to the global stage ended in disappointment despite an encouraging display. Scotland started brightly at Gillette Stadium and threatened early through Ben Doak, whose low effort forced a save from Haiti goalkeeper Johnny Placide. After surviving a spell of Haitian pressure, the Scots came

close to taking the lead when Scott McTominay's first-time effort from the edge of the area struck the post. The breakthrough arrived in the 28th minute. Placide initially denied Che Adams from close range, but the rebound fell to McGinn, whose shot took two



deflections before looping into the net. The goal made the Aston Villa midfielder Scotland's oldest scorer at a World Cup finals.

Buoyed by the opener, Scotland nearly doubled their advantage before the break when Lawrence Shankland headed narrowly wide from a Doak cross. Haiti, however, remained dangerous and almost capitalised

England's stolen football gear worth Rs 17 lakh recovered 24 hours after theft

England football team's stolen gear, reportedly worth around Rs 17 lakh, was recovered by Kansas City police within 24 hours of the theft. Two men from Texas have been charged with felony counts by authorities.

New Delhi. (Agency)

England football team's stolen equipment worth nearly Rs 17 lakh has been recovered within 24 hours after it went missing during the team's move to its FIFA World Cup base in Kansas City. Authorities in Jackson County, Missouri, charged two men from Texas on Saturday with one felony count each of receiving stolen property after police recovered the missing items. The accused, identified as Mustafa Salik and Erfan Kamal of San Antonio, face Class D felony charges that carry a maximum prison sentence of

seven years. Bond for both was set at \$75,000. The theft took place while England were relocating from their pre-training base in Florida to their World Cup camp in Kansas City ahead of the tournament.



According to court documents obtained by Associated Press, police recovered several items belonging to the team, including nine pairs of football boots, goalkeeper gloves, a World Cup match ball, multiple training kits,

electronics, stuffed toys, signed England jerseys and even a Lego set of Nike Air shoes. MISSING EQUIPMENT WAS NOT ESSENTIAL. AUTHORITIES

Despite the theft, officials said none of the missing equipment affected England's World Cup preparations. Jackson County prosecutor Melesa Johnson said authorities acted quickly after learning that an international team had been targeted. "Jackson County will not tolerate criminal activity that targets World Cup visitors, including the international teams that have travelled here to compete," Johnson said. Kansas City mayor Quinton Lucas also praised investigators for tracing the stolen goods across state lines and ensuring the accused would face prosecution. England arrived in Kansas City on Saturday and were welcomed at their team base before heading for an open training session.

Robbery? Scotland vs Haiti marred by bad referee as fans outrage over social media

FIFA World Cup 2026: Scotland opened their World Cup return with a 1-0 win over Haiti after John McGinn's deflected goal. The result brought three points, but disputed VAR calls and Haiti's bold display shaped the wider argument.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Scotland's long-awaited return to the FIFA World Cup began with a 1-0 victory over Haiti, but the result was overshadowed by controversy surrounding several key refereeing decisions. Fans across social media questioned why Haiti were denied what appeared to be a clear penalty and why a late high challenge from Scotland escaped a VAR review. The win, secured through a deflected strike from John McGinn, gave Scotland their

first victory at the World Cup since 1990 and marked a positive start to their Group C campaign. The controversy erupted in the 79th minute when Haiti's Jean-Ricner Bellegarde unleashed a shot from outside the box that appeared to strike the hand of Scotland defender Grant Hanley inside the penalty area. Despite loud appeals from Haitian players, neither the referee nor VAR intervened. "It's the biggest robbery I've seen in my entire life. Look at where that hand is, and they didn't even call it. Scotland has to steal from Haiti to win," one fan wrote on X.

Hanley was involved in another handball incident in the box earlier in the game. While others were equally frustrated by the lack of intervention from the video assistant referee, time and time again, with many arguing that Haiti had been denied a legitimate opportunity to level the score from the penalty spot. Questions were also raised deep into stoppage time when Scotland midfielder

Kenny McLean received only a yellow card for a high challenge on Josue Casimir. Replays appeared to show McLean's boot making contact above knee height, but VAR



again opted against recommending a review, further fuelling criticism of the officiating. HAITI IMPRESS DESPITE DEFEAT While Scotland walked away with all three

points, Haiti's performance earned widespread praise. Making their first World Cup appearance since 1974, the Caribbean side matched their European opponents for large periods and refused to be intimidated by the occasion.

