



MAHANAGAR METRO

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Lucknow Fire Tragedy: **Rajnath Singh** Says "Responsibility Will Be Fixed"

Lucknow Fire: Upon his arrival in Lucknow, Singh went directly to the site of the incident. There, he received a briefing about the situation from Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh assured that that "responsibility will be fixed" for those accountable for the fire tragedy in Lucknow, which claimed 15 lives on a busy Monday afternoon. Upon his arrival in Lucknow, Singh went directly to the site of the incident. There, he received a briefing about the situation from Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak. Speaking to reporters, Singh stated that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has assured that the entire incident will be investigated, adding that responsibility will be determined regarding those accountable for this tragedy, and all necessary actions will be taken. He described the incident as "very unfortunate" and offered his condolences to the families of the victims. Following this, he visited King George's Medical University (KGMU) to inquire about the condition of the injured. He gathered information about their treatment from the doctors and instructed them to ensure that the



patients received the best possible care, the Lucknow city unit of the BJP said in a statement. Upon reaching Lucknow, Rajnath Singh spoke to Adityanath over the phone to obtain detailed information about the incident. "Briefing the defence minister on the entire sequence of events, Chief Minister Adityanath said that strict action is being taken against the guilty. An SIT has been constituted to investigate the incident. The team is to submit its report to the government within seven days," the Lucknow city unit of the BJP said in a statement.

The chief minister also informed that the state government has announced financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh for the family of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for the seriously injured. Additionally, instructions have been issued to the concerned officials to ensure proper medical treatment and provide all possible assistance to the injured, the statement said. Earlier in a post on X, Rajnath had said, "The incident involving a fire at a coaching centre in the Aliganj area of Lucknow is deeply distressing. My heartfelt condolences go out to all the bereaved families during this difficult time. I also wish a speedy recovery to all those injured. The administration is promptly engaged in relief and rescue operations, and all possible assistance is being provided to the victims. I am leaving for Lucknow immediately." The fire engulfed a three-story commercial building in a posh neighbourhood of Lucknow on a busy Monday afternoon, resulting in the deaths of 15 people, including students, and injuring seven others, according to officials.

Vijay accuses DMK regime of diverting public funds, sparks Assembly walkout

The confrontation escalated as Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin strongly objected to the allegations and sought proof on the floor of the House.

Chennai.(Agency)

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the opposition DMK in the Assembly, calling the alleged corruption during its previous regime "party funds" and accusing it of siphoning money from government departments. His remarks sparked noisy protests from DMK members during his reply to the Governor's address.

The confrontation escalated as Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin strongly objected to the allegations and sought proof on the floor of the House.

The Speaker did not permit interventions during the chief minister's speech, and the protests ended in a DMK walkout. Vijay also used his speech to defend his government's mandate and reject the opposition's claim that his administration depended on the DMK's mercy. Udhayanidhi rose to protest after Vijay alleged that the previous DMK regime had "siphoned" funds from various government departments towards "party funds". He urged Speaker JCD Prabhakar to direct the chief minister to submit proof instead of making what he called baseless allegations against the DMK.

The Speaker ruled out interventions during Vijay's speech and said the chief minister should be allowed to complete his reply, but DMK members continued their protest.

Resuming his speech, Vijay said that, unlike the previous DMK government, the TVK would never indulge in corrupt practices and would not allow anyone to "loot" the government coffers.

Eye Of The Tiger: Is **Eknath Shinde** Chasing Bal Thackeray's Image?

Mumbai.(Agency)

From naming his political moves "Operation Tiger" to his aggressive tone on stage, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's recent style has sparked a debate: Is he deliberately adopting Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray's iconic 'Tiger' image? Shinde's political expansion and the pitch of his speeches point to a calculated strategy to mirror Thackeray's persona. 'Operation Tiger' and the frequent use of tiger symbolism. While the BJP usually labels its defections from other parties "Operation Lotus" or "Operation Kamal", Shinde has branded his political strikes and expansion drives "Operation Tiger". The name isn't accidental - it sends a clear message. At Shiv Sena's foundation day event, Shinde declared: "The tiger is in front of you, and the tiger always does the operation." He began that speech in a heavy, growling voice, seemingly imitating a tiger's roar.

On the first day of the Maharashtra Assembly's Monsoon Session, when Uddhav Thackeray faction MLAs were protesting in front of him, Shiv Sena MLA Murji Patel presented Shinde with a tiger portrait. Shinde held the image for several minutes amid the protest. Was it a deliberate attempt to signal to the media and rivals that Shiv Sena's "tiger" is now Shinde?

Bal Thackeray And The 'Tiger' Image

Bal Thackeray chose the roaring tiger as Shiv Sena's symbol from the party's inception to represent Marathi identity and aggressive Hindutva. Because of his fearless style, he was called the "Tiger of Maratha" or "Maratha Tiger" on party posters, banners and stages. The large, throne-like chair Thackeray used at 'Matoshree' and public events was often designed with tiger motifs. The sofas at Matoshree had tiger or lion head carvings on both sides, symbolising his authority. Fans called Thackeray "Tiger" for his bold persona. In Saamna cartoons and editorials, he often had the party depicted as a fierce tiger hunting political opponents. His stature, his ability to control power without holding a constitutional post, and his blunt rhetoric made him Maharashtra's "Tiger".

Shinde now seems to be tapping into that same aura. He isn't just copying the tiger symbol. Shinde is also adopting Thackeray's 'durbār' style - keeping doors open 24x7 for ordinary Sainiks - and the aggressive Hindutva pitch.



Khaki & Khadi Nexus in Karjan

MLA Akshay Patel & Notorious Ghugha Bharwad's 'Land Mafia-Raj' Ravage Narmada Riverbed!

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Pawan Mekan

Karjan/Vadodara: When power-drunk politicians and individuals with deep criminal mindsets treat the law with utter contempt, the result is sheer environmental and financial devastation. The living proof of this disaster is currently unfolding across Karjan Taluka. Karjan MLA Akshay Patel—who defected from the Congress and washed himself clean in the BJP's political "washing machine"—alongside notorious Karjan Municipality Ward No. 6 member Ghugha Bharwad and Gokul Bharwad, have established a parallel mafia empire. Their target: the systematic plunder of Pingerwada and Ghandhara villages. By openly flouting Gujarat Government regulations, this syndicate is draining the state exchequer of billions of rupees. In Pingerwada village, operating as if the public land is their personal fiefdom, the mafia has deployed an army of 120 to 150 dumpers, 16 Hitachi excavators, and more than 20 JCB machines to rip through the earth day and night. Illegal mining has exceeded government-approved limits by more than ten times, reducing pristine villages to literal debris fields. The audacity peaks at the banks of the sacred Narmada River.



Without an iota of legal permission, dangerous heavy-duty suction and excavation machinery have been deployed, carving out life-threatening 200-foot-deep craters. Even the local 'Gochar' (pasture land) reserved for cattle grazing has been aggressively swallowed up by these land sharks. A vigilant youth from the Prajapati community in Ghandhara village compiled exhaustive photographic evidence and dispatched it directly to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). Yet, the bureaucratic machinery in Gandhinagar remains completely deaf to the cries of the locals. The Extortion Network: MLA Akshay Patel and his cousin Dixit Patel run a fleet of nearly 120 'Aiwa' heavy dumpers carrying out this illegal trade. To ensure immunity from local police check-posts, these vehicles

prominently display religious stickers reading 'Bapji' and 'Radhe Krishna'. To guarantee hassle-free passage across regions, the MLA's son, Rishi Patel, personally orchestrates a monthly extortion racket, pocketing a staggering ₹40,000 per truck as "protection money" (Hafta). 22-Ton Royalty, 50-Ton Overload: While official government receipts are cut for a mere 22 tons of mineral transit, these vehicles are illegally overloaded with upwards of 50 tons of material. These massive overloads are destroying state highways across Gujarat, causing severe infrastructural degradation and robbing the state of billions in tax revenue. The very politicians who scaled the ranks of the state assembly on public votes are today enriching themselves by selling out public land. The MLA's son has recently acquired a luxury car valued between ₹3 to ₹4 Crore, while history-sheeter Ghugha Bharwad has erected mansions and amassed vehicle fleets worth ₹2 to ₹3 Crore. To shield himself from the long arm of the law, MLA Akshay Patel has allegedly funneled this black wealth into a mountain of benami (proxy) properties registered under dummy fronts, including individuals named Jaydutt and Mohsin Pathan from Karan village.

India, US commence talks to rework trade pact amid tariff changes

New Delhi.(Agency)

India and the US on Tuesday commenced discussions on the first phase of their proposed bilateral trade pact, after changes in US tariff policy upended a framework negotiated earlier this year.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal met US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer here as both sides sought to conclude an interim trade pact before July 24, when Washington's temporary 10 per cent tariff on imports from trading partners is due to expire.

"Warm welcome to @USTradeRep Amb Jamieson Greer, @USAmbIndia Amb Sergio Gor and their delegation to @DoC_GoI. Looking forward to productive discussions on the bilateral trade agreement between (India & US)," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said in a post on X.

Greer's two-day visit comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump held their first meeting in more than a year on the sidelines of the G7 summit in



France on June 17, injecting fresh momentum into trade negotiations that both sides see as critical to strengthening economic ties.

The talks are focused on reworking a framework agreement announced in February that was built around tariff commitments later rendered uncertain by a US Supreme Court ruling striking down sweeping tariffs announced by Trump.

The meeting at Vanijya Bhawan, the headquarters of the commerce ministry, is also being attended by Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal and India's chief negotiator Darpan Jain, sources

said.

It follows chief negotiator-level discussions held in New Delhi earlier this month (June 2-4). Securing preferential tariff treatment has become a central objective for New Delhi after changes in US trade policy eroded an advantage India had expected to enjoy over regional competitors such as Vietnam and other ASEAN economies.

Under the February framework, the United States had agreed to reduce tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent, lower than duties facing several competing exporters. However, the subsequent court ruling and Washington's decision to impose a temporary 10 per cent tariff on imports from all countries have forced both sides to revisit key elements of the arrangement. Agrawal on June 15 stated that the discussions between the two sides are expected to be centred around giving final touches to the framework deal.

On June 17, US President Donald Trump said the two countries are "very close" to finalise the trade agreement.

Earlier on June 5, Goyal said India and the US are moving towards closing all open ends of the interim trade agreement, and both sides are likely to execute the "very, very vibrant" first phase of the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by the middle of next month.

Both sides in February announced the contours of the first phase of the BTA. The framework was based on the 50 per cent tariffs imposed by the US on Indian goods. However, on February 20, the US Supreme Court struck down the sweeping tariffs imposed by the Trump administration.

The Trump-administration then announced 10 per cent tariffs under Section 122 of the Trade Act on all countries for 150 days on February 24. It will expire on July 24 this year.

The meeting between the two sides is important on account of these changes in the US tariff regime. India and the US formally launched BTA negotiations on February 13, 2025. On February 7, 2026, the two sides announced that they had reached a framework for an interim agreement regarding reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade.

On June 17, US President Donald Trump said that the two countries are "very close" on the finalisation of the trade agreement.



News box

After murder suspicion, CCTV footage reveals hit-and-run behind e-rickshaw driver's death

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

What initially appeared to be a mysterious death with no visible signs of an accident has now been traced to a suspected hit-and-run inside the Rajiv Chowk underpass, police said after analysing CCTV footage.

Lovely Kakkar (42), an e-rickshaw driver and resident of Bhim Nagar, was carrying toy goods from Sadar Bazaar when he entered the underpass around 4.28 pm on Friday. Minutes later, he was found critically injured and was rushed to hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries later that night. A biker spotted Kakkar lying injured and alerted the 112 helpline. An emergency response vehicle (ERV) and ambulance reached the spot and took him to Medanta Hospital, following which his family shifted him to Astha Hospital on Pataudi Road. Police said the ERV team received the call at 4.33 pm, while Sadar police station was informed by the hospital around 5 pm. "When we reached the spot, the injured was taken to the hospital. The e-rickshaw was still standing there; however, there were no accident traces on it. No dents, no scratches. It all looked fine," an officer said.

Doctors found injuries on Kakkar's head, spine, face, and other parts of the body. "Those looked like an accident; however, without any traces of it," the officer said. The family alleged foul play, prompting a detailed investigation. Police examined CCTV footage on Sunday and found that around 10 vehicles had entered the underpass around the same time. "All the drivers were asked to join the investigation and were questioned. Most of the drivers said that they had not witnessed the accident. However, at last, a bullet rider came and said that a delivery partner had met with an accident with the e-rickshaw driver," the officer said. Investigators later found that Kakkar had parked his e-rickshaw near a sharp turn inside the underpass and was allegedly talking on the phone beside it when a delivery rider entered a minute later and struck him.

Truck helper crushed to death after jumping from trailer after collision in Gurgaon

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A 24-year-old man died after being run over by the trailer truck he was travelling in on Gurgaon-Faridabad Road near Gwal Pahari on Sunday. The deceased, Shani Yadav, was a native of Kanpur district in UP and had been working as a truck helper with a transport company in the city for the past two years. According to a complaint filed by his father, Rajendra Singh, the accident occurred near the Valley View Society traffic signal at Gwal Pahari while Shani was on a Hyva truck (HR-65B-8499) travelling from Gurgaon towards Faridabad. In his complaint, Rajendra alleged that the driver, identified as Vikas, was driving rashly and negligently. As the truck approached the traffic signal, where several vehicles were stationary, Shani fell from the moving vehicle and was dragged for some distance. The complaint further alleged that the truck rammed into vehicles waiting at the signal, including a WagonR and an MG car. Police said the driver abandoned the truck at the spot and fled. Investigators said they are examining the exact circumstances that led to Shani falling from the vehicle. Preliminary inquiries suggest he may have attempted to jump from the truck and flee after the collision, but was crushed under the heavy vehicle. Rajendra said he was informed about his son's death on the phone on June 21. He subsequently travelled to Gurgaon with family members and identified the body at the city mortuary. He told police that he last spoke to his son on June 20, when Shani informed him that the truck had been loaded and was heading for unloading work. Rajendra said Shani had secured the helper's job through another employee, Akhilesh, who worked as a driver with the same company.

Retired scientist falls into open drain in Noida: 'My swimming skills saved me'

Noida.(Agency)

In one of the latest cases in a series of accidents caused by open pits and drains across the city, a retired scientist recently escaped death after falling into a 12-foot-deep uncovered drain in Sector 122.

Dr RS Sharma (69), a former ICMR scientist and resident of Sector 122, was on his way to activate his new card at the ATM located in the commercial area in PK Block. He walked on the drain cover but found the main gate of the complex locked. Then he saw another gate and tried to reach it. But it was dark and he misjudged the width of the drain. He tripped over the jutting drain wall and fell into it. Dr Sharma said, "Within seconds, I found myself in dirty, foul-smelling water. Being dark, I could not make sense of anything and thought it was all over for me."

However, his swimming skills came to his rescue. "I could make out a pipeline at the base of the drain and used it to get a foothold till help arrived and people pulled me out," he said. He made an initial self-examination to rule out fractures. It took him a couple of days to recover from the shock, and he has been recuperating at home, nursing a left-knee injury and the skin that peeled off on his right upper arm. The incident comes barely five months after UP govt removed the Noida Authority CEO, placed him on a waitlist and ordered an SIT probe into official negligence — action triggered by the Jan 17 death of software engineer Yuvraj Mehta (27) who fell into an open pit near a drain in Sector 150. Residents say unguarded excavation spots and uncovered drains remain a persistent hazard across Noida. This incident raises critical questions about safety in public spaces, especially for vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. "Dr Sharma's story is a chilling reminder of the urgent need for improved infrastructure and safety measures in Noida. Open drains are overlooked hazards waiting to ensnare more victims. With a growing population and aspirations to transform Noida into a 'Smart City', it is vital that the administration ensures basic safety for its residents," former RWA president of Sector 122 Umesh Sharma said. On April 6, 2025, another elderly man, Sanjay Singh, fell into an open drain in the Jagat Farm area in Greater.

Haryana hospitals told to keep OPD records for 5 years, IPD files for 10

Noida.(Agency)

Haryana govt has issued fresh guidelines on the preservation and management of hospital records. Under the new guidelines, outpatient department (OPD) records will have to be retained for five years, while inpatient department (IPD) records must be preserved for 10 years. Birth and death records have been classified as documents of permanent importance and cannot be destroyed.

Haryana State Health Resource Centre (HSHRC) has directed all civil surgeons, principal medical officers and medical superintendents to establish proper medical record rooms and follow a uniform record retention policy across district hospitals. HSHRC has laid down a detailed process for the disposal of old records once the retention period expires.

Medico-legal case (MLC) records, which frequently serve as evidence in criminal and civil proceedings, are to be retained for 15 years and indefinitely if a court case

remains pending. Now, patients seeking old treatment records for insurance claims, court cases, compensation disputes or follow-up medical care may soon find it easier to access their documents.

