

Grave sin: BJP shreds Bhagwant Mann amid 'sacrilege' video row; AAP pushes back

AAP staged protests across Punjab, accusing the SAD of circulating a fake video of Bhagwant Mann. The dispute widened with Akal Takht action and a Gurugram Police probe into the forensic reports.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

A fresh political storm has engulfed Punjab after allegations surrounding a purported video involving Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann triggered sharp reactions from political parties and Sikh religious bodies, with the BJP intensifying demands for his resignation and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) rejecting the allegations as politically motivated.

The controversy centres on a viral video that allegedly shows a man resembling Mann engaging in objectionable conduct involving photographs of Sikh Gurus.

The video has sparked outrage and prompted intervention from religious authorities, with the Akal Takht – the highest decision-making body in Sikhism – recently declaring Mann as "Guru Dokhi (the betrayer of the Gurus)" and "Khalsa Panth virodhi (anti-Khalsa faith)".

The latest escalation followed action by

Gurugram Police, which registered an FIR and arrested two men in connection with an alleged conspiracy to obtain favourable forensic reports linked to the video. The case stems from



a complaint by a Haryana-based forensic and cyber investigation professional who alleged that individuals claiming to represent senior Punjab government officials attempted to influence forensic findings. Reacting to the developments, Delhi Minister Manjinder

Singh Sirsa launched a strong attack on the Punjab government, questioning why action had not been taken against Mann.

"The way such a grave sin has been committed, and the attempt to suppress it with the help of money and the police, has been challenged. Sikh authorities, the dignity of Sikhs, and the sentiments of Sikhs have been challenged...When will a case be filed against Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann? When will Bhagwant Mann be arrested in this case?" the BJP leader said during a press conference on Wednesday.

According to the complaint, the forensic official was allegedly pressured to arrange reports declaring the video AI-generated, manipulated or unreliable, and stating that the person in the footage was not the Punjab Chief Minister.

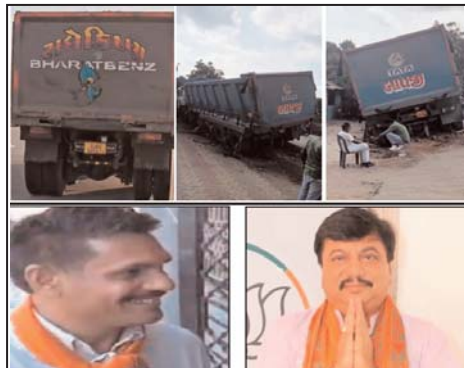
He further alleged that threats were issued and around Rs 10 lakh in cash was forcibly placed in his vehicle. Investigators are examining digital evidence, financial transactions and the role of those involved in preparing and

Mahanagar Metro Exposes Massive Mining Scam Tripartite Alliance Exploits Karjan, Links MLA, Local Gangsters, and Officials

Mahanagar Metro Desk
Pawan Makan

BARODA/KARJAN: A deeply entrenched nexus between politicians, administrative officials, and mining mafias has come to light in the Karjan taluka, leading to large-scale environmental degradation and a massive loss of revenue to the state exchequer. Investigations reveal that a sophisticated syndicate—allegedly operated by local political figures, municipal members, and administrative accomplices—has established a parallel system of extortion, illegal sand mining, and unregulated commerce across Pingarwada and Ghandhara villages.

The scale of illegal extraction in the region has reached unprecedented levels. Operations across the affected villages utilize an extensive fleet of heavy machinery, including approximately 120 to 150 dumpers, 16 high-capacity excavators, and over 20 backhoes operating continuously. Local reports indicate that mining activities have far exceeded permissible legal limits. Most notably, heavy dredging machinery has been deployed directly into the eco-sensitive beds of the Narmada River, excavating hazardous craters reaching depths of up to 200 feet without regulatory clearance. Furthermore, protected commu-



nity grazing lands (Gauchar land) in Ghandhara village have been severely encroached upon, prompting formal complaints from local panchayat representatives to the District Collector and the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

Transit Subversion: A fleet of approximately 120 heavy transport vehicles operates across local arterial roads. These vehicles prominently display specific religious identifiers to signal immunity to local law enforcement and Regional Transport Office (RTO) checkers, allegedly securing unhindered passage through pre-arranged monthly protection fees. **Revenue Evasion:** Standard operating procedures involve extreme overloading. Vehicles officially registered with a 22-ton transit permit routinely carry over 50 tons of minerals. This systematic misrepresentation causes severe structural dam-

age to state highways and deprives the state government of millions in royalty revenues. Financial scrutiny reveals an extraordinary exponential growth in the wealth of key syndicate operators. Public disclosures indicate that prominent political figures involved went from severe financial liabilities following electoral losses in 2012 to declaring white income assets valued at over ₹33 crores in 2026. This rapid capital accumulation has reportedly been channeled into premium real estate, luxury vehicles, and commercial fuel stations across Manjalpur and surrounding sectors. Investigations suggest a widespread network of benami properties registered under frontmen to insulate the primary beneficiaries from legal scrutiny.

The unchecked expansion of this illicit empire directly undermines the state's declared 'zero-tolerance' policy against corruption and organized crime. Mahanagar Metro News issues a formal challenge to the administrative apparatus: if immediate corrective steps, statutory audits, and arrests of the primary operators are not executed swiftly, a formal Green Petition will be moved before the High Court to enforce environmental safeguards and expose the administrative protection shielding this syndicate.

The cross-voting in the Karnataka MLC polls has raised questions within the BJP leadership regarding the alliance with the JD(S), the party's relevance in the state's political landscape and the saffron side's long-term strategy in the state.

BJP weighs future of JDS alliance in Karnataka after cross-voting shock in MLC polls

New Delhi.(Agency)

The cross-voting during last week's Karnataka Legislative Council elections has evolved beyond an internal discipline matter, with the BJP now reassessing both its alliance with the JD(S) and its long-term political strategy in the southern state. A fact-finding team, led by BJP veteran CT Ravi, is expected to submit a report on the cross-voting episode soon. Once that is done and the report is reviewed, disciplinary action against those found responsible is likely.



However, sources told India Today that punishment alone will not suffice. The BJP leadership is taking a tough stance on the episode and in no mood to tolerate sabotage from within. The controversy

has also sparked discussions within the party over the future of the NDA alliance in Karnataka and whether they should increasingly focus on expanding its independent political base. The Congress

won five of seven seats, taking its strength in the Legislative Council increased from 34 to 39 members. The BJP, meanwhile, managed to win only two seats, which made its tally decline to 29. The JD(S) failed to secure its lone seat and is now left with only six members. In the 224-member Karnataka Assembly, the Congress had adequate numbers to secure four Legislative Council seats. However, cross-voting within the NDA camp led the party to win a fifth seat as well.