After falling behind in the 29th minute, Haiti continued to press forward and created several promising opportunities. Wilson Isidor came agonisingly close to converting a dangerous cross from Providence in the closing stages, while Frantzdy Pierrot narrowly missed the target with a late header as Haiti searched for a historic equaliser.

Despite the sustained pressure, Scotland held firm to secure a significant victory in their first World Cup appearance since 1998. Scotland will next face Morocco on June 20 after the North Africans drew 1-1 with Brazil, while Haiti take on the five-time world champions in their second Group C fixture.

Saiee M Manjrekar

And Raghav Juyal Team Up For Ikaai, Film In Production

A new on-screen pairing is set to bring together Saiee M Manjrekar and Raghav Juyal in an upcoming project that is already drawing attention for its emotional intensity and unconventional tone. The film, titled Ikaai, is currently in production and is expected to release early next year. While details around the narrative are being kept under wraps, the film is being positioned as a challenging and performance-heavy project for its lead cast, especially Saiee M Manjrekar, who says the experience pushed her far beyond her usual comfort zone. Speaking about the film, Saiee M Manjrekar described Ikaai as one of the most demanding projects of her career so far, both emotionally and psychologically.

"Ikaai has definitely been one of the most challenging films I've worked on till date because it demanded so much from me emotionally and psychologically. There were moments during the process where I genuinely had to push myself beyond my comfort zone because the emotions required for certain scenes were extremely raw and intense," said Saiee M Manjrekar.

The actress added that the project allowed her to explore new dimensions of her craft, even though the process was not easy.

"As an actor, you always want to challenge yourself and discover parts of your craft that you haven't explored before, and this film allowed me to do exactly that. It was exhausting at times, but also incredibly fulfilling because those are the experiences that help you grow as a performer," she added. Saiee also highlighted how Ikaai shifted her understanding of performance, especially when it comes to subtle expression and emotional restraint.

"I learned that sometimes silence, vulnerability, and emotional stillness can be far more powerful than dramatic expression. The film constantly keeps the characters emotionally exposed, and that honesty is what makes the horror feel real. I genuinely feel audiences will get to see a completely different side of me in Ikaai, and that's what excites me the most," said Saiee M Manjrekar.

On the production front, Ikaai is backed by producer Vikas Bahl and directed by Raj Singh Chaudhary. The project is currently in its filming stage and is expected to reach audiences in early next year.

Zoya Akhtar Congratulates Imtiaz Ali For 'Beautiful Film' Main Vaapas Aaunga



Imtiaz Ali's Main Vaapas Aaunga has been winning hearts with its beautiful storyline and performances. Many celebrities have praised the film and now filmmaker Zoya Akhtar has also joined them. She showered praise on Imtiaz Ali's latest film Main Vaapas Aaunga, calling it a "beautiful film".

Taking to her Instagram stories, Zoya Akhtar wrote, "Congratulation to beautiful people for beautiful film Main Vaapas Aaunga." Earlier, Aditi Rao Hydari shared the review and wrote, "An Imtiaz Ali film...but I must say more! Poetic poignant and real...brain is still processing and saying main vaapas jaoongi, phir se dekhoongi." Main Vaapas Aaunga is set in Imtiaz Ali's dreamy world of love and longing, starring Diljit Dosanjh, Naseeruddin Shah, Sharvari, and Vedang Raina in pivotal roles. Filmmaker Anubhav Sinha has taken an indirect dig at film directors, saying that in today's times they are being "ruthlessly stripped" of the most vital element of their craft. In his latest post on Instagram, he highlighted the growing challenges within the industry and emphasized the importance of "belief" in cinema. While praising Imtiaz Ali's latest work, "Main Vaapas Aaunga," Anubhav Sinha remarked that in times when film directors are, for various reasons, getting "ruthlessly stripped" of the most essential element of their craft, Imtiaz continues to stand out.

Talking about the trend and Diljit's absence from Main Vaapas Aaunga promotions, the director said, "I can't represent the whole film industry on this one, but for us, Diljit is not here because he's doing shows abroad. Sharvari is not there because she is shooting abroad. When we got a release date, we knew this is going to happen in fact when we were taking the dates from Diljit to shoot for this film, we knew that he is going to perform at concerts when we will be releasing this film. But at that point of time, what was more important was the casting of the film rather than the actor's ability to promote. We don't have the strategy of not doing promotions or interactions, and I don't know which is a better or a worse strategy. We do this because we are habituated to do this. We have made a film and we want it to reach across."

Salman Khan Seeks Immediate Stay On 'Kala Hiran' Movie; Katrina Kaif Plans Comeback With Chandni Bar 2?