HSHRC executive director Dr Virender Yadav said on Tuesday, "The move is expected to bring greater uniformity in record management across govt hospitals and reduce instances of documents being misplaced, damaged or disposed of without following due procedure." Health officials said the creation of dedicated medical record rooms and adoption of uniform retention norms would help hospitals better manage storage space while ensuring legally and medically important documents remain available whenever required. The directive comes amid concerns that medical records are often stored in hospitals far beyond the prescribed retention period, while hospital staff remain unaware of record retention norms. The order also mandates the



preservation of records related to ultrasound, CT scans, echocardiography and other investigations covered under the PCPNDT Act in accordance with legal provisions. Records related to medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) are to be preserved as per the provisions of the MTP Act and retained until the conclusion of any legal proceedings. For patients, the policy could prove particularly useful in cases where medical records are required years after treatment. Hospital records are often sought for health insurance settlements, compensation claims arising out of road accidents, disability

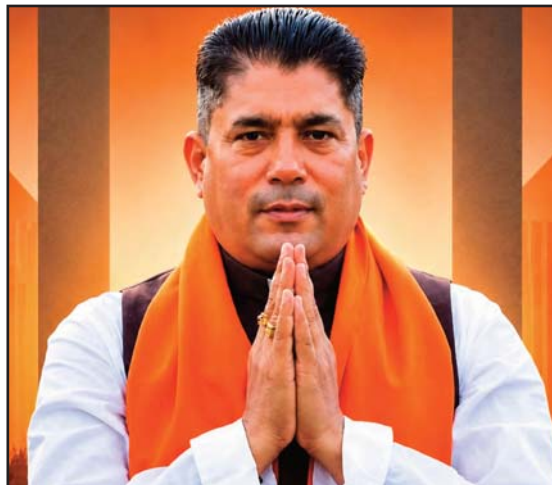
certification, pension-related documentation, medical negligence cases and long-term treatment of chronic illnesses. A standardised retention schedule is expected to improve the availability and traceability of such records. The guidelines also place emphasis on the preservation of medico-legal records through digitisation, microfilming and computerisation, a step that could strengthen evidence management in accident, assault and negligence cases.

Before the destruction of records, hospitals must obtain approval from the competent authority and publish a notice in both local and national newspapers at least one month in advance. If no objections are received, records may be destroyed through shredding and disposed of through auction or tender processes. Facilities have also been directed to maintain a register of all records destroyed.

Birthday of Shri Bhanwar Singh Palada Celebrated with Enthusiasm Across the Country

Mahanagar Metro Desk

Delhi: The birthday of Shri Bhanwar Singh Palada, National Patron of the All India Hindu Kranti Sena, senior public leader, and renowned social worker, was celebrated with great enthusiasm, devotion, and joy across the country. On this special occasion, office bearers, workers, public representatives, social organizations, and distinguished personalities from various walks of life extended their heartfelt greetings and best wishes to him. To mark the occasion, the All India Hindu Kranti Sena organized a series of social, religious, and public service activities in different parts of the country. Programs such as cow service, tree plantation drives, distribution of food and essential items to the needy, religious ceremonies, bhajan-kirtan gatherings, and community welfare initiatives were conducted in several districts. Workers of the organization pledged to celebrate the day in the spirit of service, cultural values, and dedication to society. In his message, Anand Soni, National President of the All India Hindu Kranti Sena, described Shri Palada as a source of inspiration for every worker of the organization. He stated that Shri Palada has always placed national interest, social welfare, and the preservation of Sanatan culture above all else. His leadership, guidance, and vast experience have continuously provided the organization with new direction and energy. Pawan Maken, National General Secretary, said that Shri Palada has



consistently worked for the welfare of every section of society throughout his public life. His dedication to public service, simplicity, and strong work ethic have earned him a unique and respected position in society. He added that every worker of the organization remains committed to following his ideals and carrying forward the mission of social service. National Vice President Yogesh Paliwal remarked that Shri Palada's life is an inspiring journey of struggle, service, and commitment. He has always motivated the youth to contribute to nation-building, social awareness, and the preservation of cultural values. His vision and guidance continue to be invaluable assets for the organization. State In-Charge Manish Paliwal informed that special programs were organized by various

units of the organization across the state to commemorate the occasion. He noted that under Shri Palada's leadership, the organization has undertaken significant efforts toward social transformation and the strengthening of nationalist values. State President Kuldeep Bohra stated that Shri Palada has always encouraged workers and believes in running the organization as one united family. State President Saurav Singh Shekhawat said that the occasion is not merely a birthday celebration but a day of inspiration and renewed commitment for the organization. State Vice President Hemant Joshi, State General Secretary Rajendra Singh Churli, along with numerous national, state, district, and local office bearers, extended their warm greetings and wished Shri Palada a healthy, happy, and long life. Organization leaders stated that Shri Bhanwar Singh Palada has always worked with dedication toward society, culture, and the nation. This is why a large number of supporters, well-wishers, and workers have come forward to convey their greetings on his birthday. Special prayers, religious ceremonies, and rituals were organized at several places for his good health, happiness, and long life. On this occasion, the entire All India Hindu Kranti Sena family reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the causes of national interest, social harmony, protection of Sanatan values, cow protection, and public service under the continued guidance and leadership of Shri Bhanwar Singh Palada.

Man says mother's killers met father after attack, but court acquits him

Noida.(Agency)

A man identified in court the person he said had killed his mother during a snatching bid, testifying that the accused and his accomplice had met his father the day after the attack to demand payment for the job. But 24 years later, the three were acquitted. The court noted that the son's testimony contradicted his own earlier statement to police. It also found the recovery of an alleged country-made pistol and cartridges doubtful as the bullet recovered from the victim's body was not produced as evidence. The additional sessions court acquitted Rajkumar, husband of the deceased Pinki and the original complainant in the case, along with co-accused Shahzad and Nazir alias Nazim alias Yashveer, noting serious lapses in the prosecution's case and gaps in the investigation. According to the FIR lodged by Rajkumar with Sector 39 police, his wife Pinki and son Rahul had gone to a bank to withdraw money on June 25, 2002. On their way back, four unidentified youths intercepted their Omni van and attempted to snatch the cash. When the family resisted, one of the men fired at close range, fatally wounding Pinki, who died at Kailash Hospital. Police registered a case under Sections 302 (murder) and

394 (voluntarily causing hurt while attempting robbery) IPC against unknown persons. After investigation, however, police named Rajkumar himself as the main conspirator, along with Indrajeet, Shahzad and Nazir. All were arrested on June 30. Police claimed to have recovered the pistol used in the killing. Three separate cases, for murder, conspiracy and Arms Act violations, were registered and later clubbed into one for trial. The court framed charges under Section 302 read with 120B IPC (criminal conspiracy) against Rajkumar and Shahzad, and under Sections 394, 302, 120B IPC and Section 25 of the Arms Act against Nazir, while discharging Indrajeet. The prosecution presented 10 witnesses, including the deceased's son Rahul and daughter Priyanka. Rahul corroborated the FIR and testified that his father used to physically and mentally abuse his mother and had a history of drinking and gambling. Identifying Nazir in the courtroom as the man who had fired at his mother, Rahul told the court that a day after



the incident, Nazir had come to their home with co-accused Shahzad to meet his father. "We have executed your wife as per your order, so you should give us the remaining amount," Rahul quoted Nazir as saying. While Rahul's statement was recorded in 2005, the investigating officer (IO), retired inspector Sunil Kumar, testified only in 2022. During cross-examination, the IO admitted that Rahul's 2005 statement had not been recorded during the investigation.

The court also noted that despite the presiding officer's efforts and repeated

opportunities, the IO had failed to produce the bullet recovered from Pinki's body during autopsy. "The bullet recovered from the deceased's body was not presented as evidence. There is no forensic laboratory report to prove that it was fired from the pistol allegedly recovered, or that the country-made pistol was in working condition," the court held, adding that this made the recovery of the weapon and cartridges from Nazir "completely doubtful". Citing the Supreme Court's judgment in Sujit Biswas v. State of Assam (2013), judge Sunil Kumar-1 held that however strong the suspicion, it cannot substitute for evidence in a sessions trial. The prosecution had failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt the charges against all three accused, the court said, and they were entitled to the benefit of the doubt. The court ordered each of the acquitted persons to execute a personal bond of Rs 25,000 with one surety of the like amount, in compliance with Section 437A of the CrPC.

Uttarakhand transfers probe into Karnaprayag clash involving Sikh pilgrims

The probe into two cases linked to a clash between Sikh pilgrims and locals in Uttarakhand's Karnaprayag has been transferred from Chamoli to Haridwar district.

Amritsar. (Agency)

Days after several Nihang Sikh pilgrims returning from the Hemkund Sahib shrine in Uttarakhand were arrested for allegedly attacking residents with weapons in the Karnaprayag market area, the state government said on Monday that it has transferred the investigation in two cases from Chamoli to Haridwar district "to ensure an impartial inquiry".

In a post on X on Monday evening, the Uttarakhand government stated that the probe into the case registered against the Sikh devotees at Karnaprayag police station on June 16 and the June 20 First Information Report (FIR) filed by the father of an injured Sikh pilgrim against locals will now be overseen by Senior Superintendent of Police Navneet Singh Bhullar in Haridwar.

The cases were filed over an incident that occurred on June 16, following a verbal altercation between some Nihang Sikhs and local traders in the Karnaprayag market over parking. The dispute escalated when four pilgrims allegedly attacked a local and other residents who intervened, using weapons. Four people were injured in the incident. Initially, the police had only taken action against the Sikh pilgrims.

Officials said the decision to transfer the probe followed recommendations from Rajeev Swaroop, Inspector General of Police, Garhwal Range, to guarantee a fair, transparent, and independent investigation. "The Uttarakhand Police fully respects the religious sentiments of all communities and is committed to impartial, transparent,

and just action in accordance with the law in every case," Swaroop said, adding that the Hemkund Sahib Yatra is a "sacred pilgrimage" whose safety and orderly



conduct were a top priority for the police. **Report on Sikh bodies' complaint in 2 weeks**

Deputy Inspector General Yashwant Singh

has been tasked to investigate complaints by several Sikh organisations alleging inappropriate conduct by local police during the incident. He has been asked to submit a report within two weeks.

The Uttarakhand administration had earlier sought a status report from senior officials and emphasised that the matter should not be framed as a communal dispute.

The development comes days after an Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De) delegation—including Faridkot MP Sarabjit Singh, Dakha MLA Manpreet Singh Ayali, and Tarsem Singh, the father of Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh—travelled to Uttarakhand on June 21 and met Uttarakhand Director General of Police Deepak Seth.

Short news

IELTS, TOEFL exam racket busted in Gujarat's Anand, 1 held, search on for masterminds: Police

Vadodara. (Agency)

A HIDDEN passage through a wall, mirrored computer screens and dummy test-takers working from a separate room formed the backbone of an alleged exam fraud racket for international language proficiency tests such as TOEFL and CELPIP that was on Monday busted by the Anand Cyber Crime Police, which arrested one accused and launched a search for more suspects, including the alleged masterminds.

Police identified the alleged mastermind of the racket Harshad Raval and said he, along with his aide Arth Bundela, set up the examination centre under the guise of a legitimate facility. The centre allegedly conducted not only TOEFL and CELPIP examinations but also IELTS and other foreign-language proficiency tests required for overseas education and employment.

Police identified the arrested accused as Tarunkant Sharma, a resident of South Bopal, Ahmedabad, and originally from Sahibabad in Uttar Pradesh. Sharma was allegedly working as an employee of the centre under the direction of Raval, police said.

The police said that following specific intelligence inputs, a team led by Inspector J K Dodiya and Sub-Inspector H A Rishin on Monday carried out a raid at an 'examination centre' operating from a building behind a college near Anand Grid Chokdi. Investigators found that a company, Link Horizon, was allegedly facilitating malpractice in online examinations conducted for individuals seeking opportunities abroad. These examinations included TOEFL, CELPIP and other online assessment tests that are often required for study, work and immigration purposes.

Police said the suspects had devised a sophisticated arrangement to allow impersonation during the examinations. During the raid, officers discovered two rooms functioning as a "test lab and a support room".

Gujarat announces 20% quota for former Agniveers in class-3 police, jail and forest posts

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

The Gujarat government has decided to provide 20% reservation to former Agniveers in the recruitment of various Class III cadre posts of state police, and departments of jail and forest.

The state government has also announced exemption from physical tests and relaxation in the prescribed upper age limit for former Agniveers in various recruitments in the state. The decision was taken by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, said a release from the state government.

Agniveers are the recruits of armed forces below officers' rank recruited under the Agnipath scheme of the Central government. Aspirants between the ages of 17.5 and 23 years are eligible to be recruited as Agniveers for a tenure of four years.

"Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel has taken an important decision to provide a 20 per cent reservation to former Agniveers in direct recruitment to Class-3 cadres across various departments of the state government," the release said.

It further said, "Additionally, the Chief Minister has also decided to exempt former Agniveers from the physical efficiency test required for such recruitment and provide a relaxation of up to three years in the prescribed upper age limit.

AIMPLB to launch nationwide movement against 'social, political marginalisation' of Muslims

Lucknow. (Agency)

THE EXECUTIVE committee of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) said on Monday it would soon come out with a comprehensive document on the "deteriorating condition" of Muslims in the country and launch a nationwide movement against the "social and political marginalisation" of the community. The Board made the announcement a day after a meeting of its executive committee, presided over by AIMPLB president Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, at the India Islamic Cultural Centre in New Delhi.

Sharing details of decisions taken in the meeting, AIMPLB spokesperson SQR Ilyas said, "These decisions relate in particular to the growing incidents of mob violence or lynching against Muslims in BJP-ruled states; demolition drives targeting Muslim homes and localities, against mosques and madrasas; bulldozer action; attempts to make Vande Mataram compulsory in

government functions, schools and government-aided madaras; developments concerning the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code in various states; and the recent judgment of the Madhya Pradesh High Court



regarding the Kamal Maula/Bhojshala Mosque."

Ilyas said the Executive Committee regretted that despite the "planned attacks on the life, property, dignity, religion and faith of the Muslim community, secular political parties continue to maintain a criminal silence and their leaders do not

take stands on these issues, as though Muslims have been reduced to nothing more than a vote bank".

"We are unhappy with all parties, including the Congress. None of them raises issues of Muslims strongly," he said, when asked about Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's reported remarks that if the issue pertains to Muslims, the community be specifically mentioned and not a generalised reference to minorities be made.

The Executive Committee decided that a comprehensive document would be prepared and published on the "deteriorating condition of the Muslim community, communal tensions and violations of fundamental rights, so as to awaken the conscience of the people,"

he said. On the MP High Court's Bhojshala case judgment, he said, "It is contrary to historical evidence, revenue records, colonial-era official documents, and the centuries-old Muslim tradition of worship at the site". "Furthermore, the judgment is also inconsistent with the spirit of the Places of Worship Act, 1991."

8 cats, 7 dogs and a parrot: Parallel rescue played out amid Lucknow fire

Lucknow. (Agency)

Even as the screams of people trapped on the second floor of the burning building in Lucknow's Aliganj were heard on the road, desperate cries for help rose from the ground floor. Volunteers rushed to the site, waiting anxiously behind the barricades as firefighters and policemen battled the flames to rescue the occupants.

When the first survivor finally emerged, it was not a person, but a grey cat, curled silently inside a tray. Moments later, a policeman stepped out carrying another cat in his arms, its fur darkened by soot, its body limp but breathing. Next came another cat, looking terrified in its large cage. One by one, the animals were brought out — eight cats, seven dogs and a

parrot. They were shaken but alive.

How the rescue effort unfolded The building housed a pet shop and a clinic on the basement, ground and first floors.



Head Hopper Studios, a company involved in 3D art production and game development, was on the second floor.

"After receiving information about the fire at

the pet shop, I immediately dispatched a three-member team of veterinary doctors to the site to assist with the rescue of animals and ensure their safe recovery," said Dr Suresh Kumar, Chief Veterinary Officer of Lucknow.

Several animal welfare organisations — Jeev Aashraya and Aasra The Helping Hands — as well as local residents also rushed to the scene. A local resident familiar with the pet shop said many of the animals may have been evacuated before the fire spread through the building. "As regular visitors to the pet shop, we know there were more animals on the premises... We believe the shop owner managed to move a number of the animals to safety before the blaze intensified," the resident said.

'The electric cable was burning hot': Lucknow fire survivor recounts dramatic escape

Lucknow. (Agency)

Among those who narrowly escaped the Lucknow blaze, which killed 15 people on Monday, was 29-year-old graphic artist Gaurav Kumar from Meerut, who descended from the upper floor of the burning building using a cable after fire and smoke cut off safer routes to the ground. Kumar was among the last people to emerge from the building.

"We first noticed flames rising from the lower floor. Within a short time, the fire had spread upwards towards the second floor, where our studio is located," he said. Kumar has been working for the past five years at Head Hopper Studios, a company involved in 3D art production and game development, which is located on the second floor of the building. "At the time, around 24 to 25 people were present in the studio," he said.

Another graphic artist, 29-year-old Aasif from



Lucknow, also used the cable to come down. He said a few employees managed to leave using the staircase in the initial moments after the fire was detected. However, as the flames intensified and spread upwards, the stairway became increasingly dangerous.

"With smoke and fire moving closer, many of us realised that the usual exit route might no longer be safe," he said. Faced with limited options, those inside began searching for alternative ways to escape. Aasif said they opened windows in an effort to find a route to safety and assess conditions outside the building. It was then that they noticed a thick, unused electrical cable running down from the terrace. In the tense minutes that followed, workers weighed the risks of climbing down the exterior of the structure against the growing danger posed by the smoke and flames inside, he added.

CBI arrests senior IAS officer in Haryana's multi-crore IDFC First Bank fund fraud case

Pankaj Aggarwal held in probe into alleged Rs 60.54-crore diversion of education and agriculture funds through Chandigarh's IDFC First Bank branch

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested senior IAS officer Pankaj Aggarwal in connection with the alleged misappropriation of government funds from accounts of the Haryana School Shiksha Pariyojna Parishad (HSSPP) and the Haryana State Agriculture Marketing Board (HSAMB) maintained at the Sector 32 branch of IDFC First Bank in Chandigarh.