HIGH-LEVEL REVIEW MEET IN DELHI

The key review meet was recently held in Delhi, and attended by BJP state president BY Vijayendra, Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka, Karnataka BJP in-charge Radha Mohan Das Agarwal and senior party leadership. According to sources, the state leadership informed the central leadership that as many as 11 NDA legislators failed to vote as expected during the MLC polls. Additionally, four BJP votes were reportedly wasted, one was declared invalid and cross-voting by at least three BJP MLAs has been confirmed. Preliminary assessments also suggest that six to seven JD(S) legislators may not have followed the party line. For the BJP leadership, this was not a mere numerical setback but a significant challenge to the organisational discipline.

West Bengal PAC poll may become first formal test of rebel Trinamool faction

The West Bengal Assembly will elect the Public Accounts Committee chairperson amid the Trinamool Congress split. The vote could become the clearest test yet of which faction commands support among opposition MLAs.

Kolkata.(Agency)

The West Bengal Assembly is set to see an unprecedented contest for the chairpersonship of the Public Accounts Committee, or PAC, as rival factions of the Trinamool Congress prepare for an election amid the party's deepening split.

Assembly authorities on Tuesday notified the election process for the PAC and three other key House committees, setting up what could become the first institutional contest between the camps led by TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee and Leader of Opposition Ritabrata Banerjee.



The development comes as both camps remain locked in a wider battle for control of the TMC's legislative and organisational wings, with competing claims now before political, legal and electoral forums. According to the Assembly notification, nominations for the PAC, the Committee on Public Undertakings, the Committee on Estimates and the Committee on Local Fund Accounts can be filed till June 30. Scrutiny will be held on July 1, July 2 is the last date for withdrawal of nominations, and polling, if required, will be held on July 5.

After Lucknow fire tragedy, UP bans coaching, business activity in basements

Mumbai.(Agency)

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced a strict ban on coaching centres and all commercial activities operating from basements, in the wake of the Aliganj fire tragedy in Lucknow that killed at least 15 people and triggered widespread scrutiny of building safety violations.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued clear directions saying that basements must not be used for any form of coaching or commercial operations. He further instructed officials to ensure strict enforcement of fire safety and disaster management norms across the state.

He further warned that violations of safety standards would not be tolerated under any circumstances. All concerned departments have been directed to identify buildings where basements are being misused and take immediate corrective action. Action will also be taken against officials found negligent in enforcement.



CRACKDOWN IN LUCKNOW

The decision follows the Aliganj fire incident in Lucknow, where an illegally modified commercial complex reportedly operating in violation of approved building plans came under investigation after a devastating blaze that led to multiple casualties.

The Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) has launched a major enforcement drive against the building and similar structures in the area. Officials have issued notices to building owners, alleging that a residential property approved in 2014 was later converted into a commercial complex without proper permission. Preliminary findings suggest that deviations from sanctioned maps and violations of fire safety rules may have worsened the impact of the fire.

News box

Four men break into temple, loot donation boxes

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Four men broke into the Jal Vihar temple, Sector 46 and looted donation boxes within 10-12 minutes on Tuesday, around 1.40 am. The exact amount of cash stolen cannot be ascertained. However, the donation boxes were not opened for nearly three years as they were usually unlocked only when funds were required for construction work. The theft came to light when a neighbour heard the sound of a tempo late at night and saw the temple gate open from his balcony. He instantly informed the temple priest, following which the priest and others reached the temple and found the locks of the donation boxes broken. The priest, Hari Om, then contacted the police through the emergency helpline number 112, and a team reached the spot. The entire theft took place between 1.38 am and 1.45 am, approximately. According to the priest, four men arrived in a tempo without a number plate, two of whom got off, cut the main gate's lock using some tool and emptied the two donation boxes of all the cash. Sukhbir Singh, SHO, Sector 50 police station, said, "An FIR is being registered, and we have collected the CCTV footage and started an investigation to identify the accused."

No NOCs, 2 coaching centres in Noida sealed after Lucknow fire kills 15

Noida.(Agency)

The district administrations carried out fire safety audits of coaching institutes across the two NCR districts and sealed at least two centres, operating without mandatory registration and fire safety clearances, in Noida. In Ghaziabad, several coaching centres were found violating fire norms, prompting authorities to disconnect electricity supply at some non-compliant premises.

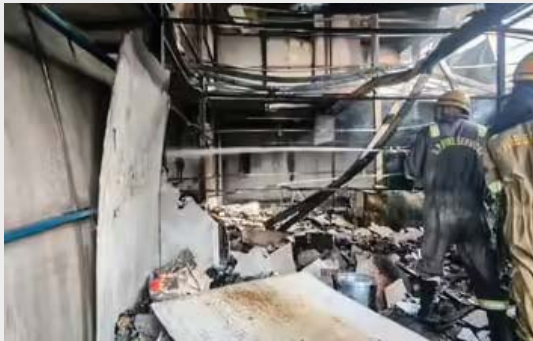
The drive follows mounting concern over fire safety lapses at private educational institutes in the NCR, especially after Monday's devastating fire at a commercial complex housing a coaching centre in Lucknow left 15 dead. In Noida, teams comprising the district inspector of schools (DIOS), chief fire officer and city magistrate inspected coaching institutes to verify registration records, fire safety arrangements and statutory clearances. Officials found that Om Education Coaching Centre in Sector 149 was operating without mandatory registration and a valid fire no-objection certificate (NOC). The institute was sealed immediately. Basu Coaching Centre in Sector 49 was also sealed after inspectors found it lacked valid registration documents.

"During the inspection, serious irregularities were found at both institutes. They were operating without complying with mandatory requirements and were sealed with immediate effect," a senior fire department official said.

Two other institutes — Victor Coaching Centre in Sector 49 and Sai Vinayak Institute of Studies in Sector 149 — were found closed when inspection teams arrived. Authorities issued notices directing their managements to appear before the DIOS within two days and submit relevant documents. Officials warned that failure to furnish the required records or comply with legal requirements could lead to further action, including sealing of the premises. District authorities said inspections of coaching centres and educational institutions would continue across Noida to identify establishments operating without registration or failing to meet prescribed safety standards.

In neighbouring Ghaziabad, the fire department carried out a parallel inspection drive. Teams inspected coaching institutes, libraries and other high-footfall establishments, focusing on the availability of fire-fighting equipment, emergency exits, electrical safety systems and evacuation preparedness, including single staircases, the absence of dedicated fire exits and inadequate fire-fighting arrangements.

Gas leak triggers fire at labour camp in Noida, 60 workers evacuated



Noida.(Agency)

A suspected gas leak on the ground floor of a two-storey labour camp in Raipur village, Sector 126, on Tuesday. Around 60 workers were evacuated as flames spread rapidly and engulfed their belongings. Thick black smoke blanketed the area, sending residents into panic.

Chief fire officer Pradeep Kumar Chaubey said the incident occurred at around 6.20am. The fire quickly spread to the upper floor, filling the building with thick smoke and flames. Most of the workers were asleep when the blaze erupted.