Salman Khan has moved the Delhi High Court seeking an immediate stay on the production, promotion and release of the film Kala Hiran: Battle for Legacy. The actor has alleged that the film, which is inspired by the 1998 blackbuck case, violates his personality rights. In his plea, Salman has accused the makers of Kala Hiran of using a lookalike and making him wear his signature bracelet. He also accused them of promoting the movie using his name. Besides this, the Bollywood superstar has also claimed that the release of the film could prejudice ongoing legal proceedings and harm his image.

Katrina Kaif, who has been missing from the big screen for a long time, is now reportedly planning to make a comeback. If a latest report by Filmfare is to be believed, the actress is in talks with filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar for the sequel to his 2001 movie, Chandni Bar. Reportedly, Katrina is in the final cast list of Chandni Bar 2, which will be directed by Ajay Bahl. A source close to the film told the entertainment portal that the film will also star Tabu in the lead and will be based on a theme similar to its original one. While details about the storyline remain under wraps, the insider also claimed that the new Chandni Bar film will also be based on "the red light area and crime ecosystem." An official confirmation from the makers regarding Chandni Bar and its cast is awaited. The tensions between Farhan Akhtar and Ranveer Singh continue to escalate after the Dhurandhar actor's alleged abrupt exit from Don 3. From legal notices to FWICE directives, the feud is playing out like a movie itself.

Now, in an interesting development, FWICE's chief adviser, Ashoke Pandit, has revealed that many Bollywood insiders, including Aamir Khan, have personally tried to pacify these tensions. Ashoke Pandit told Hindi Rush, "Many people from the industry, including Aamir Khan, had been trying to resolve the issue before it came to us. That also didn't work."

Today it's Ranveer Singh. Tomorrow it could be someone else. This is what Excel is going through. If it was someone else, they would have gone to hell." Actress and politician Kangana Ranaut is back with her new movie, Bharat Bhagya Viddhaata.

Bhumi Pednekar

Feels 'Deeply Indebted' To Armed Forces After Sikkim Border Visit: 'Full Of Gratitude'

Bhumi Pednekar, who is currently on a three-day visit to Sikkim, opened up about her experience of visiting the border and interacting with members of the Indian armed forces. The actress said the visit left her with a deeper sense of gratitude and respect for the sacrifices made by soldiers.

Bhumi Pednekar Visits Border During Sikkim Trip
Speaking to the media during her visit, Bhumi shared that she has always considered herself a deeply patriotic person. The actress said she was excited to visit the border, but the experience also made her reflect on how much the armed forces do for the country. As quoted by the news agency IANS, she said, "I'm a very, very patriotic person. I was very excited about visiting the border and once you go there you just realize how much our armed forces do for us and we as civilians don't really do that much back for them."

Bhumi added that every interaction with the armed forces leaves her feeling indebted. She said, "Every time I have an opportunity to interact with anybody from the armed forces I just feel so deeply indebted and full of gratitude, and being at the border, I was like that's China..."

Bhumi Pednekar Says She Felt Extreme Pride

The actress further shared that she learned about the history of the region during her visit and spoke to several officers posted there. Bhumi described the location as both cold and breathtakingly beautiful.

She said, "I went through the history of everything that had happened over there, spoke to so many officers. It was very cold, so breathtakingly beautiful up there and I was just filled with this sense of extreme pride for everything that our country does to protect us." Her remarks came as she

spent time in Sikkim and visited areas close to the border, gaining a closer look at the conditions in which the armed forces continue to serve.

Bhumi Pednekar's Recent Work

On the work front, Bhumi was last seen in the 2025 film Mere Husband Ki Biwi, directed by Mudassar Aziz. The film also starred Arjun Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh. It followed the story of Ankur, a divorced man who gets another chance at love when his college crush re-enters



his life. However, chaos unfolds when his amnesiac former wife also returns. Bhumi began her career as an assistant casting director at Yash Raj Films, where she worked for six years before making her acting debut. She entered films with Dum Laga Ke Haisha in 2015, in which she played an overweight bride and received widespread praise for her performance. Over the years, she has appeared in several films including Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, Shubh Mangal Saavdhan, Bala, Pati Patni Aur Woh, Saand Ki Aankh, Badhaai Do, Bheed, Afwaah and Bhakshak. Her recent work also includes the series Daldal.