Aggarwal, who was then Principal Secretary of the School Education and Agriculture departments, was arrested on June 22 and is being produced before a court on Tuesday. The case was taken over by the CBI on a reference from the

Haryana Government. According to the agency, its investigation found that accounts of the two departments were



opened in violation of Haryana Finance Department guidelines and that funds were subsequently transferred to these

accounts beyond prescribed limits.

The CBI alleged that the accounts were opened during Aggarwal's tenure as Principal Secretary and that fraudulent transactions carried out through them led to the misappropriation of government funds, causing a net loss of Rs 60.54 crore to the state exchequer. The agency said it had collected incriminating evidence against the officer during the course of the investigation. The alleged fraud involving HSSPP and HSAMB is part of a larger scam at the Sector

32 branch of IDFC First Bank, where funds worth Rs 504 crore belonging to eight Haryana government departments

were allegedly siphoned off and routed through shell entities.

The CBI had taken over the probe from the Haryana State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau at the request of the state government. So far, 17 accused have been chargesheeted in the case, including six bank officials of IDFC First Bank and AU Small Finance Bank, three Haryana government officials, two companies and six private individuals.

The agency said senior IAS officer R K Singh, who was arrested earlier in connection with alleged misappropriation of funds linked to the Municipal Corporation, Panchkula, has since been remanded to judicial custody after the expiry of his police remand.

The novel is dying, it may yet find a dignified niche

Sukirat

When the Booker Prize Foundation announced last month that it was releasing ‘All Around the World’, a collection of short stories by Booker Prize winners, including Anne Enright, David Szalay and Roddy Doyle, the literary world applauded. Priced at just £1, with thousands of free copies being distributed to prisons, libraries and community centres across Britain, it was an act of genuine democratisation. But it was also, whether intentionally or not, an admission — that the novel, that patient and unhurried baithak of modern literature, may be finding itself slowly deserted.

The debate over the novel’s death is not new. And yet the novel has survived, adapting, mutating, occasionally thriving. What feels different this time is that the threat is not coming from a rival medium alone. It is coming from inside the human brain. More than a third of UK adults now find it hard to read a book through to the end; 55 per cent say they read less than they want to. These are not people indifferent to books — they buy them, stack them on bedside tables, begin them with good intentions, and quietly abandon them somewhere around page 40. India tells perhaps a starker story. Between 2019 and 2024, only 4 per cent of Indians reported reading in their free time — down from 5.4 per cent in the years before. Among children aged between eight and 18, fewer than 35 per cent say they enjoy reading at all. The culprit most commonly named is the inability to concentrate. A generation raised on the scroll is finding sustained attention increasingly difficult to summon. Social media has done something more insidious than simply compete with books for time. It has revived the expectation of narrative itself. A story, in the grammar of Instagram or X, resolves in under a minute. The novel, by contrast, asks you to sit with ambiguity for 300 pages, to defer gratification almost indefinitely. Even newspaper opinion pieces — traditionally the thinking person’s brief indulgence — have grown shorter and punchier, as editors chase readers whose fingers hover perpetually over the scroll button. Cinema is feeling the same pressure. Limited series of six tight episodes outperform sprawling seasons of 12. And then there are reels — 15-to-60-second fragments that have become the enticing stories of our age. The attention economy has declared its preference: it is emphatically not for the long form.

It is in this context that the short story’s moment begins to feel less like a revival and more like inevitable. Punjabi literature understood this long ago. The short story — the nikki kahani — was never a minor form here. Gurbakhsh Singh, who founded Preet Lari in 1933 and used its pages to carry a reformist vision deep into Punjabi homes, wrote short fiction that was as much social intervention as literature — stories that spoke plainly to readers who had never been spoken to plainly before. Nanak Singh, who is remembered primarily as a novelist, wrote short fiction of searing emotional precision. Balwant Gargi brought to his stories a playwright’s instinct for the compressed moment. Amrita Pritam’s short fiction distilled landscapes of Partition grief into a few devastating pages. And then there is the qissa — the verse narrative that held Punjab’s oral imagination for centuries, keeping a listener hooked, making the long feel short. The International Booker Prize’s recognition of Banu Mushtaq’s ‘Heart Lamp’ last year — translated from Kannada — was a significant cultural signal. That a collection of stories in a regional Indian language could win a prestigious prize for translated fiction should have been celebrated far more loudly. It pointed to something that Punjabi writers and readers might usefully reflect upon: the short story is not a concession to diminished attention spans. In the right hands, it is the most demanding form there is.

The judge who won’t budge

It’s alarming that the upright Justice Patel and his family are receiving death threats

Julio Ribeiro

WHEN my good friend, Justice Gautam Patel (retd), phoned me from his daughter’s house in London, I was shocked to hear his story. He is known in Mumbai’s judicial circles as a conscientious, upright judge who could not be influenced by anyone. One of the last cases he decided before retiring from the Bombay High Court in April 2024 involved two factions of the Dawoodi Bohra community. One faction is led by the present Dai (religious head of the community), who succeeded his late father. The other is headed by the previous Dai’s brother, who claimed that the predecessor had told him that he would succeed to the “gaddi”. Justice Patel did not think that an oral promise made without witnesses constituted sufficient grounds to discard the widely accepted principle of primogeniture.

Both factions are strong, numerically as well as financially. Only a judge of the reputation of Justice Patel — I am proud to say that there are many such judges whom I know of — would be able to withstand the clout of these two power centres. And this he did with panache. But he would never have imagined that he would be targeted for a decision made in his judicial capacity in accordance with his conscience and principles. The Dawoodi Bohras are Shia Muslims hailing from Gujarat. They are a prosperous business community that is known to use money power to get decisions in their favour. With Justice Patel, any such approach was impossible. Both factions must have been aware of this “impediment” even before the hearing began. The case may have been assigned to Justice Patel by the high court’s Chief Justice for that very reason. So, when Justice Patel’s daughter, who stays in a London suburb with her husband and children, was assaulted on April 22 this year, he advised her to file a complaint at the local police station, which she did. A few weeks later, she received an anonymous letter. It contained a threat to kill the whole family unless Justice Patel issued a statement on YouTube that he had passed an erroneous judgment in the succession case due to pressure exerted by the rival group! Similar threat letters were received by Justice Patel’s wife at their Mumbai home. As expected by all who know him, Justice Patel decided to face the thugs. The Mumbai police lodged a case on the charge of criminal intimidation after the retired judge submitted a complaint. The identification of the culprits is the immediate priority. Unfortunately, the local police in England have not been equal to the task. The Metropolitan Police, known internationally as Scotland Yard, need to deploy their ace detectives to do the job, especially since they are up against a crime syndicate formed mainly of Pakistani-



origin Muslims active in the UK. The gang members are trafficking girls of European origin and supplying drugs to them, as reported by MP Rupert Lowe. His report also mentions the conversion of some of the girls to Islam.

When Justice Patel got in touch with me, I thought of the people who could prod the Metropolitan Police to play a more active role in the investigation. The only senior British police officer (now retired) who had kept in touch with me was Geoffrey Dear. He was the Chief Constable of the Midlands Police, with the headquarters in Birmingham, when I first met him. I stayed with him at his home, and he and two of his juniors had visited my bungalow in Chandigarh nearly four decades ago. Since the Midlands has a sizeable Sikh population, Dear was keen on learning how the Punjab Police were tackling “Khalistani” terrorism. I refuted many of the false accounts of police “atrocities” fed to him by Sikhs in Birmingham. Dear retired as the UK’s Inspector of Constabulary. He was knighted and made a Lord. In that capacity, he is an MP in the House of Lords. I tried to contact him, but did not succeed. Justice Patel’s ordeal goes beyond the attack on his daughter and the death threats. It undermines the innate concept of justice in a democracy. If judges are compelled to bother about their

own safety and those of their family members in cases where a stakeholder is displeased with the judgment, the entire system based on the separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary will crumble — like it did in Punjab during the era of terrorism. I know innumerable judges of the Supreme Court and high courts who are of unimpeachable integrity. When they retire, I fall back on them for sharing their values with young law students that my NGO, the Public Concern for Governance Trust, interacts with on a regular basis. Justice Patel was one of those judges who was always willing to spare time to talk to them.

Last week, the Bombay High Court was informed that round-the-clock police protection for Justice Patel and his family had been provided. The HC observed, “A judge who has done his duty and demitted office is facing this (threats). The Union and the state governments need to act swiftly.” The present Chief Justice of India (CJI), Justice Surya Kant, during his official visit to London recently, discussed the matter with the High Commissioner. Consequently, Justice Patel and his family have been granted security. But it is far more important for the Metropolitan Police to identify the persons who dared to threaten a judge for doing his duty.

Pharma ban

Govt move signals regulatory recalibration

THE government’s decision to ban 16 fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs is in line with its efforts to clean up India’s pharmaceutical ecosystem. The move reflects a simple but often neglected principle in medicine: more is not always better. Fixed-dose combinations — drugs that mix two or more active ingredients in a single pill or formulation — are widely used across the country. However, many of them have proliferated without adequate scientific validation, driven more by market incentives than medical necessity. The government’s conclusion that the banned FDCs “lack therapeutic justification” lays bare a stark reality: not all easily available medicines are necessarily rational or safe. The strict measure follows Supreme Court-directed reviews and expert committee assessments under the Drugs Technical Advisory Board. India has previously banned hundreds of irrational FDCs, yet their continued circulation — often when enforcement is fragmented — has exposed persistent



gaps between regulation and implementation. The

inclusion of antibiotic-based combinations on the ban list is particularly important. In the era of rising antimicrobial resistance, irrational antibiotic use is not just a regulatory concern but also a public health threat with global consequences. Similarly, banning dermatological and analgesic combinations that lack evidence-based justification signals a shift towards evidence-based prescribing norms. Whether this approach percolates down to prescribing doctors and pharmacies is the real test. The tightening of rules on cough syrups and over-the-counter liquid medicines further indicates a wider regulatory recalibration. Together, these measures are aimed at reducing unsupervised access and enforcing prescription discipline. If the ban is implemented rigorously, it can strengthen rational drug use in India. If not, it would be added to the list of well-intentioned but unevenly enforced pharma reforms.

Faithline | The discipline of decorum

While our Asian neighbours have managed to excel in public civility, Indians have little motivation to be patient or avoid littering. For all the depictions of the mannerly archetype that originated in the subcontinent, a fictitious 19th-century detective offers an explanation for similar contrasts

Renuka Narayanan

Losing our temper in public and having heated altercations seem to have become the Indian norm, as incidents keep showing in the news. Whereas our traditional position was, ‘maintain decorum, no matter what and why’. Consider Queen Kaikeyi, who is furious that Rama, not Bharata, is to be king. How correct her behaviour is, nevertheless. No nasty, vulgar scenes for her. She retreats into the ‘kopagriha’, the anger room. It’s notable how she is so proper even when she’s being horrible. This old Indian dictum on propriety has its merits. Because, while righteous anger cannot be wrong, unrestrained temper damages everybody — the individual, society at large and the entire functioning process. As a respite from all the name-calling going on in the world, let’s think for a spell of pleasant names and their positive resonances. One of my frequent-flier friends calls it her airport mantra. She finds it exhilarating to see the electronic flight status roll past. “Such amazing city names, that’s the romance of travel, of being part of a great flow,” she says, for all that she’s a canny corporate-type not given to undue sentiment. I, too, am unable to be blasé on flights. I am unabashedly delighted by the wonder of being airborne, though I pray like anything to Pavanputra Hanuman before take-off and if we hit an airport. East Europeans and Turks applaud when the flight lands, which shows appreciation — for the pilot’s skill, for the grandeur of human invention and for the laws of aerodynamics and gravity. And surely, gratitude to “whom it may concern” is due, whatever name we call “that”, for having made it safely back to terra firma one more time? The Air India morning flight from Bangkok to Delhi offers a unique civilisational sight from the sky, soaring over three great rivers — the Mekong (meaning ‘Ma Ganga’) soon after take-off as the flight heads



northwest over the borders between Thailand, Laos and Myanmar; Irrawaddy (Irawati) mid-flight; and the Ganga herself, approaching Delhi. Bangkok began as a small trading centre on the Chao Phraya, meaning River of Kings. It was called ‘Bang Makok’, meaning ‘the village of wild plum trees’, serving Ayutthaya (Ayodhya), then the capital of Siam, until Ayutthaya fell to the Burmese in 1767. A new capital came up around Bangkok. In 1782, King Rama I named this new city Krung Thep, City of Celestials, ‘thep’ meaning ‘dev’. Thais call it Krung Thep, not Bangkok, like we say “Bharat”, not “India”, among

ourselves. Many may know this, but just to enjoy its flow together, here’s Bangkok’s full name: Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Ayutthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppaharat Ratchadani Burirum Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Piman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit. Which means: “The city of celestials, the great city, the eternal jewel city, the impregnable city of Lord Indra, the grand capital of the world endowed with nine precious gems, the happy city, abounding in a grand royal palace that resembles the heavenly abode where reigns the incarnated god, a city

given by Indra and built by Visnukarn (Viswakarma)”. Bangkok is also world-famous for spectacular traffic jams. Some of Bangkok’s intersections can turn us, curry-in-a-hurry folks, into gibbering wrecks. One such quasar is where Asoke Montri Road cuts Sukhumvit Road. And yet the Thais do not have road rage. Why? Hailing from rough, impatient Delhi-NCR, I was tormented by this question. I knew about the Buddha’s benign influence on Thailand, but how were Thais so well-behaved in public? A Russian author offers a clue through his fictitious 19th-century detective, Erast Fandorin. The author is Boris Akunin, who is really Grigory Chkhartishvili, who is compared to Gogol, Tolstoy and Arthur Conan Doyle. He has sold over 20 million Fandorin books in Russia alone. Says the dashing Erast in Murder on the Leviathan, “Christian culture is based on a sense of guilt. The (Eastern) motivation is different. In their society the moral restraints derive from a sense of shame... I can assure you that shame is a far more civilising influence than guilt.”

Whatever be the case, isn’t it mortifying that both westerners and easterners generally behave better at home and abroad than those pushy, quarrelsome Indians immune to both shame and guilt? Perhaps the Union government could produce an adab nama or book of manners, call it whatever, as required reading, since no religious preacher has evidently taught enough people to speak politely, be patient, not litter and behave with dignity. Concerning Buddhism, many in India may not remember the mannerly young woman who became a turning point in the birth of this great world religion. Sujata, who, seeing a starving ascetic beneath a banyan tree, offered him a reviving drink of the madhu payasam or kheer that she carried. He course-corrected from his excessive austerities after this respectful, kind interaction and thereby attained enlightenment.



5 qualities that HR Managers look for

How well do returning mothers fare at the workplace? Every job that you apply for requires different qualities, but there are certain qualities that an HR looks for in every employee. There will also be some qualities that an HR would look for, beyond your curriculum vitae. Here are five top qualities that most of the hiring managers would look for.

Cultural fitment

One of the most important qualities that most of the companies would want their employee to have is high levels of discipline. Discussing in detail the kind of values that an HR looks for, Bhawna S Choudhary, HR head, Amway India shares, "An employee should have the ability to align with organisational values to gain the confidence and trust of others through business ethics, authenticity, and followthrough on commitment

s. There has to be consistency between words and action."

Just like the work you do, your behaviour and attitude towards your work and the organisation also plays a vital role.

Strong leadership and people management capabilities In addition to discipline, many of the hiring managers also look at the leadership and managerial abilities in the employee. To this Choudhary further adds, "A candidate should have the ability to foster personal achievement and excellence in others. He or she



should have the ability to inspire plans aligned with the organisation's mission and goals. Instill and sustain organisation-wide energy, optimism, ownership, and commitment that helps others envision a greater sense of what is possible. An employee should also have the ability to support others to manage leverage and develop their capabilities. A proven ability to attract, develop, manage and retain critical talent, effectively and constructively enables an individual to achieve high performance." Leadership abilities are important for applicants who are applying for management positions. Even if one wants to be a manager or supervisor, the people who work below you should want you to lead them.

H i g h

motivation and hunger for growth

An employee with high motivation and hunger for growth will be well appreciated, according to HR managers. A highly motivated candidate is expected to be high on growth and any employee with a strong desire to grow always contributes to the organisation's growth. "There should be the desire to make a difference, at the function the candidate is a part of and the organisation as a whole. A positive dissatisfaction with status quo shows the fire in the belly and constant desire to achieve more. The desire to excel is what drives individuals and organisations to move to a higher plane," opines Shailesh Singh, director and chief people officer, Max Life Insurance.

Decisiveness

Singh further adds that there is one more quality which makes a candidate stand apart and that is the quality to make a quick but well thought out decision. Having a quality of decisiveness is important not just for managers but all professionals. "In this VUCA world, the need for decisiveness can never be overemphasised. In today's challenging and fast paced world, there is a constant challenge of balancing between the long-term and short-term and making choices between two rights. To be able to deal with these is decisiveness. It is also important that while being decisive, the person should be able to carry the team along."

Intelligence

To many large companies, having a good education is important. But, this alone may not be enough. Rachna Mukherjee, chief HR, Schneider Electric India shares why, "The candidate has to have the ability to think out-of-the-box. He or she must be intelligent and witty. Intelligence in the literal sense means the ability to plan, organise, deal with crisis situations and use his wittiness to come up with solutions immediately which are not harmful for the company."

How female employees can raise work profile

When it comes to raising one's profile within the workplace, female employees stand much to gain from formal, face-to-face mentoring programmes, says an Indian-origin researcher.



After analysing a field experiment involving 139 "high potential" employees at a software development lab for a US-based company in China, assistant professor Sameer Srivastava from University of California-Berkeley reported that women gained more social capital from affiliation with a high-status mentor than their male counterparts.