Officials said a few workers noticed smoke and flames and immediately raised an alarm, waking up others staying in the camp. Eyewitnesses said frightened workers rushed out of their rooms and ran to safety as the fire intensified. Within minutes, all 60 workers evacuated the building. The labourers, who belong to different states across the country, are employed at various construction projects in and around the area. The fire department had initially received information that a few people might be trapped in the building. They dispatched five fire tenders to the spot. By the time firefighters arrived, the workers had already exited the camp but the flames had spread across a major portion of the building. After nearly one hour and 40 minutes of continuous efforts, the fire was brought completely under control. Teams later conducted a thorough inspection of the structure to ensure that no one was trapped inside and that there was no possibility of the fire reigniting. A preliminary investigation suggests that a gas leak may have triggered the fire.

City's worst air comes after dark, peaks around midnight

Gurgaon.(Agency)

If you are stepping out in Gurgaon late evening or heading out early in the morning, chances are you are breathing the city's most polluted air.

An analysis of hourly air quality data from EnviroCatalysts' Hourly Analysis Dashboard for Jan 1 to June 22 shows that the dirtiest hours in the city consistently fall between late evening and early morning, with pollution peaking around midnight and remaining elevated until after sunrise. TOI compared the hourly average pollution levels for the first two quarters of 2025 and 2026 and found PM2.5 — among the most harmful air pollutants because of its ability to enter the bloodstream through the lungs — recorded its highest concentrations between 10 pm and 1 am in both years. But its night-time peaks rose sharply in 2026. Average PM2.5 concentrations at midnight rose from 88.9 micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in 2025 to 138 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ during the same period this year. The deterioration was visible

across the entire night-time window. While PM2.5 level at 11 pm was 85.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2025, it climbed to 134.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2026. The 1 am concentrations rose from 85.4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ to 133 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Even after sunrise, pollution remained elevated, with PM2.5 levels recorded above 105 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ until 7 am this year. The city's cleaner-air window remained confined to afternoons, and even that has shrunk this year. Between 3 pm and 5 pm, PM2.5 concentrations recorded their lowest levels of the day. The cleanest hour in 2025 was 5 pm, when the PM2.5 level was 64 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. This year, even the cleanest hour (4 pm) registered 81.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The same trend cut across pollutants. PM10 concentrations were also found to peak around midnight, rising from an average of 189.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2025 to 240.9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2026. Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), associated with vehicular and combustion emissions, peaked at 2 am, climbing from 24.2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2025 to 33 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ this year. Carbon monoxide (CO),

linked to the combustion of fossil fuels in vehicles, industrial machinery, and residential heating appliances, was highest in the pre-dawn hours, peaking at 5 am at



1.51 mg/m^3 this year. Ozone (O_3) and sulphur dioxide were the only major pollutants that bucked the pattern. Unlike particulate matter, ozone levels were lowest at night and peaked in the afternoon, when sunlight drives photochemical reactions. The highest

ozone concentration in 2026 was recorded around 3 pm at 43.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The highest sulphur dioxide level was recorded at 10 am (6.9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), while it reached a trough at noon (5.3 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). Air quality experts attribute the night-time spike to lower atmospheric mixing heights, weaker winds, and temperature inversions that trap pollutants close to the ground. As daytime temperatures rise, stronger atmospheric mixing disperses pollutants, producing the relative afternoon reprieve the data shows. Clean Air at EnviroCatalysts programme manager Jinitha Varghese told TOI that particulate levels in Gurgaon follow both the meteorological cycle and human activity patterns. "They peak at night and during morning office hours, coinciding with high traffic emissions from city vehicles and heavy goods vehicles, industrial emissions at night, and lower dispersion at lower temperatures," she said.

Only 3 prosecution officers in Noida, 300 new cases reach courts daily

Noida.(Agency)

In a district where roughly 300 cases are instituted daily and another 2,000 are disposed of, just three prosecution officers handle the workload at magisterial courts, the entry point for most criminal cases.

Uttar Pradesh's prosecution system is organised into 18 administrative regions, each overseen by an additional director of prosecution. District units are headed by joint directors, while senior prosecution officers (SPOs), prosecuting officers (POs) and assistant prosecution officers (APOs) are tasked with scrutinising chargesheets and representing the state in court proceedings. According to 2010 staffing norms, Noida has a sanctioned strength of one SPO, one PO and six APOs for 26 police stations mapped to 15 magisterial courts. It currently has one SPO and two POs, forcing officers to divide time across multiple courtrooms and widening the gap between caseload and capacity. Prosecution officer Gaurav Pandey told TOI that the workload is time-bound. "Almost every criminal case reaches us, and we have to check the police report. If they are in accordance with law, we assist in making the case file and preparing for arguments.

Sometimes we have less than 30 seconds per case." He acknowledged that the shortage often leads to matters being listed without effective representation.

Prosecution work begins at the earliest stage of criminal proceedings. APOs at the entry level, followed by POs and SPOs, review police papers, verify charges and prepare cases for hearings. After magistrate-level scrutiny, matters that proceed to trial are handled by district government counsels and public prosecutors at the sessions stage. PO Rajesh Kumar Shukla said each court or police station ideally needs dedicated prosecution support. "One person can attend only one court at a time, but matters are listed in all courts simultaneously. With only three officers, it is not possible to manage the entire load," he said. Officers said they routinely process 80-100 case files a day, focusing mainly on verification of sections and charges, while more complex matters receive limited but prioritised scrutiny due to time constraints. Court data show around 9,000 cases were filed in the district court last month, or roughly 300 a day. About 60,000 cases were also disposed of across courts in the same period, with magisterial

courts handling the bulk of the workload. Officials and prosecutors say the manpower gap is increasingly reflected in both pendency and case quality. A prosecution officer, speaking anonymously, said inadequate staffing weakens scrutiny of chargesheets and allows procedural lapses to pass into trial. He added that strengthening the cadre could improve conviction outcomes and reduce dependence on poorly prepared filings. "We cannot allow arbitrary charges to pass unchecked, but with the current workload, it becomes difficult to examine every file in detail," he said. The district has about 9.18 lakh pending cases, including 8.47 lakh at the magisterial level, 22,000 sessions cases and 18,000 civil suits. Officials say the backlog reflects not only sustained inflows but also staffing constraints in the lower judiciary. And the shortage is not limited to Noida. In neighbouring Ghaziabad, all 16 sanctioned APO posts are vacant. The district has nine prosecution officers, though several are expected to be transferred this month. Our job is to ensure only legally sustainable cases go forward. But when workload is overwhelming, even weak or improperly

Occupation certificates for unfit buildings: 15 architects face blacklisting for violations in Haryana