NEWS BOX

UK forces intercepts Russian shadow fleet oil tanker in English Channel: ministry

LONDON. (Agency)

British forces on Sunday intercepted a sanctioned oil tanker linked to Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" as it attempted to transit the English Channel, the Ministry of Defence said. In what officials described as the first UK-led operation of its kind, the vessel SMYRTOS was boarded by Royal Marines and specially trained officers from the National Crime Agency. The government said the operation targeted efforts by Russia to circumvent international sanctions imposed over its war in Ukraine. According to the Ministry of Defence, the tanker will now be moved to an anchorage off England's south coast, where it will remain under close monitoring. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he had authorised the operation in the early hours of Sunday. "In the early hours of this morning, I directed our Armed Forces to intercept a shadow fleet oil tanker attempting to pass through the English Channel," Starmer wrote on X.

"This successful operation delivers yet another blow to Russia and reminds those fuelling Putin's war in Ukraine that we will not let them hide. "I want to thank those involved, including our Armed Forces and law enforcement officers who keep this country safe 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

Indian crew being evacuated from vessel off Oman coast after engine failure

world. (Agency)

Fourteen Indian crew members are being evacuated from a commercial vessel off the coast of Oman after it suffered an engine failure, the Indian Embassy in Muscat said on Sunday. The crew were aboard the Indian-flagged merchant vessel Virat 1.

"It has emerged that the vessel experienced an engine failure, and the crew eventually transferred safely to a life raft. Rescue operation is presently underway through ships in vicinity, under coordination of Omani authorities," the Indian Embassy said in a social media post. The incident comes amid heightened tensions in the Gulf region. Last week, three vessels carrying Indian crew members were attacked by US forces off the coast of Oman, leaving three seafarers dead.

Earlier on Saturday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio exchanged sharply differing views during a phone call, with Jaishankar calling the US killing of three Indian mariners as "unjustified" and Rubio warning that violations of the American blockade in the Strait of Hormuz "will not be tolerated". "Such lethal actions against commercial shipping are not justified," Jaishankar had said in a post on X after he spoke with Rubio during which he raised India's "strong protest" over the killings. Meanwhile, Rubio underscored that violations of the American blockade and the illicit transport of Iranian oil will not be tolerated, US State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said in a statement. Rubio stressed that all commercial vessels should immediately comply with orders from US forces as they seek to uphold peace and security in the Strait, Pigott said. The US has imposed a naval blockade in the Strait of Hormuz since April 13, preventing transit of ships to and from the ports of the Islamic Republic as part of its efforts to restrict Tehran from profiting from oil trade. India on Friday summoned US charge d'affaires Jason Meeks, the second time in a week, and told him that American military's "lethal and deadly" strikes on commercial vessels with Indian crew members off the coast of Oman are "unacceptable" and they undermine the safety, security and stability of international maritime commerce.

Pakistan's inflation worries return as rising energy costs push up food and fuel prices

World. (Agency)

Pakistan is once again grappling with mounting inflationary pressures, with rising food, fuel and utility costs putting renewed strain on households and raising concerns over the sustainability of the country's economic recovery, a report has said.

Official data showed that short-term inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Index (SPI), increased by 14.75 per cent year-on-year for the week ending June 4, as per Pakistan Observer report. The rise was largely driven by higher retail prices of perishable food items, highlighting the growing cost-of-living burden faced by consumers across the country. The resurgence of double-digit inflation comes after a period of relative stability and has reignited fears among millions of Pakistanis already struggling with the aftermath of years of economic turbulence. Long queues at utility stores, rising public transport fares and soaring electricity bills have once again become common sights, reflecting the pressure on household budgets.

Analysts attribute the latest inflation spike largely to global energy market disruptions linked to escalating tensions in the Middle East. Instability around the Strait of Hormuz has pushed international oil prices higher, significantly affecting Pakistan's import-dependent energy sector. Reports indicate that the country's weekly oil import bill increased from around \$300 million before the recent regional tensions to nearly \$800 million afterward. The sharp rise in fuel prices has had a cascading effect on the domestic economy. Higher transportation and production costs have translated into increased prices for essential goods and services. Residents in major cities, including Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, have reported noticeable increases in commuting expenses and food prices.

Food inflation remains one of the most pressing concerns. Rising fuel costs have increased transportation expenses across agricultural supply chains, leading to sharp price increases for vegetables and other essential food items. Market reports suggest that the prices of onions, tomatoes, potatoes and poultry products have risen significantly in recent weeks.

North Korea Says Nuclear Status 'Irreversible'

Pyongyang has repeatedly insisted it will not abandon its nuclear arsenal, portraying it as essential to deterrence.