According to Srivastava, formal mentoring can expand professional networks in a variety of ways.

Qualitative interviews in his study pointed to one main reason: women experienced a greater increase in visibility and legitimacy as a result of their mentor affiliations than did male participants.

As a result, women became more attractive network partners for their colleagues.

In the study, "senior leadership believed that the people who did well in the organisation were those who had not only depth but also breadth of social capital", Srivastava added.

The company had been experimenting with different ways to help employees develop this breadth of social capital and tried, among other things, a formal mentoring programme.

The programme assigned employees to shadow a more senior person in another part of the organisation for about a dozen days over a two-to-three-month period.

Because the study was based on one particular organisation, Srivastava says that care must be taken in generalizing the findings to other contexts.

Nevertheless, he believes the findings support the idea of formal mentoring programmes as a means of addressing differences in organisational networks that women and men tend to form, which, in turn, contribute to gender inequality in the workplace.

Quick analysis

Mathematical model captures online social life



Researchers from the University of Oxford, the University of Limerick, and the Harvard School of Public Health have developed a mathematical model to examine online social networks, in particular the trade-off between copying our friends and relying on 'best-seller' lists.

The researchers examined how users are influenced in the choice of apps that they install on their Facebook pages by creating a mathematical model to capture the dynamics at play. By incorporating data from the installation of Facebook apps into their mathematical model, they found that users selected apps on the basis of recent adoptions by their friends rather than by using Facebook's equivalent of a best-seller list of apps.

The model suggests users tended to be swayed by recent activity—from their 'friends' on Facebook—that they saw on their Facebook feeds over the previous couple of days. The research, published in the journal, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, finds

that the "copycat" tendency in human behaviour is strong and that we can be influenced by the activities of others over a relatively short period of time.

The mathematical model examined data from an empirical study published in 2010, which had tracked 100 million installations of apps adopted by Facebook users during two months. In the 2010 study, based on data collected in 2007, all Facebook users were able to see a list of the most popular apps (similar to best-seller lists) on their pages, as well as being notified about their friends' recent app installations.

In the 2010 study (which included two of the authors of the new study), researchers found that in some cases, a user's decision to install some apps seemed virtually unaffected by the activities of others, whereas sometimes they were strongly affected by the behaviour of others - even though the apps in these two categories did not appear to be distinguished by any particular characteristics. Instead, once an app reached some popularity threshold (as measured by the installation rate), its popularity tended to rise to stellar proportions.

In the new study, the researchers developed a mathematical model to distinguish between the consequences of two distinct, competing mechanisms that appeared to drive the dynamics behind the behaviour of the Facebook users. Using their model and extensive computer simulations, they looked behind the empirical data to see whether Facebook users' behaviour could be modelled as being influenced primarily by the notifications of apps recently installed on their friends' Facebook pages or mainly driven by which apps appeared on the best-seller list. Using the supercomputers of the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC), the researchers ran thousands of simulations in which they varied the relative dominance of the two influences (recent installations versus cumulative popularity). It took the researchers 15,000 hours of computer processing to best match the results of the simulations with the characteristics of app installation that were observed in the earlier empirical study.

The researchers found that, although users seem to be influenced by both, the stronger effect on popularity dynamics was caused by the recent behaviour of others. The best-seller list did have a 'mild' effect on the behaviour of Facebook users, but an instinct to copy the behaviour of others was by far the more dominant instinct.

Associate Professor Felix Reed-Tsochas, James Martin Lecturer in Complex Systems at Said Business School and Director of Complexity Economics at the Institute for New Economic Thinking at the University of Oxford, said: 'We have used sophisticated modelling techniques to show how it is possible to tease apart different causal mechanisms that underpin behaviour even when the empirical data are purely observational. This is significant because the assumption these days is that only experimental research designs can provide such answers. Here, we found that the "copycat" tendency plays a very important role in online behaviour. This might be because users need to make quick decisions in information-rich environments, but other research has identified similar imitative behaviour in the off-line world.'

The other authors of the new study were Dr Davide Cellai (University of Limerick) and Assistant Professor Jukka-Pekka Onnela (Harvard). Professor James Gleeson, from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Limerick, said: 'This study reveals how we can explore different scenarios using mathematical models to disentangle what drives people to behave the way they do using large data sets from the real online world. This opens up lots of new possibilities for studying human behaviour.'

Commenting on the significance of the method behind the study, Associate Professor Mason Porter, from the Mathematical Institute at University of Oxford, said: 'We hope that our paper can help serve as a guide for modelling complex systems and how data can be incorporated directly into such modelling efforts. The importance of mathematical modelling often seems to be lost amidst the overabundance of empirical studies, and I cannot stress enough that mathematics is also crucial to help illustrate how things work.'



6 tips for Companies to retain Employees

Consciously hiring freshers is a popular practice across organisations these days. Most companies believe that hiring freshers from top colleges is a kind of guarantee that they will stick to the job for a relatively longer duration. While offering a good paycheck is important, companies need to go that extra mile to make sure their attrition rate is low. Progressive HR functions are now ensuring that freshers establish a long-term association with the company beyond the paycheck. Here are a few strategies they are employing:

- A WELL-DEFINED CAREER PATH:
Employees, whether freshers or ones with experience, want to understand how the leadership of an organisation can facilitate their growth. They want to see tangible examples of how their counterparts have grown in the firm. For many, growth is not just a vertical ladder. A lateral lattice is equally important. The young workforce is keen on having early experiences of doing different things rather than being sandboxed into one job role. Hence, it is important for companies to chart out well-defined career paths that factor in a variety of work that encourages their employees to stick to the organisation.

- EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:
It is true that more than half of a company's workforce, at any given time, may be open to opportunities outside their firm. In order to retain employees, it is important to keep them engaged through interesting work opportunities, workshops, personal mentoring, etc. Organisations, thus, need to delegate this responsibility to their people managers.

- WORK-LIFE BALANCE:
Irrespective of

their industry, it is important for working professionals to maintain a work-life balance. While high-paying jobs do demand longer hours of work, organisations should implement flexible working hours and work from home policies while respecting their core office culture. Practices like occasional work from home, flexible work arrangements, 'ME' time (keeping a chunk of their time to pursue a hobby of their choice) are ways to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.

- RECOGNITION AND FEEDBACK:
Typically, bosses are quick on giving feedback when issues crop up. However, appreciation is rare

when things go smooth. Letting your employees know that you appreciate their efforts, recognising and highlighting impactful outcomes and giving timely feedback is crucial. Similarly, gaining feedback from employees and engaging oneself in meaningful dialogues to improve areas that are creating obstacles is important.

- ACCESSIBILITY AND COLLABORATION:
Structures are important in organisations. However,

Organisations these days need to offer more than a good paycheck to fresh graduates to retain them for a longer period of time. Here are a few tips companies can employ to reduce the attrition rate among fresh recruits.



doing away with hierarchy in various aspect of the organisational culture can create a stronger bond with employees and leaders of the firm. An open door policy, open offices, access to calendars of leaders, etc, are a few such examples.

- TRANSPARENT AND FAIR REVIEWS:
Enabling transparent and clear reviews and appraisals for employees helps them achieve more with a clear picture of being rewarded on the basis of merit. The review process should celebrate key milestones in an employee's career in an organisation where the focus is on highlighting key achievements, strengths and development areas, followed by a mutually agreed upon goal setting discussion.

Starting a new job? 10 things you need to know

Your first week at work can be challenging. Here are a few tips to help you make the most out of your first few days at your new job

Your first week at your new work place can either go well, or make you rethink about your new position. Your first day at work may be among the most memorable and perhaps stressful day of your career. Here are ten things that you should do in the first week of your new job to make the right start:

DRESS WELL: How you present yourself says a lot about your personality.

Dressing well helps give a professional impression. You are the brand ambassador of your firm and the way you project yourself, projects the culture of your workplace.

BE A PEOPLES PERSON: Introduce yourself to the people you come across in your organisation. Do not hesitate to have a conversation with your new team members. First impressions do matter. Use generic topics as conversation starters - for example positives of the job, the people around you, the city, the place you stay at, etc.

OFFICE SPACE AND RESOURCES: You need to understand your work place for your convenience. It also helps you feel at home. The better you know your workplace, the more engaged you will be. Speak to your colleagues and know more about your workspace.

LISTEN AND OBSERVE: One of your most important objectives during the first week must be to



you. Being proactive and volunteering to help your new teammates on a project will go a long way. This will project you as a self-motivated employee and help you build a rapport with your boss and colleagues. This will also help you learn more about your job expectations, culture and how things are done in the organisation.

FIND A MENTOR: This may be underrated but it's

familiarise yourself with the company culture, your department and your goals and responsibilities. Attending orientation programmes in addition to all team and office meetings can be of great help. Participating in informal colleague meetings will help you bond with them.

ASK QUESTIONS: As you learn about new job role, projects and people, don't be afraid to ask questions. It might be a good idea to take notes about everything you learn, even if it seems simple. Documenting your queries will ensure you don't ask the same question twice.

SPEAK UP: At the same time, don't be afraid to contribute and add value to your new organisation. Actively participate in team meetings and brainstorming sessions. If you have a skill or an ability basis which you've been hired, share that knowledge and experience with the team.

OFFER HELP: Don't sit around and wait for the team to decide the task for

crucial to find a mentor in any of your seniors who has been the firm for a few years. It could be your manager or your peers from the same or even a different department. Their experience will come in handy when dealing with crucial situations.

KEEP YOUR BOSSES IN THE LOOP: Throughout the first week, and the rest of your tenure at work, ask for periodic meetings with your boss as per their convenience. In addition to getting their direction on projects and tasks you have been assigned, you can also use this face time to update him/her on your learnings and observations.

DON'T COMPARE: Never compare your last job to your current one. Deciding to switch jobs was your decision. There is a difference between expectations and reality. However, if there is a massive change in role, talk to your manager and look for a solution. Those pursuing their first job must go with a clear mind.

Boss's bad jokes can improve your job satisfaction

If relationships are good, use of both positive and negative humour by leaders can help improve their subordinates' job satisfaction, suggests new research.

"Generally, people think that positive humour, which is inclusive, affiliative and tasteful, is good in leadership, and negative humour, which is aggressive and offensive, is bad," said one of the researchers Christopher Robert, associate professor at University of Missouri in the US.

"In our study, we found the effects of humour depend on the relationship between leaders and subordinates," Robert noted. Specifically, both positive and negative humour use by leaders is positively related to their subordinates' job satisfaction when the relationship between the leader and subordinates is good. However, when the leader-subordinate relationship is bad, both negative and positive types of humour are associated with lower job satisfaction.

In other words, for leaders, sometimes good humour has bad effects and bad humour has good effects on subordinates.

To test their theory, the researchers developed two sets of matched questionnaires, one for leaders and one for their subordinates.

They analysed responses from about 70 leaders and their 241 subordinates in 54 organisations.

"The findings suggest that if leaders wish to integrate humour into their interactions with subordinates, they should first assess whether or not their subordinates are likely to interpret their humorous overtures positively," Robert said.

These results also have implications for leaders' strategic use of humor.

"Instead of using humour to build relationships, leaders should work to build strong relationships through other means such as through clear communication, fair treatment, and providing clear and useful feedback. Humour then can be used to maintain those strong relationships," Robert suggested.



10 words never to use in your resume

Creative is the most overused buzzword in LinkedIn profiles followed by effective, motivated and extensive experience, the social networking site has said.

According to career expert David Schwarz, using buzzwords not only makes your CV generic but it can give the impression that you are trying to mislead your prospective employer.

"They create almost a sense of misleading because they gloss over the detail," News.com.au quoted Schwarz, a principal consultant at career management firm Board Portfolio, as saying.

Schwarz said that everything you put in a resume needs to be backed up with proof.

"If you can't put a metric or a statistic next to that statement shouldn't have it in your CV," he said.

He added that candidates should never include aspiration statements in their resume.

"I want to be, or my goal is, or in the future I want', they're all massive red flags because they all basically say you're not qualified to do the job you're doing now," he added.

The top 10 buzzwords that appear most in profiles are:



1. Creative
2. Effective
3. Motivated
4. Extensive experience
5. Track record
6. Innovative
7. Responsible
8. Analytical
9. Communication skills
10. Positive

Delhi cracks down on illegal tree cutting: New SOP mandates video recording, possible arrests

According to the SOP, information on a tree offence may be received through the dedicated portal, Green Helpline calls; through letters or handwritten complaints; the Green Delhi App, or any other Delhi government app.

New Delhi.(Agency)

What happens when illegal tree cutting or damage to trees is reported in Delhi?

The response is meant to begin at once and follow a documented legal trail under the Forest Department's Standard

Operating Procedure (SOP) for dealing with offences under the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994.

The SOP, notified earlier this year and made available on the department's portal this month, details how a complaint can trigger a first offence report. Real-time alerts are sent to control rooms and field officers, the site is cordoned off, followed by video-recording of suspects, seizure of tools, complainant participation in hearings and, where required, and prosecution before a court. Those who skip summons may face arrest warrants.

According to the SOP, information on a tree offence may be received through the dedicated portal, Green Helpline calls; through letters or handwritten



complaints; the Green Delhi App, or any other Delhi government app.

Once information is received, the Range Officer or Range In-charge must register a First Offence Report under Section 22 of the Act. The information must then be transmitted in real time to the Forest Control Room, division control room, Beat Officer concerned and the land-owning agency.

Site response

Quick Response Team personnel must maintain status quo at the site, stop the offence and prevent further damage. They have to take geo-referenced photographs, video-record suspected offenders, document tools, vehicles, animals or other conveyances allegedly used, and record names and addresses of suspected offenders.

If a suspect refuses to provide details, gives details believed to be false, or is likely to abscond, the person may be taken to the Range Officer for further action. The QRT must cordon the site until the Beat Officer, Deputy Range Officer or Range Forest Officer arrives, and can leave only after handing over the information collected.

Preventive action

As per the document, Beat Officers also have preventive duties where an offence is apprehended. They must record geo-referenced photographs and geo-coordinates of trees. The SOP specifically mentions digging or excavation near trees, visible deterioration of tree health, barricading of construction areas blocking direct line of sight to trees, and soil erosion. In such cases, the land-owning agency, private owner or occupier must be informed, and a copy sent to the local police station. A restraining order may be issued under Section 20 where there is reasonable apprehension of contravention of Section 8. If such an order is violated, the Tree Officer has to intimate police under Section 173 of the Bharatiya.

IIT Delhi to do 3D analysis of Saidulajab collapse site

New Delhi.(Agency)

Delhi Police have reportedly sought assistance from IIT-Delhi to conduct a detailed structural study into the collapse of a five-storey building in Saidulajab, near Saket Metro Station in South Delhi's Mehrauli area, an incident that claimed six lives and injured eight others on May 30. The building, originally constructed as a four-storey structure around eight years ago, was undergoing expansion at the time of the tragedy. According to investigators, the owner and builders had planned to add two more floors. One additional floor had already been completed, while work on another



was underway when the building collapsed. The ground, first and third floors were occupied and operational, while the second floor had

reportedly remained vacant for several months.

Sources said Delhi Police approached IIT-Delhi earlier this month to seek an expert assessment of the collapse. A team of engineers has already inspected the site, and a second visit is expected before a final report is submitted. The study will include structural analysis, technical evaluations and 3D mapping to determine the precise reasons behind the collapse.

Preliminary findings suggest that the building's basement may not have been designed to bear the additional load created by the construction of extra floors. Investigators are also examining whether recent excavation work in the basement, carried out to install a water tank, may have further weakened the structure.

Judicial custody

A Delhi court on Monday extended the judicial custody of 'Flourish Stay' hotel owner Lovkesh Bajaj, and others till July 6 in the Malviya Nagar hotel fire case which claimed over 20 lives. The court said that releasing the accused may hamper the probe.

Shop okay in a day, factory licences in 15 days: Delhi govt fast-tracks 23 services

New Delhi.(Agency)

Aiming to strengthen public service delivery, the Delhi government has brought 23 new services under the Delhi Right of Citizen to Time-Bound Delivery of Services Act, 2011.

The government said the objective is to ensure that citizens and businesses receive services within a defined timeframe. Important approvals, licences, registrations and no objection certificates (NOCs) will now be delivered within stipulated timelines. This is expected to reduce unnecessary delays and the need for repeated visits to government offices.

Under the new framework, approval of factory plans by the Labour Department will be granted within 15 days, while registration under the Shops and Establishments Act will be completed within a single day.

The Delhi Jal Board will provide sewerage connections within 15 days, and the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation will issue film shooting permissions within 15 days.

In addition, applications related to electricity meters and connection agreements under the Energy Department will be processed within 60 days. Registration of weighing and measuring instruments used in shops, industries and commercial establishments will be completed within 45 days. The Delhi Pollution Control Committee will issue authorisations within 15 days.

Within 60 days

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said that among municipal services, registration of water sports and adventure sports operators and approvals for operating amusement parks will be issued within 60 days. NOCs from local bodies required for obtaining state licences for food businesses will be issued within 60 days.

Challenge to CAG notice to discoms premature: Delhi HC

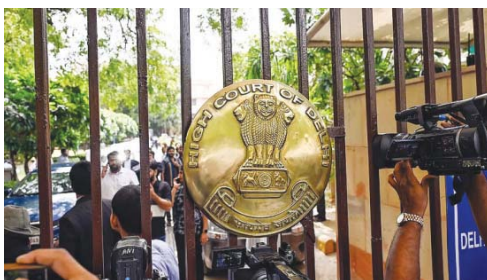
New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed petitions against a government notice proposing a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit of BSES Discoms, saying that the challenge was premature.