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The department of town and country planning (DTCP) has recommended blacklisting of 15 architects following alleged irregularities in the issuance of occupation certificates (OCs). The architects include Niharika Yadav, Yashpal, Jatin Lochab, Jivesh, Sudiksha Kaushik, Aman Sharma, Deepak Jayant, Ravinder, Ravi Kumar, Manoj Kumar, Gomati Prasad, Jyoti Sharma, Rosy Raghav, Jitender and Somansh Singh. Department sources said fresh OC applications submitted by these architects are no longer being accepted pending further action. The department is also examining the possibility of imposing

financial penalties and initiating further disciplinary action. One of the biggest crackdowns in the matter followed a joint probe — conducted by the chief minister's flying squad and planning authorities — that uncovered multiple instances of OCs being granted to incomplete and under-construction buildings. After months of inspections across licensed colonies in Gurgaon, investigators found several properties that had secured OCs despite construction being far from complete. In some cases, buildings were found at the brickwork stage, without plastering or basic finishing work, yet had been certified fit for occupation. Officials said the CM flying

squad sought details of nearly 1,500 OCs issued by architects during a nine-month period. Subsequent site inspections and document verification allegedly revealed a pattern of certifications being granted in violation of prescribed norms. According to officials, the district town planner (planning) forwarded the names of the architects to the senior town planner for blacklisting after finding prima facie violations of the self-certification policy and the Haryana Building Code, 2017. District town planner Praveen Chauhan told TOI, "The architects concerned issued OCs for incomplete, unfit and under-construction buildings.

MCG rules out exemption from waste charges linked to property tax bills in Gurgaon

Noida.(Agency)

Amid growing confusion over the payment of garbage collection charges linked to property tax bills, MCG has clarified that no exemption will be granted.

MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya told TOI that the levy should not be viewed merely as a garbage collection fee. "These are solid waste management charges, which also cover sweeping of roads and other sanitation-related expenses. Residents will have to pay these charges," Dahiya said, adding that MCG's annual expenditure on sanitation is around Rs 350 crore. The clarification comes after weeks of uncertainty, with many residents questioning whether the charges were mandatory. Several resident welfare groups have argued that the civic body has failed to provide satisfactory sanitation services, including door-to-door waste collection and regular road sweeping, making the additional charge difficult to justify. Residents have also questioned why a separate sanitation levy is being imposed when they are already paying property tax and, in many cases, monthly maintenance charges to their housing societies. "When we are already paying property tax so that the municipal corporation provides civic services, why



do we have to separately pay for garbage collection or sweeping? We are paying monthly maintenance charges and then property tax, and now, on top of that, a garbage collection charge is also being imposed on us," Sanjay Agarwal, a resident of Sector 109, said. Amit Goswami, a resident of Princeton Floors in Sector 51, said residents in his society have opposed the charges from the beginning.

"Gurgaon is now being called a garbage city because of the current sanitation. We have been managing our society on our own since the builder exited in 2013, with virtually no support from the MCG. There are around 350 households in our society, and we were clear from day one that we would not pay these charges when the MCG is not providing any services," Goswami said. "Earlier, the payment portal

allowed residents to pay property tax and garbage collection charges separately, so most residents chose not to pay the sanitation component. These charges are being imposed on us unnecessarily," he said. Residents also pointed to poor road-sweeping standards, one of the key services that MCG says is covered under the solid waste management charges.

"Even if these charges are meant for sweeping roads, the MCG is not doing its job properly

. Contractors often do not turn up regularly and, when they do, the quality of work is poor. So what is the purpose of paying these charges?" asked Lalit Suraj Bhola, a resident of Sector 9A.

The controversy is also likely to intensify as the civic body moves towards outsourcing door-to-door waste collection to private agencies

under five-year contracts. When asked whether residents would have to pay separate user charges for door-to-door waste collection once the agencies begin operations, Dahiya said a decision on that aspect would be taken later. MCG earned revenue of more than Rs 350 crore from property tax in the 2025-26 FY. For the 2026-27 FY, MCG has set a target of Rs 325 crore in income from property tax.

Bengal CM assures justice for RG Kar victim in Assembly, BJP MLA mother in tears

Bengal CM Suwendu Adhikari vowed justice for the RG Kar rape and murder victim in the Assembly. This made the victim's mother and BJP MLA, Ratna Debnath, break down, with a video showing another legislator seated beside her consoling her.

Kolkata. (Agency) West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Tuesday told the Assembly that justice would be delivered in the RG Kar hospital rape and murder case, and said the state government had a "zero tolerance" approach to crimes against women. His remarks came during the discussion on the Governor's Speech. The assurance left the victim's mother, BJP MLA Ratna Debnath, in tears as she sat in the House. Later, she told PTI that she remained hopeful of getting justice for her daughter. "RG Kar case will see justice...People of Bengal have voted so that Abhaya gets justice," Adhikari said in the Assembly. The RG Kar case involved a 31-year-old on-duty postgraduate trainee doctor, who was found raped and

murdered inside the hospital on August 9, 2024, when the Trinamool Congress was in power. "Abhaya" is the symbolic name widely used by protesters for the deceased doctor.

After hearing the Chief Minister's remarks, Debnath broke down and was consoled by another legislator. "I am hopeful that my daughter will get justice. I'm here (Assembly) not for power, but for justice for my daughter," she later told.

In the House, Adhikari said, "To ensure justice, three IPS officers have been suspended. Sandip Ghosh has been removed. We will clear everything." Dr Sandip Ghosh was the principal of the hospital when the incident took place. Former Kolkata police commissioner Vineet Goyal and former deputy

commissioners Indira Mukherjee and Abhishek Gupta were suspended for various reasons linked to the case. A civic volunteer of Kolkata Police, Sanjoy Roy,



was convicted as the main perpetrator and sentenced to life imprisonment. The CBI has started a reinvestigation into the case.

Adhikari also referred to several old and recent rape cases, including those in Rampurhat, Hanskhali, Kasba Law College, Kamduni and Dhupguri, and said the government had adopted a "zero tolerance" approach. "Tamanna's mother will also get justice... From the Namasudra family in Hanskhali to Kamduni and Kasba Law College there will be zero tolerance," he said.

He also referred to the death of 13-year-old Tamanna Khatun, daughter of a CPI(M) supporter, who was killed in Molandi village in Nadia's Kaliganj on June 23 last year after bombs were allegedly hurled from a Trinamool Congress victory rally taken out before the assembly bypoll results were officially declared.

Short news

AAP MLA Chaitar Vasava, wife, co-accused get 7-year jail term in 2023 assault case

Vadodara. (Agency) A court in Gujarat's Narmada district on Tuesday sentenced AAP MLA Chaitar Vasava, his wife, and seven others to seven years in jail in a 2023 case related to the alleged assault and extortion of forest officials.

The court's sentencing is a setback for the Aam Aadmi Party in Gujarat, where Chaitar has emerged as one of the party's most influential tribal leaders since its 2022 Assembly election breakthrough. Additional Sessions Judge A V Hirpara also imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on Chaitar.