Seoul. (Agency)

North Korea said Sunday its status as a nuclear weapons state was "irreversible" and key to ensuring regional stability, rejecting calls by the United States and its allies for denuclearisation. Pyongyang has repeatedly insisted it will not abandon its nuclear arsenal, portraying it as essential to deterrence, with Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un calling the policy a "line of no retreat" earlier this month. The North's statement came after a trilateral meeting between South Korea, Japan and the United States in Tokyo on Friday, at which the allies reaffirmed their commitment to the "complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula", according to Seoul's foreign ministry.

"The US and its vassal forces' meaningless rhetoric against the DPRK... can never



affect the irreversible position of the DPRK as a nuclear weapons state," the unnamed spokesperson said in a statement published by the official Korean Central News Agency on Sunday, using the acronym for the

North's official name. "The 'denuclearisation' is an irreversibly finalised matter," the official added.

The spokesperson also cited Washington's sales of weapons systems to Seoul and

Tokyo as justification for Pyongyang's pursuit of its nuclear programme, describing it as "a strong security guarantee for regional stability and peace". No matter how hard the US, Japan and the ROK may quibble, they will never change the present position of the DPRK as a nuclear weapons state," the official said, referring to the South by the acronym of its official name.

North Korea has accelerated its nuclear weapons programme since talks with Washington broke down in 2019, when a summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump in Hanoi ended without agreement. In a possible reference to the failed negotiations, the spokesperson said "no one can recover the 'denuclearisation' permanently missed in the trend of the times". Kim recently hosted China's President Xi Jinping in Pyongyang, after the Chinese leader held back-to-back summits in Beijing with Trump and Putin. Neither side made any mention of denuclearisation, according to their official media reports.

China opposes US move to list top firms as military companies



BEIJING. (Agency)

China said Saturday it firmly opposed the U.S. adding several prominent Chinese businesses to its list of military companies, and that the move ignored the consensus reached during U.S. President Donald Trump's summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping last month.

The Pentagon on Monday added several non-state-owned Chinese companies, including electric vehicle maker BYD, tech giants Alibaba and Baidu to its list that seeks to identify Chinese companies it deems to have ties to the Chinese military, preventing them from landing U.S. defense contracts.

By adding these firms to the list, "the U.S. side has ignored the consensus reached during the meeting between the heads of state of the two countries in Beijing," a Chinese Ministry of Commerce spokesperson said Saturday in a statement. The U.S. has "disregarded the overall interests of bilateral economic and trade relations, continuously generalized the concept of national security, and abused state power to unjustifiably suppress Chinese enterprises," the spokesperson added. BYD, Alibaba and Baidu said earlier there's no basis to include them in the list. Trump in mid-May visited Beijing in a much-anticipated summit with Xi. The two leaders agreed to boost economic ties between the countries, including China's purchase of more U.S. agricultural products and Boeing jets, and the setting up separate boards of trade and investment.

26-year-old Indian man stabbed to death in London

KABUL. (Agency)

President Donald Trump said Friday a 26-year-old Indian-origin man was stabbed to death in west London, prompting a murder investigation by the Metropolitan Police, which has appealed for witnesses and CCTV footage as detectives work to establish the circumstances surrounding the attack. The victim, identified as Gurbhraj Singh, suffered fatal injuries during a stabbing on North Road near the junction with Dormers Wells Lane in Southall. Another man, believed to be in his 30s, was also injured in the incident and was taken to hospital. He has since been discharged. According to the Metropolitan Police, officers were called to the scene by the London Ambulance Service in the early hours of Wednesday. Police and paramedics attended the location, but despite efforts to save him, Singh was pronounced dead at the scene after suffering a knife wound.

POLICE APPEAL FOR WITNESSES

Detective Chief Inspector Alison Foxwell of the Met Police's Specialist Crime Command said investigators are continuing to examine the circumstances surrounding the killing. "Homicide detectives continue to investigate Mr Singh's tragic death and my thoughts remain with his family and loved ones," Foxwell said.

"We believe he was assaulted outside a shop at the junction of North Road and Dormers Well Lane at around 00:30hrs (Wednesday)." She urged anyone who may have information to come forward. "I would urge anyone with CCTV covering the area - or who was in the area at the time and has not yet spoken to police - to please come forward and speak to police," she said.

ARRESTS AND INVESTIGATION

Police said seven men, ranging in age from their early 20s to late 30s, were arrested at the scene on suspicion of murder. Following further enquiries, six of those arrested have been released with no further action. The seventh man

has been released on bail and is expected to return at a later date as the investigation continues.