The petitions filed by BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) and BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) had challenged the notice issued by the Government of NCT of Delhi (GNCTD). Justice Tejas Karia said the communication challenged by the petitioners was only a show-cause notice and not a final decision. The judge said the notice merely granted the discoms an opportunity to submit their representations and participate in a hearing before any

final decision on entrustment of audit was taken.

"It does not record any adverse finding against the petitioners warranting any interference on merits at this



stage in the exercise of writ jurisdiction. The present petition is, therefore, premature," the judge said. During the hearing, the GNCTD contended that consumers bear the burden of regulatory assets through

tariffs and surcharges, and therefore an independent audit was necessary to examine the financial position of the distribution companies and ensure transparency and accountability.

The judge accepted the preliminary objection regarding maintainability and reiterated that writ courts ordinarily do not interfere at the stage of a show-cause notice.

The judge also held that the earlier judgement cited by the petitioners did not bar the present proposal for a CAG audit. He held that the earlier case arose in a different factual and legal context. The judge also made it clear that the order is confined only to the validity of the notice and does not decide the merits of whether the audit should ultimately be entrusted to the CAG.

79 to 100: How Delhi student's board exam results jumped after CBSE re-check

New Delhi.(Agency)

For weeks, 17-year-old Kushal Jain believed he had underperformed in Chemistry. The student from Dwarka in Delhi had scored 97 in Physics and 97 in Mathematics in the CBSE Class XII Board examinations. But his Chemistry score was 79 — a result he found difficult to accept considering his performance through the year.

"I had expected above 95," he said. "When the results were declared, I assumed there had been a mistake." When the outcome of CBSE's post-result verification process arrived this week, it revealed just how large that mistake may have been. Kushal's Chemistry marks had jumped from 79 to 100. The revision transformed his Physics-Chemistry-Mathematics

(PCM) aggregate from 91% to 98%, a seven-percentage-point increase that he described as "massive". "The 7% margin is very massive," he told The



Indian Express.

Glitches left students in limbo

His case is one of several that have emerged from CBSE's first year of On-Screen Marking (OSM), a digital evaluation system introduced across Class 12 board examinations with the

promise of reducing human error and improving efficiency.

Instead, several issues were flagged. Many students questioned discrepancies they observed after obtaining scanned copies of answer books. Some even wondered whether the scripts uploaded to them belonged to them. Principals, evaluators and senior teachers who spoke to The Indian Express had alleged that the rollout was rushed, inadequately tested and difficult for many evaluators to navigate.

Kushal said after the Class 12 results were declared on May 13, he tried accessing his evaluated answer book through CBSE's portal. But the platform malfunctioned, he said, while deadlines for obtaining answer scripts and applying for re-evaluation were repeatedly extended.

Barapullah Phase III nears finish line, both ends linked

The initial sanctioned budget for the Barapullah Phase 3 project was Rs 1,260.63 crore, which was approved in 2014 prior to construction.

New Delhi.(Agency)

For more than a decade, Barapullah Phase-III became synonymous with delays, missed deadlines and unanswered questions. What was originally expected to be completed in 2017 remained unfinished until 2026 due to land acquisition disputes, environmental clearances, technical challenges and prolonged administrative hurdles. The initial sanctioned budget for the Barapullah Phase 3 project was Rs 1,260.63 crore, which was approved in 2014 prior to construction.

Despite the challenges, on Monday evening, the story took a decisive turn. The final deck slab of the Barapullah Phase-III corridor was successfully cast, connecting both ends of the structure across the Yamuna River and bringing one of Delhi's longest-pending infrastructure projects to completion. The project has crossed nearly 4.5 lakh cubic metres of concrete, with the final slab physically connecting both sides of the YamunaPWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh visited the site and shared dinner with workers, engineers and staff members. He said the final slab marked the completion of a promise Delhi had awaited for over a decade. The project's journey has been far from easy. Approved in 2014 and initiated in 2015, it was originally targeted for completion in 2017. Instead, it became one of Delhi's most delayed infrastructure projects, with setbacks ranging from a seven-year land acquisition dispute and environmental approvals to technical challenges associated with constructing a major bridge structure across the Yamuna floodplain.

The project witnessed accelerated progress over the past year and a half through continuous monitoring, regular inspections and coordinated action by multiple agencies.

Singh further said, "Governments are ultimately judged not by announcements but by delivery. What remained incomplete for nearly eleven years is now approaching completion. This achievement belongs to every worker who spent long hours on this site, every engineer who solved complex challenges and every Delhiite who continued to hope that this project would one day become a reality."

The elevated corridor is expected to transform connectivity between East and South Delhi. Once operational, commuters travelling

Delhi's new EV policy may offer tax relief for strong hybrid cars: Debate intensifies ahead of cabinet nod

New Delhi.(Agency)

Provisions relating to strong hybrid vehicles in Delhi's new Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy continue to be debated as the existing policy, which has already been extended multiple times, nears expiry. The new EV Policy 2026-30 is expected to be placed before the Cabinet at its next meeting.

Over the past couple of months since the draft policy was put in the public domain, the Delhi Transport Department has received more than 700 responses, and the suggestions are under review, officials said.

There is a clear divergence of opinion over exempting strong hybrids from road tax. A strong (or 'full') hybrid vehicle combines a traditional internal combustion engine with a powerful electric motor and a larger battery, which enables it to run entirely on

electric power at low speeds, and to switch automatically to the engine for higher speeds. A mild hybrid, by contrast, has a smaller electric motor and battery, and cannot run on electricity alone. The electric motor in mild hybrids acts only to boost acceleration and smoothen stop-start systems.

"The government wants to provide road tax exemptions on buying strong hybrid vehicles at least for the first couple of years so that the public can gradually switch to electric vehicles... Several stakeholders have also backed the policy and the proposed incentives on strong hybrid vehicles. However, there is resistance from some quarters," a senior Transport officer told The Indian Express.

Critics have argued that instead of providing incentives to strong hybrids, the government should invest in



charging infrastructure and push the adoption of pure EVs.

The draft EV Policy has proposed a 50 per cent exemption on road tax and registration charges for strong hybrids with an ex-showroom price up to Rs 30 lakh. Several top institutes and consultants working to promote electric mobility, such as the IITs and the International Road Federation (IRF), have backed the government's plan to incentivise strong hybrids, the officer

said.

"The incentives on strong hybrids have been proposed after proper research and studying similar policies implemented in other states. For instance, Uttar Pradesh allowed 100 per cent exemption on strong hybrid vehicles for almost a year and a half, and both the government's revenues and vehicle registrations increased during this period, even as Delhi lost out to UP in revenues," the official said.

Auto industry data show that before strong hybrids were exempt from road tax in UP in July 2024, an average of 538 such vehicles were registered in the state every month; this number increased by 175 per cent on average after the incentives were introduced. Also, the state's monthly revenues under this head increased by 60 per cent from an average Rs 29 crore per month to Rs 47 crore.

Top Indian tech supplier reports 'cybersecurity incident'

MUMBAI.(Agency)

A top Indian maker of iPhone parts has confirmed it was hit by a "cybersecurity incident", with media reports alleging that Apple supplier specifications had been leaked.Industrial giant Tata Group is a lynchpin of Apple's growing supply chain within the world's most populous country.On Monday, reports said over 600 gigabytes of data, allegedly stolen from the conglomerate's subsidiary Tata Electronics, were made available on the dark web.

Specialist news site TechCrunch said it had found what appeared to be "Apple supplier specifications and Tesla manufacturing documents".

AFP could not independently verify the claims. Apple and Tesla did not immediately reply to a request for comment.A Tata Electronics spokesperson told AFP the company had identified an incident but that it had no impact on operations.

"A few weeks ago, Tata Electronics identified a cybersecurity incident on some of our systems," the spokesperson said."Our response protocols were deployed immediately, and the incident has had no impact on our operations across businesses, which remain unaffected."India has been a major beneficiary of Apple's decision to broaden its production outside of China.The breach however is the latest incident to affect Tata Group, as it seeks to secure a larger share of global supply chains.Last week, Tata Electronics said it had received a notice from local environmental authorities in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, over claims of water contamination from its factory. But it said the concerns were "satisfactorily addressed" and that officials had "dropped any further course of action on this issue"

Stock markets turn flat in subdued trading

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty were trading flat in a subdued trading on Tuesday, as investors stayed on the sidelines after the recent rally.Weak trends in Asian markets and fresh foreign fund outflows also led to the subdued trading in equities during the early deals. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 57.43 points to 77,061.94 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 31.6 points to 24,071.30.However, later both the benchmark indices were trading marginally higher. The BSE benchmark quoted 29.75 points higher at 77,123.82, and the Nifty traded 20.80 points up at 24,123.65.

Last week, the benchmark indices rallied in four trading sessions out of five. In the previous trading



session also, the benchmarks registered gains.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards.

Sun Pharma, Trent, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and NTPC were among the winners.Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 635.91 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index traded lower. The Kospi tanked nearly 6 per cent.Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.49 per cent lower at USD 77.53 per barrel.

Rupee falls to 94.69 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI.(Agency)

The rupee fell to 94.69 against the US dollar in early trade on Tuesday as the greenback strengthened further after a record high.

FIIs outflows and a weaker start to the morning trade at the equity markets put further pressure on the rupee while a decline in crude oil prices cushioned against a steeper decline, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 94.73 against the US dollar before rising to 94.69, down 6 paise from its previous close.

The rupee depreciated 30 paise to close at 94.63 against the US dollar on Monday."The rupee opened weaker against the US dollar, as mounting expectations of a Federal Reserve rate hike and broad-based dollar strength weighed on Asian currencies. The greenback hovered near a 13-month high, supported by optimism surrounding US-Iran peace negotiations and weakness in major currencies, particularly the British pound and Japanese yen," Pinky Yadav, Commodity Fundamental Analyst at Choice Broking, said.While easing crude oil prices amid progress in US-Iran talks may offer some support to the rupee, the Fed's hawkish stance and higher inflation outlook are likely to keep gains limited. Meanwhile, India's infrastructure output growth slowed to 0.5 per cent in May, signaling a moderation in economic activity," Yadav said.

"The rupee will remain in a range of 94.20 to 94.90 for the day with upticks to the dollar to be sold off," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.04, up 0.02 per cent, amid hawkish Fed and the fragile US-Iran trade deal.Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading lower by 0.46 per cent at USD 77.54 per barrel in futures trade.On the domestic equity market front, Sensex declined 57.43 points to 77,061.94 in early trade while the Nifty was down 31.6 points to 24,071.30.Foreign institutional investors turned net sellers, offloading equities worth Rs 635.91 crore on a net basis on Monday, according to exchange data.

Indian startup head appointed as new WhatsApp boss

Meta has tapped Indian fintech founder Kunal Shah as the new head of WhatsApp, as the US tech giant seeks ways to monetise the messaging app's massive user base.

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Meta has tapped Indian fintech founder Kunal Shah as the new head of WhatsApp, as the US tech giant seeks ways to monetise the messaging app's massive user base.

The announcement, made Monday night, was accompanied by news that Meta would also lead a \$900 million funding round in Shah's consumer finance firm CRED.

"Kunal built CRED into one of India's most

important technology companies," Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg said in a statement.

"He brings the kind of builder mentality and global perspective that will serve him well in running the world's biggest messaging app."Shah, a serial entrepreneur and influential figure in India's fintech world, started CRED in 2018 after selling an earlier payments startup to Indian e-commerce giant Snapdeal for roughly \$400 million.He is also one of India's most prolific angel investors, according to data tracker Tracxn, with the local financial press often reporting how Shah agrees to seed funding pitches within minutes of hearing them.

But over the last few years, Shah has focused on building CRED -- which got its start by offering rewards to customers for timely credit card payments.

Since then, the company has aggressively expanded into offering wealth



management, insurance and lending services to its 17 million users.

This experience is likely to help WhatsApp as it seeks new revenue streams that go beyond the core advertising business of Meta, which also runs Facebook and Instagram.While India is WhatsApp's largest market -- with over half a billion users, according to 2021 government

figures -- analysts say it has largely missed the chance to build an equally popular payments service.

In May, the messaging app offered businesses in India the ability to use artificial intelligence for services including responding to customers at all hours or booking appointments.

Shah acknowledged the scope for future growth, saying in a statement that the gap between "WhatsApp today and its full potential is massive".India's startup ecosystem also celebrated Shah's appointment -- the latest example of an Indian-born executive becoming the leader of a Silicon Valley company.

Sajith Pai of Blume Ventures, an early stage Indian start-up backer said Shah was getting an "even bigger canvas to paint his bold brushstrokes in".

Expecting an ITR deadline extension? Here's why it may not happen this year

Many taxpayers are hoping for another extension to the ITR filing deadline, as seen in previous years. However, this year's filing season appears different, and the chances of additional time may be lower than expected.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Many taxpayers tend to put off filing their Income Tax Returns (ITRs) until the last moment. One common reason is the hope that the government might extend the deadline, as it has done in some previous years. With the filing season underway once again, many people are wondering whether a similar extension could be announced in 2026.

While the possibility cannot be completely ruled out, the current situation suggests that taxpayers should not depend on a last-minute relief. Several factors indicate that the government may stick to the existing deadline this year. Instead of waiting, taxpayers may find it wiser to complete the process well in advance and avoid

unnecessary stress later.FILING SYSTEM IS ALREADY UP AND RUNNING



One of the biggest reasons why an extension may not be necessary is that the tax filing system is already functioning smoothly. Most of the key filing utilities are available, allowing taxpayers to submit their returns without major hurdles.The Income Tax Department appears to have ensured that the e-filing platform is ready early in the season. This means taxpayers have sufficient time to gather documents, verify details and complete their filings before the deadline.

MOST COMMONLY USED ITR

FORMS ARE AVAILABLE

The utilities for ITR-1, ITR-2, ITR-3 and ITR-4 have already been released. These forms cover a large section of taxpayers, including salaried individuals, professionals and small business owners.

In previous years, delays in the release of important forms sometimes contributed to deadline extensions. This time, however, most taxpayers already have access to the forms they need.As a result, there may be little justification for providing additional time.MANY TAXPAYERS HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED EXTRATIME

Another important point is that the due date has already been extended to 31 August 2026 for several non-audit taxpayers. This includes certain professionals, partners in firms and other eligible taxpayers.

Since a significant group has already been granted extra time, the need for a broader extension appears less compelling. The government may view the existing relaxation as sufficient for those who require additional time.

Explained: Why SpaceX lost \$600 billion in 3 days after historic IPO listing

GUWAHATI.(Agency)

Less than two weeks after becoming the most valuable IPO in history, Elon Musk's SpaceX has suffered a reality check.The company has lost roughly \$600 billion in market value over three trading sessions, wiping out a significant chunk of the gains that followed its blockbuster stock market debut.

To put that figure in perspective, the wipeout is nearly three times the combined wealth of India's two richest businessmen -- Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani (\$88.3 billion) and Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani (\$120 billion).The sell-off comes after investors briefly pushed SpaceX's valuation close to \$3 trillion, betting on Musk's vision for artificial intelligence, space exploration and the future of computing.So what changed?The short answer is not much. And that may be exactly the problem.

FROM IPO EUPHORIA TO INVESTOR DOUBTS

When SpaceX debuted on the Nasdaq earlier this month, demand was



unprecedented. Investors poured into the stock, helping it become one of the world's most valuable companies almost overnight.For many buyers, this was not just a bet on rockets or satellites. It was a bet on Elon Musk.

SpaceX's IPO arrived at a time when

investors were aggressively chasing companies linked to artificial intelligence. The company had spent months positioning itself not just as a space business, but as a major AI infrastructure player through investments in data centres, computing power and AI acquisitions.That excitement helped fuel a stunning rally.

But after the initial euphoria faded, investors began paying closer attention to the numbers. THE DEBT RAISE THAT SPOOKED MARKETS

One trigger for the sell-off was SpaceX's announcement that it would raise fresh money through a bond offering. Ordinarily, companies raise debt all the time.What surprised investors was that SpaceX disclosed it already had more than \$100 billion in cash and cash equivalents on its balance sheet.

Seoul's Kospi crashes 10%, Japan's Nikkei falls 4%. Why are Asian markets down?

New Delhi.(Agency)

Asian stock markets witnessed a sharp selloff on Tuesday, with South Korea's benchmark Kospi index leading the decline after plunging nearly 10%, while Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 3.6% as investors rushed to book profits in technology and artificial intelligence-linked stocks.

The sharp correction comes after months of strong gains across Asian markets, particularly in South Korea, where optimism around artificial intelligence, semiconductor companies and government-backed market reforms had pushed stocks to record highs.The Kospi suffered its worst single-day fall in years, triggering market-wide circuit breakers and raising concerns about whether Asia's technology rally had run ahead of fundamentals.

WHY DID SOUTH KOREA'S KOSPI CRASH?

The biggest reason is simple: investors are taking money off the table after a spectacular rally.

South Korean stocks have been among Asia's best performers this year, driven by gains in semiconductor giants, AI-related companies and hopes of shareholder-friendly reforms under the country's new administration.The benchmark index had surged to record highs before Tuesday's correction.

When markets rise too quickly, even a small trigger can lead to aggressive profit booking as investors rush to lock in gains.That appears to be exactly what happened.

TECH STOCKS LED THE SELLOFF

The correction was particularly severe in technology and semiconductor shares, which had been at the centre of Asia's stock market rally.Investors have begun questioning whether valuations in some AI-linked stocks have become too expensive after months of relentless gains.