Prosecutor Vandana Bhatt said the eight other accused, including Vasava's wife



Shakuntala, have also been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

"At present, all the accused have been ordered to be kept in judicial custody at the Rajpipla sub-jail. In addition, the accused have filed an application seeking transfer to a jail in another district, as their presence in Narmada could disturb law and order," Bhatt said. "One of the four convicted women is pregnant and another has a newborn child. Therefore, her lawyer has submitted an application requesting that the child be allowed to stay with its mother in jail," she added.

Bhatt also said the accused had previously been released on a one-year probation in the case. However, since they allegedly committed offences again, she said, "taking all circumstances into consideration, the court has imposed the present sentence".

'Which subject do you find toughest': Gujarat education minister reaches out to school dropouts, at their doorstep

Sabarkantha.(Agency) RIVABA JADEJA, Gujarat's Minister of State for Primary, Secondary and Adult Education, on Tuesday walked right up to the doorsteps of multiple students who dropped out from school in 2025-26 in Sabarkantha's tribal-dominated taluka of Poshina to convince them and their parents to go back to school on the first day of the state government's annual enrollment drive, Shala Praveshotsav and Kanya Kelavani.

The 24th edition of the enrollment drive is aiming at re-enrolling the 6.41 lakh dropout students who lost teaching days in the 2025-26 academic session. Teachers in every district have surveyed dropouts from each school and tracked them with the help of a UID (unique identification) number, contacted their parents and convinced them to join the education system again.

However, a few students remain who have decided not to get enrolled back in schools. On Tuesday, Rivaba Jadeja knocked on the doors of two such students - Sajalben Chandubhai Dhrangi who dropped out in Class X and Manishaben Rameshbhai Kateria, who dropped out in Class IX from the Government Secondary School, Ganava, in Poshina. The minister reached there unannounced, treading the hilly path despite the heat.

UP dishonour killing: 2 years after marriage, man beaten to death by wife's family

Vivek Kanaujia, an e-rickshaw driver, married Poonam against family wishes in 2024 and moved to Noida. After returning to their village with their infant son, tensions escalated when her relatives allegedly confronted them.

Hardoi. (Agency) A 28-year-old man was allegedly beaten to death by members of his wife's family in Uttar Pradesh's Hardoi district over a love marriage the family had opposed since 2024. The victim, identified as Vivek Kanaujia, had returned to his native village with his wife and infant son when the attack allegedly took place. Police have registered a murder case against seven accused and detained two for questioning.

The incident was reported from Badruddinpur village in Hardoi. According to police and family members, Vivek, an e-rickshaw driver, had married Poonam in May 2024 against the wishes of both families. Following the marriage, the couple had moved to Noida near Delhi and had been living there due to continued opposition from relatives.

Recently, Vivek and Poonam returned to the village along with their seven-month-old son. Soon after their return, tensions

resurfaced over the marriage. According to allegations made by the victim's family and wife, members of Poonam's maternal family reached the house on Monday



evening and confronted the couple. The argument allegedly escalated and turned violent when Poonam's father, uncle and brothers attacked Vivek with sticks and canes. During the assault, Poonam escaped and took shelter in a neighbour's house to save herself. Recalling the events, Poonam said that after the couple informed

their families about marrying of their own choice, they were told not to stay in the village. She said they had shifted to Noida but were harassed again after returning. "A fight broke out, and they beat us badly. My father, uncle and brother attacked us. I somehow reached my uncle's place and the police were informed," she said.

Police reached the spot after receiving information and took the injured Vivek to a medical college for treatment. However, doctors later declared him dead. Hardoi ASP (West) Martand Prakash Singh said Vivek had approached Behta Gokul police station on the previous evening alleging assault by his in-laws, following which a case had already been registered. "He died during treatment today. Two accused, Ramgopal and Shyam, have been taken into custody," the officer said. Based on a complaint filed by Vivek's mother, Vimla, police have booked seven named accused under serious charges including murder.

Daughter found alive in Canada after 13 yrs, NRI from Ludhiana cleared in a second murder charge

Ludhiana. (Agency) In an order earlier this month, the Punjab and Haryana High Court cleared a 68-year-old of the allegations of murdering his daughter, after police found that the latter was alive and living in Canada.

Last year, Balbir Singh was acquitted in the murder of his first wife Harpal Kaur, whose whereabouts remain unknown, with a local Ludhiana court stating the prosecution had failed to establish guilt.

A German citizen, Balbir was visiting India for the last rites of his father in January 2013 when his wife Harpal Kaur, then in her early 50s, and daughter Devinder Kaur went "missing" four days apart. While Balbir lived in Germany with his second wife, Harpal and Devinder stayed at his native village Bhattian in Ludhiana

district. While Devinder, 27, was last seen at the Ludhiana bus stand on January 25, 2013, Harpal "disappeared" on January 29. On January 31, Balbir flew back to



Germany. A fortnight later, Harpal's father Gurdial Singh and brother Atma Singh filed an FIR accusing Balbir, his brother Manjit Singh, nephew Sarabjit Singh and

an aide, Deepak Kumar, of "murdering" Harpal and dumping her "partially burnt" body in a canal. All except Kumar flew to Germany after the murder, the FIR said.

Gurdial also alleged that Harpal's relationship with Balbir had soured due to his second marriage, and that Devinder too had gone "missing". Gurdial mentioned Devinder's wedding in October 2012, and said Balbir had forcibly organised it and she had returned home within days as she was not happy with the marriage.

Incidentally, in its chargesheet, police said Kumar confessed that he and the others killed Harpal the same day as she went "missing". Kumar, who was acquitted during trial, is now dead. More than eight years later, in October 2021, Balbir came back from Germany, surrendered and went on trial for Harpal's alleged murder.

Riot drill in UP backfires as tear gas smoke affects public, sparks outrage

Several residents in the locality reported sudden eye irritation, coughing, and breathing discomfort after the smoke spread beyond the police premises.

Bijnor.(Agency) A riot control mock drill conducted at the Reserve Police Lines in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor, aimed at preparing security forces for the upcoming Muharram festival, has sparked criticism after tear gas smoke reportedly drifted into nearby markets and residential areas, causing discomfort to civilians.

The exercise, carried out under the supervision of senior police officials, was intended to simulate crowd control and emergency response scenarios. However, according to eyewitnesses, the use of tear gas during the drill led to unintended exposure of nearby shopkeepers, pedestrians, and children. Several locals reported sudden eye irritation, coughing,

and breathing discomfort after the smoke spread beyond the police premises. Some pedestrians were seen rubbing their eyes, while shopkeepers alleged that business activity was disrupted due to panic and visibility issues.

Residents claimed they were not informed in advance about the use of tear gas in the drill. They questioned why the exercise, meant for public safety preparation, ended up causing inconvenience to ordinary citizens in surrounding areas.