FAMILY BEING SUPPORTED

The Metropolitan Police said specialist officers are supporting Singh's family while detectives pursue leads in the case. Investigators are continuing to seek witnesses and review evidence from the area as they attempt to piece together the events that led to the fatal attack. Meanwhile, the killing comes at a time when immigration and public safety have become contentious issues in parts of the UK. Earlier this week, hundreds of anti-immigrant protesters took to the streets of Belfast in Northern Ireland after a Sudanese national was charged with attempted murder over a knife attack in another incident that left a man seriously injured. The protests escalated into violence, with vehicles and properties set ablaze and several homes belonging to ethnic minority families targeted. Authorities condemned the unrest.



that are not aligned with the elite military establishment, say that decisions about governance, resources, demographics and even cultural identity are made outside the region. Local institutions are reduced to being administrative extensions of the Pakistani establishment. Scholars and activists have attributed it to "state-sponsored Islamisation policies and migration patterns". The phenomenon, Punjabisation, has sprung back into the spotlight after the Pakistani military establishment carried out a deadly crackdown on protesters in POK, killing dozens. It was the second such large-scale protests in POK since September 2025. Over the last few years, protests led by the civil society body, Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), have challenged Islamabad's authority in POK. Alongside basic demands related to inflation, electricity and governance, protesters called for greater autonomy and the abolition of Assembly seats reserved for refugees settled outside the region in Pakistan. The JAAC has argued that outsiders, primarily from Punjab, continue to wield disproportionate influence in POK.

Trump says peace deal with Iran will be signed on Sunday; US to take Tehran's enriched uranium when 'all is calm'

BRUSSELS. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump said Saturday that a deal with Iran to end the war in the Middle East would be signed on Sunday, and that the strategic Strait of Hormuz would be "open to all" immediately after. Iran had offered a different timeline earlier in the day, but nonetheless signalled an agreement was in the offing, as both the warring parties and their mediators expressed increasing optimism that weeks of halting negotiations were drawing to a close. The new momentum came in spite of fresh skirmishes in the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has blockaded since early in the war, throwing global markets into turmoil. "The Deal is scheduled to get signed tomorrow, and immediately after it is signed, the Hormuz Strait is OPEN TO ALL," Trump said on his Truth Social platform. Since an April 8 truce paused the worst of the fighting, Trump has repeatedly insisted a deal was near only for the wrangling to drag on. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei had said earlier on Saturday that the date of the

signing was yet to be determined, but "it will not be tomorrow". However, he added, "The possibility of this happening in the coming days cannot be ruled out." The leader of key mediator Pakistan had also said a deal was closer "than ever before". "With finalisation likely expected in the next 24 hours, Pakistan is preparing for the electronic signing of the peace deal immediately after, followed by technical level talks next week," said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. A Pakistani foreign ministry statement also said the signing was planned for Sunday. The warring parties have nonetheless released conflicting information about the contents of the deal, as each seeks to show it emerged from the war with the upper hand. Tehran has insisted it will maintain control over the Strait of Hormuz, a key maritime trade route for oil and gas shipments from the Gulf. ince imposing its blockade, Iran has demanded vessels obtain permission from its armed forces before transiting the waterway, and has established a new body to oversee it and collect tolls.

The US has responded with its own blockade of Iranian ports. Earlier on Saturday, the US military's Central



Command said Iran had "launched multiple one-way attack drones in an attempt to strike commercial ships transiting the Strait." It added that "US forces have downed all of them in recent hours". Araghchi, in an interview with state television Friday, had said the deal on the table called for the lifting of the US naval blockade. He added that "the administration of Strait of Hormuz will no longer be the same as before", calling the

waterway one of Iran's "main instruments of deterrence".

The US has repeatedly said Iran remaining in control of the strait would be unacceptable, and Trump's post made no mention of tolls or other arrangements.

Nuclear dust Another key sticking point in the talks has been the fate of Iran's nuclear programme, particularly its stockpile of highly enriched uranium -- believed to have been buried by US strikes last year during a previous short-lived war. Iran has long insisted its nuclear programme is peaceful and that it has a right to enrichment, but the United States, Israel and other Western governments suspect it of seeking a bomb. Araghchi on Friday said the only way to deal with Iran's enriched uranium "is to dilute it inside Iran". Trump, who has justified the war as necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, previously said the US would remove and destroy the uranium. In Saturday's post, he said: "When all is calm, we will go in and get the Nuclear Dust."