The mood was not limited to South Korea. Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 3.6%, while other Asian markets including Hong Kong and Taiwan also traded sharply lower as investors cut exposure to growth stocks.The weakness mirrored a broader pullback in global technology shares after concerns emerged that the artificial intelligence trade may be losing momentum.FED FEARS ARE BACK

Another factor weighing on markets is the outlook for US interest rates.Investors increasingly believe the US Federal Reserve may keep interest rates higher for longer than previously expected.

Higher rates tend to hurt technology stocks because they reduce the present value of future earnings, which are often the main attraction for high-growth companies.

SpaceX loses over \$600 billion in market value in three days as profit booking intensifies

New Delhi.(Agency)

Just days after emerging as one of the world's most valuable companies following its blockbuster stock market debut, Elon Musk-led SpaceX has witnessed a sharp correction, with more than USD 600 billion wiped off its market value in just three trading sessions.

The stock fell 16 per cent on Monday to close at USD 154.60, its lowest level since listing.

The latest decline extended the stock's three-day slide to 23 per cent, significantly reducing the company's valuation. Despite the sharp fall, SpaceX remains valued at more than USD 2 trillion, making it one of the world's most valuable companies.

Profit Booking After Record IPO

The correction comes shortly after SpaceX's record-breaking IPO, which raised USD 75 billion and triggered a strong rally in the stock. Investor enthusiasm around the company's businesses spanning space launches, satellite communications and artificial intelligence had propelled the stock sharply higher in the days following its listing.

However, the rapid rise also left the stock

vulnerable to profit booking, as investors who entered early rushed to lock in gains after the rally.

Market observers say such corrections are common when newly listed companies witness a surge in valuations over a short period. As valuations rise rapidly, investors often reassess whether future growth expectations have become too optimistic.

Concerns Over Valuation Emerge

The recent sell-off has also sparked debate over whether SpaceX's valuation had moved ahead of its underlying fundamentals.

While investors remain optimistic about the company's long-term prospects, some analysts believe much of the expected future growth may already have been factored into the stock price during the post-IPO rally.

The correction reflects growing caution among investors as they evaluate whether the company's current valuation can be

justified by its future earnings potential.

AI Expansion Adds to Investor Scrutiny

Another factor influencing investor sentiment is SpaceX's growing focus on artificial intelligence.

The company is reportedly trying to raise at

least USD 20 billion in its first investment-grade bond offering, with a large portion expected to go toward funding its AI efforts.

SpaceX has also signed a multibillion-dollar deal to provide computing infrastructure to AI startup Reflection AI, further expanding

its footprint in the fast-growing artificial intelligence field.

While many investors see AI as a major growth opportunity, others are wary about the size of the investments being made at a time when expectations for the company are already high.

Retail Investors Were Big Contributors to Rally

Retail investors were among the biggest contributors to SpaceX's strong post-listing performance.

Individual investors poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the stock during its first few trading sessions, according to data from market research firms, helping to fuel the rally and push valuations higher.

However, stocks that attract heavy retail participation can also experience significant volatility when sentiment shifts.

While retail investors continued to buy SpaceX shares, the pace of purchases slowed considerably compared to the frenzy seen immediately after the IPO, according to recent data.



Short news

KTR slams house arrest of Prashanth Reddy, calls it attack on democratic rights

Hyderabad.(Agency)

Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) working president K T Rama Rao on Tuesday strongly condemned the house arrest of former minister and Balkonda MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy, terming it an example of the Congress government's "anti-democratic and autocratic" attitude. Prashanth Reddy was reportedly placed under house arrest while preparing to participate in a protest at the Tadwai Mandal headquarters in Yellareddy constituency. The protest aimed to highlight issues related to fertiliser supply and to oppose the app-based system being implemented for urea distribution.

Speaking to Prashanth Reddy over the phone, KTR alleged that the government's attempt to suppress leaders raising questions on behalf of farmers was highly reprehensible. He said that while farmers across Telangana were struggling to obtain urea, the government was failing to address the problem and instead using the police to silence those who questioned it.

The BRS leader accused the government of trying to cover up its failure to ensure adequate fertiliser supply by restricting opposition leaders. He claimed that forcing farmers to stand in queues and face hardships due to the app-based distribution system had exposed the government's failure in safeguarding farmers' interests. KTR said it was unfortunate that the government had responded to concerns over the shortage of urea—an essential agricultural input—with police action rather than addressing farmers' grievances.

32-year-old doctor held for cheating woman in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

Police on Monday arrested a 32-year-old doctor for allegedly keeping romantic and physical relationship with a woman for wrongful gains, and then stepping away from the affair.

The accused, Abhinash Mohanty, posted as a general physician in primary health centre at Dengausta in Ganjam district had come in contact with the victim in 2014 through social media.

Police said the woman was married but staying separately from her husband due to some personal disputes. Mohanty and the woman entered into a relationship with mutual consent. The two also travelled to Dubai on a vacation earlier in the year which had reportedly been sponsored by the woman.

However, during their stay, Mohanty informed that he was not interested to continue the relationship with her anymore. The woman then asked him to return the money which she had allegedly spent on him. She also demanded Mohanty to hand over the gold ornaments which she had gifted him when they were in a relationship. However, the accused allegedly refused to return the money and valuables and even threatened her of dire consequences.

Finding no other alternative, she lodged a complaint in Airfield police station in this regard. A case was registered and Mohanty apprehended on the day.

Chennai Metro plans laying 200m track a day on Red Line

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Despite reeling under labour shortage, Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) is planning to lay 200-metre track a day on the 27 km Koyambedu-Chennai Trade Centre Red Line. "Nearly 45% of track-laying work has now been completed on this stretch that helps cut the commute times across one of Chennai's most congested arteries," a CMRL official told. Work on the section slowed for nearly 75 days since the recent election period as labourers left the city, leaving a workforce shortage of around 10% even now. "We currently have nearly 2,200 workers on site and expect another 300 to join within a



week," a CMRL official said while highlighting the dependence on the availability of migrant labour has on engineering capacity.

The 47 km Red Line, once complete, will run through 45 stations from Madhavaram in the north to Sholinganallur in the south - a corridor that touches some of the city's dense residential and commercial belts.

Officials are exploring extending operations as far as Alandur and starting the service before the end of this year. "It is an ambitious target, but discussions are under way," the official said. "No decision as of now has been taken to extend the line to Alandur," the official added.

From Nimbalkar to Siddique: Murders of political leaders and long legal battles in Maharashtra

Mumbai.(Agency)

The acquittal of all accused in the 2006 murder of former Congress leader from Dharashiv (earlier Osmanabad) Pawanraje Nimbalkar has once again brought focus on murders of political persons in Maharashtra.

The order by a special court designated under the CBI Act on Saturday, nearly two decades after the killing, which shows investigations, trials and appeals can stretch for years before courts reach a final verdict.

The court acquitted former Maharashtra Home Minister Padamsinh Patil (86), brother of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, and seven others. The CBI is likely to challenge it before the Bombay High Court.

The decision came amid a string of other politically charged killings in Maharashtra over the last two decades, many of which continue to be shaped by prolonged investigations, pending trials and appeals years after the killings.

NCP leader Baba Siddique

As he stepped out of his then MLA son Zeeshan's office in Bandra (East), veteran

Mumbai politician, former minister and NCP leader Baba Siddique was shot dead on October 12, 2024. The assailants walked up to Siddiqui and shot him, escaped into the crowd, only to be arrested subsequently.



Mumbai Police claimed the murder was carried out on the instructions of gangster Anmol Bishnoi, brother of Lawrence Bishnoi. A total of 27 arrests were made in the case.

Status: Trial in the case has begun. Anmol, a wanted accused, was brought to India from the US in 2025 and is lodged in a high-

Cuttack's Ravenshaw University top choice for UG admissions in state

BHUBANESWAR.(Agency)

Ravenshaw University in Cuttack has once again emerged as the most preferred institution for undergraduate admission in the state, recording the highest cut-off marks in multiple subjects across arts, science and commerce streams in the first merit list for 2026-27 academic session released by the Higher Education department on Monday.

In the first selection list under phase-I of the UG admission process, around 1,78,782 students have secured seats in different higher educational institutions. Of them, 69,182 are boys, 1,09,591 girls and nine transgender students.

Among the highest cut-offs in the state, Ravenshaw University has recorded 94.50 per cent in political science under the arts stream. In science, the university registered the highest cut-offs of 96.50 pc in physics under physical science, and 94.83 pc in zoology under biological science. For

commerce, highest cut-off was also recorded by Ravenshaw at 89.17 pc.

Meanwhile, in Shastris stream, the highest cut-off of 67.57 pc was logged by Brajakishore Sanskrit Degree College, while in self-financing courses, the highest cut-off of 92



pc was registered in computer science by BJB Autonomous College. Similarly, the highest cut-off in law was 89.40 pc for the five-year Integrated BA LLB programme at Madhusudan Law University.

160 farmers give consent for land acquisition in Third Mumbai, but opposition brews

Mumbai. (Agency)

Almost a month after the MMRDA opened the floodgates of land acquisition for Third Mumbai, around 160 farmers have pledged their land of 118 hectares for the project. Largely consisting of small farmers with a few gunthas of land to their name, officials said these farmers have overwhelmingly chosen the option to get 22.5% of their land in developed areas as their means of compensation, a leap of faith in the city whose realisation is a good decade away.

The challenge in front of the MMRDA, however, looms large. The area under Third Mumbai is 323.44 sq km large, of which 104 sqkm is developable, accounting for mangroves, forest, etc.

Of this, 118 hectares – 1.18 sqkm – represents a little over a percent of the total area to be acquired. Even as consent is trickling in, opposition against the ambitious city planned in the influence area of the Navi Mumbai International Airport and

the Atal Setu is growing. "The Koli-Agri community here depends on their land for their sustenance, hence we will not give a single inch of it away," said Rupesh Patil, general secretary of the MMRDA KSC Navnagar Virodhi Samiti. The



Samiti in the past weeks has organised several meetings with the farmers of the area, and has support in former Bombay High Court judge BG Kolse Patil. "Villagers here have had bad experiences with past land acquisition for projects by CIDCO and the NMIA, with many still having not received compensation. Our lands are like our security and

our birthright. There is greenery, nature, lush fields, here and the authorities plan to grab all of this," he said. Most of the farmers in the villages grow paddy in their fields, he said. Patil narrated a decades long history of the farmers in the villages

having fought for their rights – first against the zamindari system before independence, against the plans for an SEZ in 2006, and now this. In times of unemployment, it is this land and the farming that comes to the villagers' rescue. "Due to the infrastructure projects here, our land has become valuable. If we give our land away, we will lose all we have," said Patil.

Currently, the area consists of farms of 124 villages of the Karnala Pen Chirner (KSC) belt in Raigad, as well as warehouses that have come up due to the area's proximity to the JNPT port. Land owners have the option of taking monetary compensation, in FSI, TDR, or in 22.5% of their land area in developed land.

No hike in monthly pass fare: BMTC

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) on Monday clarified that there has been no increase in the fare of its regular monthly bus pass, following concerns suggesting otherwise.

In a press release, BMTC said the clarification was necessitated after misinformation surfaced claiming that the corporation had increased the price of the general monthly pass. The transport utility maintained that the existing monthly pass rates remain unchanged and continue to be valid for commuters travelling within the city's limited operational area.

The clarification comes in the wake of BMTC introducing new 'General Vistara' daily, weekly and monthly passes from June 2, exclusively for passengers travelling on newly extended routes beyond the city's traditional operational limits.

BMTC's operational jurisdiction, which was earlier limited to 25 km from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits, was expanded by the state government in January 2026 to cover up to 40 km within the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) area. Consequently, bus services that earlier operated up to 40-42 km from the city centre can now extend up to 65-70 km. Following the expansion, BMTC has extended services to key districts and taluk centres around Bengaluru, including Kanakapura, Ramanagara, Channarayana, Magadi, Chikkaballapur and Malur. BMTC has classified routes up to around 40 km from the city centre as 'limited area' services and those beyond as 'Vistara area' services.

AIMIM corporator disqualified for 'invalid' caste certificate; Shiv Sena likely to get BMC seat

Mumbai.(Agency)

In another setback for the Opposition in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the civic body's general assembly on Monday disqualified AIMIM corporator Sameer Ramzan Patel after his caste certificate was declared invalid.

This is the second time within a week that a corporator from the Opposition has lost membership. On June 18, Shiv Sena (UBT) corporator Deepak Sawant was disqualified after the caste certificate he had submitted with his nomination papers for the February civic elections was invalidated.

Patel had contested from Ward No. 137 in Govandi, a seat reserved for candidates from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. The state-appointed caste

scrutiny committee invalidated his caste certificate, paving the way for his disqualification. Earlier, the Bombay High Court had granted Patel interim relief against action on his candidature. However, after the scrutiny committee submitted its findings, Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde announced his disqualification on Monday.

According to civic sources, Shiv Sena candidate Ayesha Rafique Shaikh, who finished behind Patel in the election, is likely to be declared the winner for the seat. Patel's disqualification reduces AIMIM's strength in the BMC from nine to eight, while the ruling Mahayuti alliance's tally is expected to rise to 120. "The Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act does not provide for a by-election in such

cases. If a corporator is disqualified, the candidate who secured the next highest number of votes is declared elected. The



formal appointment is to be announced by the High Court," an official told The Indian Express.

BMC officer suspended for protocol

violation In a separate development, the BMC's law committee unanimously passed a resolution recommending the suspension of protocol officer Sandeep Lalge for an alleged protocol violation during the inauguration of the Mumbai Public School at Liberty Garden.

The issue was raised by BJP corporator Tejinder Singh Tiwana, who claimed that despite being the local corporator, his name was omitted from the inauguration plaque. Speaking to The Indian Express, Tiwana said that when the official was questioned about the omission, he allegedly responded in a disrespectful manner, prompting the committee to move the proposal for his suspension.

Mettur delay leaves

Veeranam with 29 per cent storage

CHENNAI.(Agency)

With the government deferring the opening of the Mettur dam (customary opening date June 12), the Veeranam lake, one the water sources for Chennai, is drying up fast, as it has just 29% of storage now. However, Krishna river water from Andhra Pradesh is helping the city maintain water level in other lakes that provide drinking water.

A Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (Metro Water) official said a water treatment facility near Veeranam lake has designed capacity to send 180 MLD (million litres per day) to Chennai.

"Presently, 180 MLD is being drawn from the lake for supplying to the city. With the present water storage situation, we can maintain 180 MLD supply till July 18. If the government opens Mettur dam or catchment areas of Veeranam lake (parts of Ariyalur, Perambalur and Cuddalore districts) receive summer rains, storage level will improve," the official added.

As per data, the Chola era lake had 421 mcf (million cubic feet) of water, which is only 28.79% of total storage capacity of 1,465 mcf.

The official explained water supply to the city will not be stopped after July 18 but a reduced quantity will be sent until the lake is filled up again.

Meanwhile, Poondi lake in Chennai has received more than 500 mcf of water from Krishna river since May 25. Krishna water from Kandaluru reservoir continues to flow into Poondi lake, which has helped the 'water manager' maintain sufficient storage despite supplying more than 1,200 MLD to the city.

NEWS BOX

Messi beware: France coach backs Mbappe to claim World Cup scoring crown

New Delhi. (Agency)

France manager Didier Deschamps believes Kylian Mbappe is destined to become the FIFA World Cup's all-time leading scorer after the forward's latest brace helped Les Bleus secure a 3-0 win over Iraq on Monday. Mbappe struck twice in France's weather-disrupted Group I clash to take his World Cup tally to 16 goals, drawing level with former Germany striker Miroslav Klose. The 27-year-old now trails Lionel Messi's record of 18 goals by just two, with the Argentina captain also continuing to add to his tally at the ongoing tournament. Records are there to be broken," Deschamps said. "And now he has a symbolic figure. He has 100 caps. He's always scored goals. He will score more goals.

"Take Messi, take Cristiano Ronaldo. I'm not sure that Kylian will play up to their age, but as long as he's on the pitch and as he feels right, he will score a lot of goals. "Every time he beats his own record, he does have the capacity to up his ante." Mbappe's double was unusual even by World Cup standards, with the two goals arriving nearly three hours apart after severe weather forced a lengthy suspension of play. Deschamps revealed France spent the delay trying to stay relaxed while waiting for updates



on when the match could resume. We played cards," he joked. "No, well, we were waiting. We had slots that kept being pushed forward again. And what is most important with my colleague Graham Arnold is to have the 20 minutes to do another warm-up, to not take any risks. "There was a lot of rain that made the pitch very heavy. It was the first time that it happened to me. Same for my players."

While admitting the circumstances were frustrating, the France coach accepted that safety concerns left organisers with little choice. "I was actually having a good time with the players. We're making fun. You know, it's a question of safety and it's just the way it is. You cannot fight against rain and lightning when there is a risk. "It's almost early morning in Europe. These are very special circumstances and I do hope that they will not happen again."

FIFA World Cup: Messi breaks records. The spell remains unbroken

New Delhi. (Agency)

I am not there. I am on a couch on the other side of the planet, watching a stream that runs a few seconds behind real time, which feels about right for covering Lionel Messi from here: always slightly behind, never quite able to catch up. He takes the ball at the top of the box, glances up once, shifts his weight onto his left foot. In a few seconds, this will become a line in a record book. None of that occurs to me as it happens. I just watch. That is the trick of watching Messi now, in what is supposed to be the twilight. The numbers keep arriving, but they have stopped being the point. On a humid Monday night in Texas, two days shy of his 39th birthday, Messi scored twice against Austria to become the all-time leading goalscorer in FIFA World Cup history. What would have happened had he not reversed his decision to retire from international football in 2016? What if he had



stayed retired, watching from afar as Argentina searched for answers without him? It is a thought that makes the stomach drop. A decade of sustained brilliance, a crowning winter of madness in Qatar, and now this age-defying run across the sun-drenched stadiums of North America would have disappeared from the story. The goal tally would have remained frozen at five. The redemption arc would never have arrived. Instead, we are left to thank whatever stubborn, irrational love for Argentina was planted in him all those years ago.