QUESTIONS RAISED OVER PUBLIC SAFETY DURING EXERCISE

The incident has triggered debate over whether proper precautions were

followed during the drill. Locals argued that adequate warnings should have been issued, and safety buffers maintained to



prevent exposure to civilians. Concerns were also raised about the vulnerability of elderly people, children, and individuals with respiratory

conditions such as asthma, who could have been severely affected by tear gas exposure.

BALANCING SECURITY PREPAREDNESS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

While authorities maintain that the drill was necessary for operational readiness, the incident has highlighted concerns over execution and public communication. Residents have called for stricter safeguards to ensure that future training exercises do not unintentionally impact civilian life.

The episode has reignited discussions on the need to balance security preparedness with public safety and transparency in policing practices.



safety measures.

PRAYAGRAJ

Prayagraj, one of Uttar Pradesh's biggest coaching destinations, has come under the scanner after inspections exposed serious concerns over safety arrangements at institutes operating in areas such as Katra, Allahpur, Salori, Govindpur and University Road. Following the Lucknow tragedy, several coaching centres were found either locked, shut, or operating with reduced activity. Some institutes reportedly closed their classes and offices, while others avoided discussions over fire safety preparedness.

A reality check of coaching centres in the city revealed that safety compliance remains a major concern. Even prominent institutes operating in Katra, including names such as Adda 247 and Azad IAS, were found lacking in basic fire preparedness measures. Sources said several centres did not have adequate fire-fighting equipment, proper water supply arrangements, or infrastructure required to tackle a fire emergency.

Modern wars need a new grammar

Lt Gen DS Hooda Retd

Rear Admiral Raja Menon's recent article in this newspaper ('Military jargon cripples serious thinking', June 4) is sharp and necessary. He warns that fashionable terms such as "multidomain operations", "hybrid", "grey zone" and "cognitive warfare" can become substitutes for clear thought. Much of what they describe, he argues, is not new. States have always used deception, propaganda, covert action, diplomacy and military force in combination. That criticism is important because new language can easily become a substitute for clear thinking. The strategic community must not mistake vocabulary for insight. However, the opposite mistake is equally dangerous. We cannot dismiss new concepts merely because some of the practices they describe are old.

In 2016, Oxford named "post-truth" as its word of the year. The word did not mean that truth had disappeared or that lying was new. It captured a condition in which objective facts had become less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. Social media algorithms were amplifying outrage over reason, while institutions that once filtered information had lost authority. A new word became useful not because human behaviour had changed, but because the information environment had.

War had faced such moments before. The advent of nuclear weapons created a new vocabulary. Terms like deterrence, mutually assured destruction, counterforce and counterstrike had to be built from scratch. Nobody called it jargon. It was an honest response to a new strategic condition.

A similar situation exists today. Some fundamentals endure. Clausewitz's concept of friction is real, and his trinity of people, commanders and governments remains a powerful analytical tool. Yet the structural conditions in which wars are fought have undergone a significant transformation. The old grammar of war rested on four pillars. First, sovereign states and their militaries were the principal actors. Second, physical force was the primary instrument of victory. Third, war and peace are distinct conditions. Fourth, battlefields are geographical spaces on a map. Each pillar has cracked.

The State remains central, but its relative monopoly over strategic effect has weakened. The actors shaping today's conflicts include third-party satellite operators, such as SpaceX, that are tilting the intelligence balance between two foreign adversaries. International digital platforms decide which version of events the world sees. Private firms like NSO Group sell surveillance tools once reserved for intelligence agencies, and ideological groups like WikiLeaks can achieve effects that once required State power. None of these appears in any order of battle. Kinetic force remains indispensable, but strategic disruption no longer always requires the traditional physical attack. The Stuxnet virus, which damaged Iran's nuclear centrifuges at Natanz, offered an early glimpse of this capability.

The Colonial Pipeline cyberattack in 2021 showed that a criminal ransomware group could massively disrupt fuel supplies across the American East Coast, producing consequences once associated with physical interdiction.

The line between war and peace has blurred. We now inhabit a condition of continuous coercive competition below the threshold of open armed conflict. There is daily probing of critical networks by foreign intelligence agencies. There is a ceaseless flood of divisive content on social media, keeping societies polarised. Attribution becomes difficult, and traditional models of deterrence break down. The battlefield has not ceased to be physical, but it has acquired a new geography. This geography is the algorithmic substrate comprising the platforms, data pipelines, networks and AI systems through which wars are now fought, narrated and judged. An attack launched from a server in one continent can paralyse the infrastructure of another.

Indian policy needs new batteries to reduce Chinese dependence

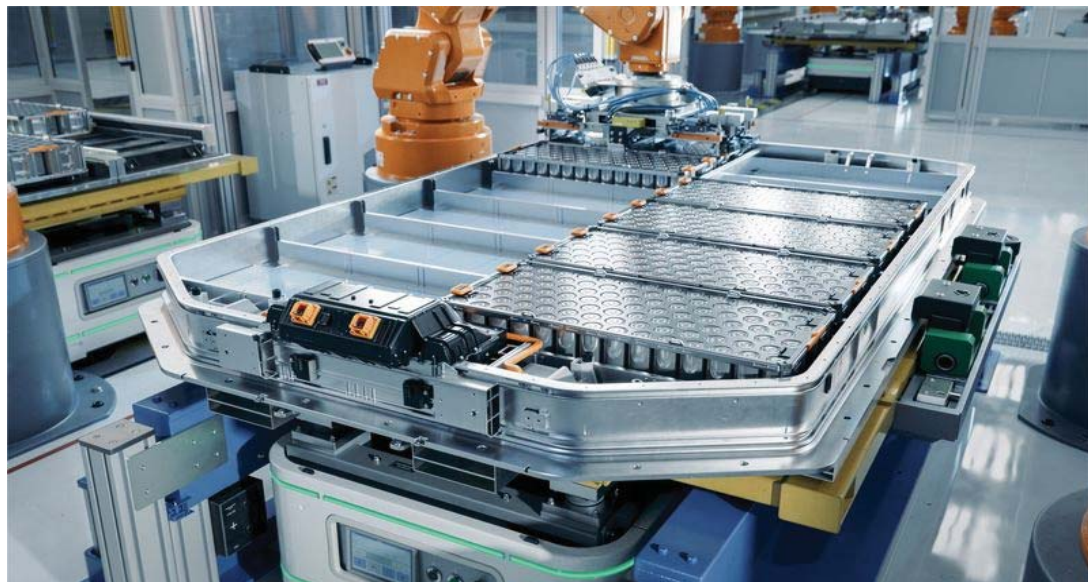
India's advanced manufacturing and industrial transformation requires a reframing that provides a level playing field

Julio Ribeiro

It was reported in mid-May that Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) was involved in discussions with Chinese battery company CATL to procure components for big battery systems for its upcoming facility in Gujarat. Announced in 2021, the facility seeks to indigenously manufacture lithium iron phosphate-based battery (LFP) chemicals, cells and packs, along with containerised energy storage solutions and recycling. LFP batteries are used in electric vehicles, solar and wind energy grids, telecommunications infrastructure and data centres for uninterrupted power services. However, over the last five years, RIL's ambitious plans have been pushed back due to lack of access to technological knowhow in producing lithium-ion battery cells. The Indian company's negotiations with CATL and Xiamen Hithium Energy Storage to acquire technology licensing were unsuccessful due to China's restrictions on technology transfer. Forced to scale down ambitions, RIL is shifting focus to packaging Chinese pre-made cells into big battery systems. As a parallel, this is similar to the smartphone production model – final assembly, testing and packaging, with components shipped from China.

However, Beijing's updated controls on the export of technology since July last year now extend to battery systems and components, thus derailing even these alternate plans by RIL. In fact, a closer look at India's battery storage ecosystem in the last five years reveals that all major domestic conglomerates share the same story of restricted access to components and technology licensing. China's dominance in global industrial supply chains extends to the clean and renewable energy industry. The Chinese Party-State has weaponised this dominance, expanding its repertoire by establishing new legal frameworks to shield its citizens and entities from foreign sanctions, safeguard its industrial supply chains, and govern overseas foreign direct investments.

Domestic weaknesses & incapacities
Structural asymmetry and dependence of the Indian industry on Chinese expertise, components and technology are characteristic features of India-China economic relations. In spite of the downturn in ties after the Galwan incident in 2020, these features have remained constant. However, the focus on China cannot hide India's own domestic economic weaknesses and lack of capacities that require structural reforms. Of particular interest is the role of private capital and big business. India's big capital has not pulled its weight in the country's industrial development and transformation. According to the Government of India's Economic Survey 2025-26, the business sector's contribution to



research & development (R&D) is 41 per cent of the total expenditure compared to 77 per cent in China and 75 per cent in the US. The lack of investments in R&D and the aversion to taking risks – in this case, in battery systems – leaves procurement by Indian companies to the mercy of both Chinese manufacturing firms and their government. Volatility in the international political economy and geopolitical uncertainties require Indian industry to take more risks and adopt long-term strategic thinking for survival. Yet, despite their strong balance sheets and the government's high capital expenditure facilitating infrastructure development, Indian corporates have lacked will and enthusiasm in sharing in the burden of development. The increasing diversification of Indian business portfolios into sectors other than manufacturing – retail/e-commerce, entertainment and hospitality, to name a few – puts profit maximisation at the forefront than long-term national interests in industrial manufacturing. The government's privileging of a few big industrial houses as national champions has further skewed India's industrial trajectory, leading to the phenomenon of precocious development – where growth relies heavily on skill-intensive services and a small number of massive, entrenched firms rather than broad-based labour-intensive manufacturing. Even the manufacturing ecosystem exhibits a bifurcated structure, dominated by low-productivity micro-enterprises and a handful of large firms, with an

underdeveloped layer of medium-sized enterprises, termed by economists as the 'missing middle'.

Chinese experience for reference

There are Indian startups in battery systems making efforts to produce cells from scratch and this includes producing purpose-built machinery for the process. However, to scale up, they need recognition, easier access to bank credit and regulatory as well as infrastructure support from the government. The opening of a new factory is celebrated as industrialisation in India, when the need is to view it as a layered, coordinated process. Rather than isolated factories and plants, advanced manufacturing economies are built around linkages between skilled workforces, local suppliers, universities as knowledge incubators and firms making long-term investments. China provides a ready reference for such holistic innovation under the Party-State's strategic vision. Successful Chinese companies today, like Geely and Chery, emerged through intense competition among many firms, local experimentation, and decentralised provincial initiatives. Mutually beneficial partnerships between entrepreneurial local governments and non-state manufacturers led to commercial success which was later nationally replicated by the Central government. India's advanced manufacturing and industrial transformation requires a reframing that is federal and provides a level playing field for all sizes of firms, not just the big players.

Faith at stake

Ram Mandir case must be probed transparently



religious sentiments. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has appealed for patience, saying that devotees who

waited 500 years for the temple need to wait another 15 days for the SIT to complete its investigation. Indeed, a transparent and time-bound inquiry is a must to get to the bottom of the sordid matter.

The demand for the public disclosure of records and an independent audit cannot be brushed aside. In matters involving public donations and religious devotion, accountability must not be compromised. The row also exposes a malaise afflicting major religious institutions across India. Temples that receive enormous donations require modern systems of auditing, inventory management, digital tracking and autonomous oversight. The Ram Mandir represents the collective aspirations of India's majority community. Precisely because of its immense symbolic importance, every allegation must be investigated impartially and every doubt addressed transparently. Protecting the sanctity of the temple ultimately means preserving the trust of the faithful themselves.

The politics of selective scrutiny

➤ The issue is not that the opposition is questioned, but that those who govern are questioned so little.

Manoj Jha

For much of the past decade, India has witnessed developments that would ordinarily provoke sustained public debate and media examination. Foreign policy challenges, economic distress, youth unemployment, agrarian crisis, widening inequalities, shrinking institutional autonomy and the growing distance between constitutional ideals and administrative practice are not minor concerns. They touch the everyday lives of millions, yet these issues have rarely generated the intensity of discussion that accompanies every disagreement within the opposition camp. One often gets the impression that a section of the media and political commentary has settled into an unusual role. Instead of holding power accountable, it has become preoccupied with explaining power, defending power and occasionally inventing narratives that soften the consequences of governmental failures.

It tells us about the changing standards through which democracy itself is evaluated. Over the last few years, one notices a curious inversion. The opposition, particularly the INDIA alliance, has often been subjected to greater scrutiny than the ruling establishment. The expectation of accountability seems to operate with extraordinary vigour when directed at those outside power and with remarkable restraint when directed at those who exercise it. The issue is not that the opposition is questioned, but that those who govern are questioned so little.

Democracy, no doubt, demands scrutiny. Political parties, especially those aspiring to govern, must answer difficult questions. They must explain their choices, justify their alliances, and demonstrate coherence in their political conduct. The problem arises when this scrutiny becomes selective. It then ceases to be a democratic instrument and begins to resemble a political habit.

This pattern became visible once again after the recent

political developments in West Bengal and the subsequent Upper House elections in two states. Almost immediately, a familiar chorus emerged. Is the INDIA alliance finished? Has the opposition lost direction? Was the alliance fundamentally flawed from the beginning? These questions are legitimate as political alliances are not sacred entities. They succeed, falter, evolve, and sometimes collapse. But what is remarkable is the disproportionate energy with which such questions are pursued. One could almost believe that the greatest crisis confronting Indian democracy today is the existence of disagreements within the opposition rather than the concentration of power at the very apex of the political system. The tendency to examine the opposition in isolation is itself a form of intellectual dishonesty. Political actors do not operate in a vacuum; their strengths and weaknesses are shaped by the institutional environment in which they operate. The reality is that contemporary Indian politics is characterised by inequalities that have few precedents in independent India's electoral history. The asymmetry is financial, institutional, organisational, and communicative. The resources available to the ruling party are so vast that opposition parties across regions, languages, and ideological traditions struggle to compete on even remotely equal terms. Yet resources alone do not explain the imbalance. There is a deeper and more troubling dimension to the present moment. Increasingly, opposition politics unfolds under the shadow of institutions that appear vulnerable to political influence. Investigative agencies are repeatedly accused of displaying selective enthusiasm. Cases move swiftly in some circumstances and mysteriously slow down in others. Political defections are frequently accompanied by dramatic changes in legal fortunes. Whether every such allegation is true is less important than the fact that the perception has become widespread.