On Monday, the numbers finally caught up with the man.

By scoring twice, Messi eclipsed Miroslav Klose's mark of 16 goals to stand alone at the summit of World Cup history, doing so at a record sixth World Cup of his own. His tournament had already begun with a hat-trick against Algeria, his first on this stage, three goals delivered with such soft precision that none of them looked struck in anger.

Viking row: After taking over Times Square, Norway fans celebrate with Haaland. Video

Erling Haaland and Norway's players performed the Viking row with supporters in New York after beating Senegal 3-2. Norway qualified from Group I alongside France into the knockouts round.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Norway will be heading into the Round of 32 and decided to celebrate with their passionate fans by recreating the iconic Viking row in New York. Norway defeated Senegal 3-2 in a thrilling contest to qualify for the next round alongside France.

FIFA World Cup, Norway vs Senegal: Highlights

After the game was done, Haaland and the rest of the Norwegian players sat down on the ground in formation and ready to replicate the Viking row. The beat of the row was set by captain Martin Odegaard, who was beating the drum hard and the fans provided the noise that echoed around the stadium. You can see



the full video below: The celebration has been part of the Norway travelling fans, who took over Times Square in New York, in the build-up to the game.

HOW NORWAY DEFEATED SENEGAL Norway's dominance in the opening half finally paid off in the 43rd minute after a costly defensive lapse from Senegal. Kalidou

Koulibaly failed to clear a loose ball inside the area, allowing Marcus Pedersen to pounce and smash his effort beyond Edouard Mendy to hand the Scandinavians the lead.

The Norwegians threatened to extend their advantage before the interval, creating the clearer openings. Mendy denied them with a pair of impressive saves, while Erling

Haaland came agonisingly close when his effort rattled the post just before half-time.

Haaland needed little time to make his mark after the restart. Three minutes into the second half, Martin Odegaard threaded a perfectly timed through ball into the striker's path, and the Manchester City forward made no mistake, blasting his finish into the top corner to make it 2-0. Senegal hit back almost instantly. In the 53rd minute, Sadio Mane carved open the Norwegian defence with a precise pass, and Ismaila Sarr shrugged off his marker before calmly slotting home to reduce the deficit. Norway restored their two-goal lead five minutes later as Senegal once again failed to deal with the danger. Patrick Berg's cross picked out Haaland, who met it with a stunning first-time volley that cannoned in off the crossbar, taking his World Cup tally to four goals in just two matches. Sarr grabbed his second goal in stoppage time to set up a nervy finish, but Norway stayed composed to seal all three points and secure one of the first knockout berths from Group I. The victory also sets the stage for a blockbuster showdown with France on Friday, June 27 (IST), with both teams locked on points and top spot in the group up for grabs.

Nitish Reddy ruled out of Ireland T20Is, unlikely for England tour as well

India have been dealt a big blow ahead of their tour of the United Kingdom. All-rounder Nitish Reddy has been ruled out of the Ireland and England series due to a quadriceps injury.

New Delhi. (Agency)

India have been dealt another blow to their all-rounder stocks ahead of the T20I series against Ireland and England. In-form Nitish Reddy has been ruled out of the upcoming white-ball tour of the United Kingdom with a quadriceps injury. India Today.in has learnt that the fast-bowling all-rounder has suffered an injury to his left quadriceps and has been ruled out of the series. Reddy was expected to be a key member of the Indian squad for the tour of the UK due to the absence of Hardik Pandya, who has not taken the field since the end of the Indian Premier League. Pandya is also suffering from a quadriceps niggle and is not in a condition to bowl.

"Nitish Kumar Reddy has been ruled out of the Ireland series. The MRI has revealed swelling with fibre disruption in the left

quadriceps. He has been asked to report at COE for further assessment," the medical bulletin in possession of PTI stated. PTI further reported that Reddy will take a minimum of four weeks, with the recovery timeline expected to go beyond that period to complete his rehabilitation. INDIA'S UPDATED T20I SQUAD vs IRELAND



Shreyas Iyer (Captain), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Ishan Kishan (WK), Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (Vice-Captain), Nitish Kumar Reddy*, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Prasidh Krishna.

*BCCI is yet to announce a replacement for

Nitish Reddy

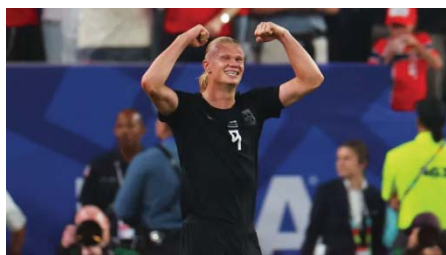
Nitish's injury was initially reported after the first ODI against Ireland, where the bowler had bowled four overs and taken two key wickets. Afghanistan's centurion from the first game — Rahmanullah Gurbaz — was not able to survive Nitish's yorker barrage and lost his wicket in the 16th over of the match. The 23-year-old did not play the second match, with bowling coach Morne Morkel informing that Nitish was suffering from a slight injury, which was not serious in nature. Nitish returned to bowl in the final ODI of the series, where he bowled six overs without taking a wicket. Nitish Reddy has shown visible improvement with his bowling in recent times. In an earlier interview with India Today.in, Nitish had claimed that if he improved his bowling, he had the ability to match the level of Hardik Pandya. In the endeavour to achieve that goal, Nitish recently worked with fast-bowling coach Steffan Jones, who helped him get more front-on and increase his speed from the late 120 kmph range to a brisk mid-130 kmph.

World Cup 2026: Haaland brace sends Norway into knockouts with 3-2 win over Senegal

New Delhi. (Agency)

Erling Haaland scored a brace for the second successive match as Norway secured a place in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 32 with a hard-fought 3-2 win over Senegal in their Group I clash at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey on Tuesday, June 23 (IST). The victory moved Norway level with France on six points at the top of the group and set up a potentially decisive showdown between the two sides in their final group-stage fixture. Norway were rewarded for a dominant first-half display in the 43rd minute when Senegal's defence gifted them the opening goal. Kalidou Koulibaly failed to deal with a loose ball, allowing Marcus Pedersen to break into the penalty area and drive a powerful shot past Edouard Mendy. FIFA World Cup, Norway vs Senegal: Highlights The Scandinavians could have

gone into the break with a bigger lead after creating the better chances, with Mendy producing a couple of important saves and



Haaland striking the post late in the half.

Haaland, however, quickly made amends after the restart. Just three minutes into the second half, Martin Odegaard released the striker with a perfectly weighted through ball

and the Norway captain's pass was finished emphatically as Haaland fired into the top corner to double his side's advantage. Senegal responded almost immediately. Sadio Mane's incisive pass split the Norwegian defence in the 53rd minute, and Ismaila Sarr showed strength and composure to beat his marker before finding the back of the net. Norway restored their two-goal cushion five minutes later. Senegal once again failed to clear their lines and Patrick Berg's delivery found Haaland, who produced a superb first-time volley that went in off the crossbar for his fourth goal in two World Cup matches.

Sarr struck again deep into stoppage time to give Senegal hope, but Norway held on to secure a valuable victory and become one of the first teams from Group I to book their place in the knockout stage.

Birth certificate says 15, big-match record says Vaibhav Sooryavanshi loves pressure

New Delhi. (Agency)

Sport has always been generous with prodigies. Every few years, a teenager arrives carrying impossible expectations and an even more impossible highlight reel. The difficult part is never the talent. It is discovering how that talent behaves when the occasion grows teeth.

That question followed Vaibhav Sooryavanshi into the tri-series final against Sri Lanka A in Dambulla on Sunday. Not because the 15-year-old had done anything to invite doubt. If anything, he had spent the past year bulldozing it. He had already lit up age-group cricket, rewritten records at the Under-19 World Cup and dismantled established international bowlers during a remarkable IPL campaign. Yet sport has a habit of asking the same question over and over again, no matter how many times it appears to have been answered. The timing was hardly ideal. Vaibhav had endured a relatively quiet tri-series by his standards, struggling to convert starts into the kind of innings that have become routine for him. Sri Lanka A had also found a way to get under his skin in the teams' previous meeting, a



feisty contest that ended with tempers flaring. A final, then, offered both a challenge and an opportunity.

Vaibhav needed only 29 balls.

By the time Vaibhav departed for 94, Sri Lanka's shoulders had dropped. The scorecard would show only 29 balls faced, but the damage stretched far beyond the runs. Matches are not supposed to feel decided inside 10 overs. Finals even less so. The bigger the occasion, the better he seems to become. It is rare to see a teenager carry himself with such comfort in high-pressure situations. Rarer still to see him alter the course of a match so completely. Young Sachin Tendulkar possessed the former. Chris Gayle, at his destructive peak, often produced the latter. In Dambulla, Vaibhav offered a glimpse of both.

ODI queens, T20 learners: South Africa hold up the mirror to Harmanpreet's India

South Africa delivered a timely reality check to India in Manchester. The six-wicket defeat exposed glaring shortcomings in Harmanpreet Kaur's side and raised fresh questions about their ability to translate ODI dominance into T20 success as the battle for the semi-finals heats up.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The hype was inevitable heading into the Women's T20 World Cup. India arrived at the tournament carrying the momentum of their historic maiden ICC title, having lifted the ODI World Cup the previous year. That triumph in the 50-over format was widely viewed as a turning point for women's cricket in the country, raising expectations that the team could build on its success and establish a

period of sustained dominance. As a result, all eyes were on India when the Women's T20 World Cup began. India started their campaign with two thumping wins over the Netherlands and Pakistan. However, everyone knew those matches didn't truly test them. The two games were more like a honeymoon phase for the Indian team.

But India were brought back to reality when South Africa handed them a six-wicket defeat. The mistakes that India didn't have to pay for against Pakistan and the Netherlands came back to haunt them against the Proteas. It was as if South Africa held up a mirror to Harmanpreet Kaur's team, while Laura Wolvaardt's side showed others the blueprint for beating India by exposing their shortcomings. It seems that while India have mastered the ODI format, they are yet to find the right formula for success in T20Is.

INDIA THROWING AWAY GOOD STARTS

India were guilty of throwing away good starts during their tour of South Africa, a



recurring issue that led to them conceding a 3-0 lead and eventually slumping to a 4-1 defeat. In the World Cup match against the Proteas, India again got off to a flying start, scoring 59 runs in the first six overs, even though they lost both openers Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana early. However, with eight wickets in hand, India were expected to reach around the 180-run mark, especially with a strong middle order and a power-hitter like Richa Ghosh in prime form. Instead, they managed only 99 runs in the last 14 overs. Most batters

got into double digits and looked set for meaningful contributions, but none could convert their starts into substantial innings. Richa had provided the finishing kick against Pakistan and the Netherlands, but she failed to replicate that impact against a stronger bowling attack. India still have two matches left, and they will need their middle order to build on the platform laid by the top order if they are to recover.

SPINNERS CAN'T SAVE YOU EVERYTIME

India's spinners have been in outstanding form throughout the tournament. Deepthi Sharma did concede 16 runs in the penultimate over of South Africa's chase, but such occasional setbacks are part and parcel of the game and do not take away from her overall impact. Shree Charani has emerged as the leading wicket-taker with 10 wickets at an exceptional average of 6.40, and her remarkable consistency could soon propel her up the ICC T20I rankings, potentially overtaking Linsey Smith.

Sara Ali Khan

Attends Pakistani Actress Kubra Khan's Birthday In London; Sharmila Tagore Feeds Her Cake

A video from Pakistani actress Kubra Khan's intimate birthday celebration in London has gone viral on social media, drawing attention after Sara Ali Khan and veteran actress Sharmila Tagore were spotted at the gathering. The clip, now being widely shared by fans online, shows the actresses coming together for a warm private celebration, creating buzz for its rare cross-border star presence.

The video appears to be from a restaurant in London, where Kubra celebrated her birthday with close friends and guests. Sara is seen enjoying the evening, singing the birthday song, smiling and participating in the cheerful festivities. However, the moment that has particularly caught fans' attention is Sharmila Tagore lovingly feeding cake to Kubra.

Sara Ali Khan And Sharmila Tagore Attend Kubra Khan's Birthday Bash

In the viral clip, Sara Ali Khan can be seen standing close to Kubra Khan as the birthday celebrations unfold. The actress appears relaxed and happy, joining others in singing for Kubra and sharing in the festive mood.



Sharmila Tagore's presence added a special charm to the evening. The veteran actress, known for her grace and warmth, was seen feeding cake to Kubra, a gesture that quickly became the highlight of the video for many fans. Social

media users have been sharing the clip, with several praising the affectionate moment between the two actresses.

The gathering has also sparked conversation because of the presence of Indian and Pakistani artistes in the same frame. While it was a private celebration, the video has resonated with fans who were delighted to see Sara, Sharmila and Kubra sharing a happy moment together.

Sara Ali Khan Enjoys Theatre Time With Sharmila Tagore And Amrita Singh

The viral birthday video comes shortly after Sara Ali Khan gave fans a glimpse of another special family outing in London. The actress recently shared pictures from a theatre visit with her mother Amrita Singh and grandmother Sharmila Tagore. Sara posted the pictures on social media and affectionately referred to Amrita and Sharmila as her "OG legends". Sharing the photos, she wrote, "Theatre time with my OG legends. Play toh accha tha but best actors toh mere bagal mein hi hai."



Love & War Set Tragedy: FWICE Seeks Rs 50 Lakh Compensation, Job For Deceased Worker's Wife



The shocking news of the death of a worker on Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Love & War set has been making headlines. While it was said that Bhansali Productions is ready to offer Rs 40 lakh as compensation to the grieving family, the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) has stepped in and urged the filmmaker to increase the compensation.

Chandradhari Singh Yadav, a 42-year-old carpenter, died after reportedly suffering a severe electric shock on June 17. The incident happened at the Royal Pump Studio in Mumbai's Film City while actor Alia Bhatt was reportedly shooting. Following his demise, Bhansali Productions decided to offer Rs 40 lakh as compensation. However, as per reports, FWICE has intervened in the matter and requested the filmmaker to increase the compensation by Rs 10 lakh and provide Rs 50 lakh to the grieving family. The federation has argued that a larger sum is necessary to secure the future and education of Yadav's young daughters.

"Firstly, we want the compensation to be ₹50 lakh, given that his children are very young and the family will need aid for their education. Also, we have called for stricter safety measures on set and for the work hours of these workers to be streamlined. He was such a talented technician, and it's heartbreaking that he lost his life this way," BN Tiwari told.

Along with financial assistance, the federation has urged Bhansali's production house to provide employment to Yadav's wife. FWICE believes that a job would ensure the bereaved family has a stable and dependable source of income in the future. For now, Bhansali Productions has not issued an official statement on the matter.

About Love & War

The incident comes at a time when Love & War is deep into production. The film marks Bhansali's first collaboration with Ranbir Kapoor since Saawariya and brings together Ranbir, Alia, and Vicky in what is being billed as one of the biggest Bollywood releases in recent years.

Pankaj Tripathi's Brother Bijendra Nath Tiwari Hospitalised In Patna After Alleged Attack, Police Launches Probe



Bollywood actor Pankaj Tripathi's brother, Bijendra Nath Tiwari, is undergoing treatment in Patna after reportedly sustaining serious injuries in an alleged attack in Bihar. The incident has led to a police investigation, with authorities forming a special team to identify and arrest those responsible.

According to reports, Tiwari was first taken to a local hospital before being shifted to Patna for advanced medical care. His condition was reportedly considered critical, leading doctors to refer him to a higher medical facility.

Brother of Pankaj Tripathi shifted to Patna

News agency IANS shared details of the development and posted a video showing Tiwari's arrival at the hospital, as reported in The Times of India. "Bijendra Nath Tiwari, sustained critical injuries in a sharp-weapon attack linked to an old dispute. He was shifted to Patna for advanced treatment, while police formed a special team and launched raids to apprehend the accused."

Attack allegedly linked to old dispute

As per reports, the incident took place in Belsand village, which falls under the Madhopur police station area in Bihar. The report alleges that the attack was connected to a long-standing dispute. It claims that the accused were waiting in the village before allegedly attacking Tiwari with sharp weapons.

Family members reportedly rushed him to Model Sadar Hospital immediately after the incident. Doctors there provided emergency treatment and are said to have described his condition as extremely serious before recommending that he be moved to Patna.

Police launch investigation

With the case now under investigation, police have reportedly constituted a special team to track down those allegedly involved. Authorities are conducting raids as part of the effort to identify and apprehend the accused.

Further details are expected as the investigation progresses and officials gather more information about the circumstances surrounding the alleged attack.

Karisma Kapoor

Thanks Fans For Loving Rita Brown: 'I Am So Happy And Grateful'

Karisma Kapoor has received a warm response for her performance as Rita Brown in ZEE5's crime thriller Brown. The series, which blends a murder investigation with the deeply personal journey of a woman battling grief, trauma and emotional scars, has struck a chord with viewers. In an exclusive conversation with News18 Showsha, Karisma opened up about the encouraging response to the show, the love coming her way for Rita Brown and why she believes the series stands apart in the crowded thriller space on OTT.

Speaking about the audience response to Brown, Karisma said that it felt deeply rewarding to see the hard work behind the show being acknowledged.

"It feels really wonderful to know that all the hard work that went into the making, and the belief that the maker, and all the actors had over Brown has given this positive reaction," she said. Karisma added that a great deal went into shaping Rita Brown as a character, and she is grateful that viewers have connected with more than just the crime-thriller aspect of the series.

"I think a lot went in to creating the character of Rita Brown, and I am so happy and grateful that the audiences have identified with it not only being a murder mystery, a crime investigation but also felt the human story of the character, especially the character of Rita Brown," she shared.

Karisma Kapoor On The Love For Rita Brown

Karisma's performance in Brown has been appreciated for its emotional weight and restraint. Asked if there were any specific comments that stayed with her, the actress said she could not single out one particular reaction, but was grateful that Rita's pain, strength and inner battle had moved viewers. "Well, I don't know how to name one



comment but I am just honestly very grateful that people have been moved by Rita's character, the kind of broken woman that she was but at the same time such a strong woman and how she overcomes her grief," Karisma said.

She further explained that what made Rita powerful was not the absence of pain, but her ability to keep going despite it.

"At the same time trying to do her job to the best of her ability. I think that's what a strong woman is all about. So I am glad that fact has really touched the audience and they have felt those feelings," she added.



NEWS BOX

Ransom Note Reveals US Anchor's Mother Died Shortly After Disappearance

MANIL. (Agency)

A ransom note related to the disappearance of Nancy Guthrie, the mother of "Today" show host Savannah Guthrie, said the 84-year-old had died, CNN and other news organizations are reporting, citing law enforcement sources. Some media outlets had previously reported receiving ransom notes tied to the case in the days after Guthrie's disappearance in early February from her home in the foothills just outside Tucson. CNN reported Monday that one of notes revealed that Nancy Guthrie was dead - and those who kidnapped her did not mean to kill her, but she died shortly after her disappearance.

CNN said it knew the contents of one such note, and that a Tucson TV station had received two notes. CNN and the station agreed to hold off on sharing the contents of the notes publicly so any future communications with the kidnapper or kidnappers could be authenticated, CNN reported. The Pima County Sheriff's Department declined to comment on the note's contents. The FBI didn't respond to a request for comment. And the Guthrie family didn't make any immediate social media posts or any public comments about the notes Monday. Jessica Bobula, news director for the Tucson TV station KOLD, said Monday that the station received several notes after Guthrie disappeared. The station notified authorities and has shared only what the FBI has released about the notes, she said. Authorities believe Nancy Guthrie was kidnapped, abducted or otherwise taken against her will after finding blood near her front doorstep. The FBI later released surveillance videos showing a masked man on the porch that night.

Volunteers and search teams scoured the nearby desert terrain filled with cactuses, bushes and boulders in the weeks after she vanished. A volunteer group recently conducted a search for her body near the Arizona-Mexico border but didn't report finding her.

Oracle Cut 21,000 Jobs in 12 Months Amid AI Adoption

World (Agency)

Oracle Corp. reduced its workforce by 21,000 employees in the past 12 months, a wider scale than previously known, including those whose jobs were eliminated by the use of artificial intelligence.

"The adoption and deployment of AI technologies across our operations have resulted, and may continue to result, in reductions to our workforce," Oracle said Monday in an annual financial regulatory filing.

The company's global headcount shrank to 141,000 full-time employees as of the May 31 end of the fiscal year, compared with 162,000 a year earlier, Oracle said. The reductions led to about \$1.8 billion in restructuring costs. Oracle is under financial pressure because of an expensive build-out of AI data centers for customers like OpenAI. Earlier this year, it began cutting thousands of jobs as part of efforts to save cash, Bloomberg has reported. The exact scope of the cuts was never formally disclosed. As of the end of May, the company had about 49,000 US workers while about 92,000 were employed internationally. The company's headcount is now slightly lower than it was before buying electronic health records company Cerner in 2022. That \$28 billion acquisition added thousands of employees, with many concentrated near Cerner's Kansas City-area headquarters.

"He's Got 2 Problems": Trump Criticism Follows Starmer's Exit

United States. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump criticized outgoing British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday after the Labour leader announced he would resign, saying he had "really hurt himself" over energy, immigration and his handling of relations with Washington.

"I think he's a lovely man," Trump told reporters at an



Oval Office event, before accusing Starmer of mishandling Britain's energy policy by failing to exploit North Sea oil and allowing "windmills all over the place." "The UK buys much of its energy. You know where? Norway. You know where they get their oil? The North Sea," Trump said. "The UK has a much better portion of the North Sea -- they don't want to do it for environmental purposes." Trump, who had predicted Starmer's departure in a Truth Social post, said the British leader was "sort of a friend of mine" but had not been supportive enough of the United States on NATO and the Iran war. The leaders had clashed over the use of British military bases in Cyprus to conduct strikes in Iran, with the US leader voicing disappointment that Britain took too long to approve the US request to use RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus to bomb Iranian targets. "He said we can't use the island to land. That was a first," Trump said, adding that Starmer had eventually relented but that "was a bad move" that "hurt him badly." "I wish him well," Trump said. "But he's got two problems: energy and immigration -- and crime. But energy and immigration. He's really hurt himself very, very badly." Starmer announced Monday that he would resign as Labour leader but remain prime minister during an orderly transition, after months of pressure from party lawmakers and collapsing domestic authority following poor local and regional election results.

Shooting in Montreal, Canada leaves three dead including suspect

The shooting occurred in a partly Jewish neighborhood that includes kosher markets and restaurants, and the civilian who has shot dead has been identified as a member of Montreal's Jewish community.

MONTREAL. (Agency)

A midday shooting in Montreal killed three people on Monday, including a police officer, a civilian, and the alleged gunman, triggering rare levels of shock across the Canadian city. The bloodshed occurred in a partly Jewish neighborhood that includes kosher markets and restaurants, and the civilian who has shot dead has been identified as a member of Montreal's Jewish community. But police have declined comment on the shooter's motive. French language public broadcaster Radio Canada said the gunman was connected to "incel" ideology -- a misogynistic worldview that fueled the man responsible for one of

Canada's most deadly mass killings, a 2018 vehicle-ramming in Toronto that killed 10. Incel means "involuntarily celibate," and is linked to heterosexual men driven to extremism over their apparent inability to find women who want to be their partners. Montreal police chief Fady Dagher said Monday's incident was "a tragedy, a nightmare." Dagher said police received a call about an active shooting in Montreal's Cote-des-Neiges neighborhood at around 11:30 am (1530 GMT). Police responded and a shootout ensued, with the assailant firing from inside a building with a long gun, Dagher told reporters at the scene. Frank Vogas told AFP he was buying paint at a shop in the area when the gunfire erupted.

"I see the police storm in, come in from everywhere, and, they raise their guns," the 71-year-old said, explaining that officers told people in the shop to keep low to the floor. Cote-des-Neiges resident Danny Wilk told AFP that he witnessed the violence unfold. "I was on the street near my home when I heard one shot, then several more,"

he said, adding: "I tried to take shelter in the nearby pizzeria, and that's when I saw the shooter, who looked ready to fire his weapon, dressed in military clothing." Wilk said he saw the officer, dead on the ground, before



the shooter was taken down by police. Dagher confirmed one male officer, later identified as Mohamed Lamine Benredoune, was shot dead. Another female officer sustained injuries that were not life threatening. Dagher also confirmed the gunman was dressed in what appeared to be military-style clothing.

Avoid speculation'

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said he was "horrified" by the violence.

The location of the shooting raised immediate speculation online that it was another incident of antisemitic violence in Canada, a country that has seen an enormous increase in reported crimes targeting Jews since Israel launched its operation in Gaza following the October 7, 2023 attacks by Hamas. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), a prominent Canadian civil society group, named the slain civilian as Michael Moshe Mizrahi, describing him as "a beloved member of Montreal's Jewish community." Dagher stressed the investigation had not yet produced any indications as to motive.

"It's important to be very careful of rumors," he said. Getzy Markowitz, a rabbi who works in the area, said the shooting took place in a community with multiple Jewish institutions, including educational centers and a food bank.

JD Vance Says Iran Talks Lay 'Good Foundation' For Deal To End War

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

Vice President JD Vance on Monday said his lengthy talks with senior Iranian officials in Switzerland created a "good foundation for a successful final deal" as they seek a permanent end to the war that the U.S. and Israel began in late February. Vance and U.S. officials claimed progress on multiple fronts, including the establishment of "mechanisms" to ensure the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for global energy shipments, stays open and to address fighting between Israel and Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in southern Lebanon, where a ceasefire appeared to be holding. The vice president departed Switzerland as technical teams were still negotiating, and President Donald Trump talked up the efforts to keep the strait open to create "an oil gusher."

"We're doing very well with respect to the Hormuz Strait," Trump said from the Oval Office. "We have an open strait, and we have a country that will never have a nuclear weapon." Iran effectively closed the strait after the U.S. and Israel attacked on February 28, causing fuel prices to skyrocket far beyond the region. The interim agreement to end the war was supposed to reopen the channel. Dozens of ships passed through it over the weekend, even though the main route is still mined and closed. Shortly after those attacks, Hezbollah and Israel also went to war, with Hezbollah firing rockets and drones at civilian communities in northern Israel and Israel seizing large swaths of southern Lebanon. Iran has insisted that addressing the fighting in Lebanon is a critical component of any deal to end the wider conflict.

Iran noted "major progress" to end the fighting in Lebanon and called that the first real test of the negotiations. In other developments, the U.S. Treasury issued a 60-day license waiving sanctions on Iranian oil as part of the interim agreement. Notably, the license allows Iranian oil to be imported into the U.S., which has not imported significant amounts of Iranian oil since the 1990s. Also on Monday, the State Department announced that Secretary of State Marco Rubio would travel this week to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain to discuss the latest developments in Iran. The mediation effort in Switzerland started Sunday and stretched into early Monday. "We haven't built the house, but we've laid a successful foundation to get to a good place for the American people," Vance told reporters after initial talks with Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf. Trump did not attend what was dubbed the "Lake Lucerne Summit," but his presence certainly loomed large. The talks were jolted by statements from Trump, who, from thousands of miles away, fired off comments that offended the Iranians. Iranian state media said talks had paused after the "publication of an insulting message by the U.S. President." The negotiations later continued. The vice president suggested that the U.S. could agree to unfreeze Iranian assets for purchases of U.S. soy, corn and wheat. He said Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and one of the lead U.S. negotiators, came up with the idea with officials from Qatar.

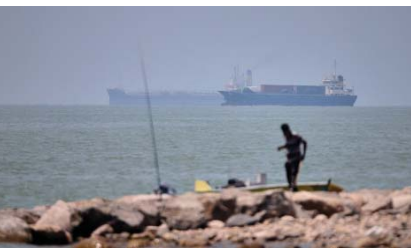
Iran's chief negotiator says Hormuz will be administered by Tehran: State media

TEHRAN. (Agency)

Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said that the Strait of Hormuz will be administered by Tehran, state media reported on Tuesday, following talks pushing to end the US-Israeli war on the Islamic republic.

Iran and the United States agreed on Monday to set up communication lines to keep the vital shipping route open and end fighting in Lebanon, mediators said, after their first round of talks in Switzerland toward ending the conflict that has engulfed West Asia. "The Strait of Hormuz will never return to its pre-war conditions and will be administered by the Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with international law," Ghalibaf said on his return from the talks, according to IRNA. In a video posted to Ghalibaf's Telegram account, he said the talks at the luxury Swiss resort of Burgenstock produced "good achievements." "In my view, this trip had good achievements, especially

regarding the discussion of the Strait, the Lebanon discussions, the question of oil waiver, and the matter of releasing the frozen funds," he said. The United States temporarily suspended sanctions



on Iranian oil on Monday after Vice President JD Vance said Tehran would allow UN nuclear inspectors to return to the country, following the talks.

As part of the deal, Tehran is also set to get some form of sanctions relief from Washington, as well as the unfreezing of assets. "Of course, we believe we are

still at the beginning of this work and must continue our efforts," Ghalibaf added in the video. Iranian state media reported that Ghalibaf made a stop in Oman, which shares the Strait of Hormuz. The waterway, which Iran closed at the start of the war, reopened last week, after Washington and Tehran reached an agreement. But Tehran announced on Saturday it had closed the strait again in response to Israeli attacks in Lebanon. Since then, Tehran and Washington have agreed to establish a line of communication "to avoid incidents and miscommunication with the aim of

safe passage for commercial vessels" through the waterway, according to Qatari and Pakistani mediators. Maritime traffic in the strait continued to flow on Monday at a faster pace than before the US-Iranian agreement on talks to end the war, according to tracking firms.

How Ukraine's Latest Drone Strategy Is Targeting Russia's Supply Lines

world. (Agency)

Ukraine's latest drone campaign is not focused on tanks or trenches. Instead, it is targeting something equally important to Russia's war effort -- the supply routes that keep troops equipped with fuel, ammunition and military equipment. According to analysis by French open-source analyst Clement Molin, volunteer OSINT group Geoconfirmed and CNN's OSINT team, around 150 strikes on Russian fuel tankers, trucks and other vehicles have been geolocated since early May. Many more attacks are believed to have gone campaign relies on a new generation of Ukrainian-made mid-range drones, including models such as the FP-2 and the Behemoth. These drones can travel between 50 and 300 kilometres and are increasingly being used to hit roads, bridges, trains and logistics hubs far behind the front lines.

The Ukrainians have obtained the means to start a large-scale drone campaign to cut Crimea from its main

supply roads and to complicate Russia's logistical situation throughout the frontline," Molin told CNN.

Targeting The Lifelines

Much of the pressure is being felt in southern Ukraine and occupied Crimea. Geolocated videos show burnt-out fuel trucks and military vehicles along key highways connecting Crimea with occupied territories. Ukraine says the goal is not simply to destroy equipment but to weaken Russia's ability to sustain offensive operations. In a statement to CNN, Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces said the number of mid-range strike missions had increased 28-fold over the past year.

The force said its objectives include creating supply problems for Russian troops, reducing Moscow's offensive capabilities and opening safe corridors for longer-range drone operations. Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister and Digital Transformation Minister Mykhailo Fedorov described the campaign as a "logistical lockdown"

aimed at systematically destroying Russian capabilities and depriving them of the "ability to conduct active assault operations."

"The enemy will no longer feel safe, even at a considerable distance from the line of contact," Fedorov said last month.

Bridges, Trains And Fuel Under Fire Researchers say Ukrainian drones have expanded what soldiers often call the "kill zone" far beyond the battlefield. "Roving munitions that fly over key routes and target Russian logistics, particularly military equipment and fuel trucks," have also been highly effective, Molin said. According to his research, 20 trains -- many carrying fuel -- have been targeted since January 2026.

The Institute for the Study of War has also reported repeated attacks on Russian vehicles moving along highways in Crimea and southern Ukraine. One major target has been the Chonhar bridge, a key route linking Crimea with occupied parts of Ukraine.

Bill To Ban Horse Carriages In New York Renamed After Indian Victim

New York. (Agency)

A bill that seeks to ban horse carriages in New York City has been renamed in honour of an Indian teenager, who died after sustaining injuries in a horrific carriage incident at Central Park here. Romanch Mahajan, 18, lost his life after he fell from a horse-drawn carriage at Central Park last week. Mahajan had jumped off the carriage in an effort to help his mother, who fell out of it as the horse bolted. A vigil was held at Central Park on Monday to pay tributes to Mahajan. New York City Council member Christopher Marte, who organised the event, announced that a bill introduced by him, named 'Ryder's law', which seeks to ban horse-drawn carriages in New York City, will be changed to 'Romanch's Law' in honour of the teenager.

Ryder's law was named after Ryder, a 26-year-old carriage horse that collapsed in August 2022 while being forced to pull a carriage. Ryder died in October that year,

and following its death, several animal rights and advocacy groups, such as The Animal Legal Defence Fund, have been calling for a legislation to ban and replace horse-drawn carriages in New York City. The bill would wind down the horse-drawn cab industry by prohibiting the issuance of new licences used in the operation of horse-drawn cabs. The operation of such cabs would be prohibited beginning June 1, 2028, the Animal Legal Defence Fund said. "What happened last week is a stain on our city. Why aren't we taking action immediately?" Marte asked at the vigil, as he announced that Ryder's law will be renamed as Romanch's Law.

At the vigil, Marte read a letter from Mahajan's family, who called for a ban on horse-drawn carriages after the tragedy last week. "The industry responsible for my nephew's death is preparing to resume passenger tours this Tuesday, treating the

loss of Romanch's life as a temporary inconvenience. This is a profound insult to



our family and a direct threat to the safety of every tourist and resident in New York City. "We demand that you use the full power of your office to halt the resumption of these rides immediately. Allowing horse carriages back on the streets while our family is planning a funeral proves that the city values tourism over human life," the Mahajan family's letter read, according to an excerpt

published in ABC7NY news. The Animal Legal Defence Fund expressed concern at the condition of the horses and the circumstances under which the animals are made to pull carriages on crowded city roads. "Every summer, horses are used to pull carriages on hot pavements. They are subjected to breathing in heavy exhaust from the congested downtown traffic.

"In winter, they endure freezing temperatures while standing unprotected from the elements, waiting for fares. Day in and day out -- rain, sleet, or shine -- these horses are worked, often to the point of exhaustion," it said. The Fund noted that under the current law, drivers can work their horses nine hours a day, seven days a week. "Public safety is at risk when horses are forced to work in traffic. Blinders, which prevent the horses from having a full range of vision, cannot protect them from the blaring horns, crowds of people, and constant noise of busy New York streets.