Democracy rests on the appearance of fairness. Institutions derive legitimacy from public confidence. But once citizens suspect that power determines institutional behaviour, trust erodes. Fear is rarely acknowledged as a formal political instrument, even

INDIAN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL INCLUSIVE ALLIA

8 June, 2026



though democracies are not supposed to function through fear. Yet one cannot ignore the growing number of politicians, activists, journalists, academics, and civil society actors who speak of intimidation, surveillance, legal pressure, and administrative harassment. Dissent increasingly carries a cost, and the tragedy is that these developments are often normalised. What should provoke concern is treated as routine, and what should invite resistance is accepted as inevitable.

For many years, citizens looked towards the judiciary as a constitutional counterweight capable of preserving democratic equilibrium. The courts represented the possibility that power, however overwhelming, would ultimately encounter institutional restraint. The fact that increasing numbers of citizens now express anxiety about this expectation is itself indicative of the democratic

mood of the times. None of this means that the INDIA alliance should be absolved of responsibility. On the contrary, the opposition faces both real and serious challenges. Internal contradictions exist. Party-based ambitions may collide with collective objectives, and personal rivalries may sometimes overwhelm political priorities. Electoral understandings remain fragile in several states, and pretending that these problems do not exist would serve no purpose. Yet there is a difference between acknowledging weaknesses and exaggerating them into evidence of inevitable failure. Coalitions are inherently messy, particularly in a country as socially diverse as India. Alliances are rarely built upon perfect agreement. We have historical evidence that they emerge from negotiation, compromise, and the recognition of shared challenges.

The larger question is whether the opposition possesses the imagination to move beyond electoral calculations and rediscover political purpose. The future of democratic politics in India cannot depend exclusively upon parliamentary arithmetic. Numbers matter, but numbers follow politics; they do not create it. If the opposition seeks renewal, it must return to society itself. It must rediscover the language of public engagement, social movements, and democratic mobilisation. Perhaps the greatest mistake many political parties have made over the years has been assuming that elections alone constitute politics. Elections are important, but democracy does not begin and end with voting day or counting day. Between two elections lies the vast terrain of public life where citizens struggle with unemployment, inflation, insecure livelihoods, discrimination, inadequate healthcare, educational exclusion, and social vulnerability. It is here that a meaningful alternative must be constructed.

Must-have exfoliating tools for Your skin

Cleansing and exfoliation are integral steps to any basic skincare routine. They create a healthy foundation for products like moisturisers and serums and help in efficient absorption, allowing them to work effectively, and giving you that radiant to-die-for skin. Here are some skincare tools that

frequencies. The resulting flexing action works to loosen dirt and oil, removing deep-seated impurities from pores and priming skin to better absorb moisturisers, masques and serums. It is suitable for all skin types and cleanses the skin six times better than hands."

Manual exfoliating brush



you can use during cleansing/ exfoliation to complement your at-home skincare regime...

Cleansing brush

There are two types of cleansing brushes available in the market — manual and mechanical (battery-operated). Both provide a deep cleanse and are great tools to add another level of exfoliation to your cleansing routine.

Mechanical cleansing brush

Avni Amlani, international skincare professional says, "The most popular type of cleansing brushes use sonic (sound)

If you cannot go for a mechanical brush, use an ultra- gentle brush to gently exfoliate surface debris and impurities for effective cleansing. Aesthetician Ritu Singh Tanwar says, "Exfoliating brushes with a long handle are great for a back scrub." Adds consultant dermatologist and aesthetic physician, Dr Madhuri Agarwal, "Use a long-handled, natural bristled brush for dry brushing before bathing to reduce dead cells."

Sponge cloth

Damp sponge cloth is a gentle tool that can thoroughly remove makeup and debris without irritating your skin. Avni says,

"Select one that is made from biodegradable, bacteria-resistant fabric, can be easily rinsed clean and dries quickly. Sponge cloths can be used to remove cleansers, exfoliants and masques."

Buffing cloth

This hygienic, microbial exfoliating cloth can be used to buff and polish the body. Use this with a body wash to clean and exfoliate rough and dull skin in hard-to-reach areas.

Opt for one made from extra-durable nylon fiber that can easily be rinsed clean and dries quickly. This is a great tool to experience an exfoliating power cleanse at home.

Tried the floating eyeliner yet?



Tired of perfecting your winged eyeliner? Here's a trend that lets your eyeliner float! Called the floating eyeliner, this eye makeup trend is for those who want to try something different. This is perhaps an extension of negative space eyeliner. But what makes this one different is that you will just have to draw a line on your eyelid without connecting them to your inner or outer eye. Though, they might look strange at first glance, this trend has taken the social media by storm with makeup lovers trying it out! Here's how you do it...

Floating eyeliner is simple so you don't have to stress about drawing the perfect line. All you need is a good brush, the thickness of which depends on how you want it.

First draw the usual eyeliner on top of your eyelid. Then, use the brush to draw a line on your crease. Let it dry and you're set!

If you think it is too plain, use eye-shadow and then draw the line on your crease. This would add more glam to your eyes.

And if you like bold makeup, then simply draw the line on your crease without applying the eyeliner above your lid. If you think simple is way too boring, then you can try the floating eyeliner in a winged design, too. Take a look at the girl on the top right who has done her version of winged in the floating eyeliner look. And if you are not much of a winged eyeliner person? You can create a different pattern or your own design to make your eyes look fun and chic at the same time.



Things to keep in mind before a wax



Waxing is painful and that is why many women are reluctant to try it out. Post-waxing boils and eruptions are also something that can give you a difficult time.

Here are a few things to keep in mind to have a better waxing experience:

- Scrub before you wax. Use a mild exfoliator to scrub off the dead cells, loosen the skin and release hair trapped in the pores.
- Make sure there's full growth. Let the hair grow fully before waxing. Not only is it difficult to wax undergrown hair, it is also pointless, as the hair won't get uprooted as they are too small.
- Apply baby powder prior to getting waxed. It instantly softens the skin and makes the process easier. Other fragrant talcum powders don't work as well as baby powder does.
- Don't use lotions and ointments. Adding moisture and oil to your skin will make waxing really difficult. Try to keep your skin as dry as possible for a less painful experience.

5 amazing ways to get a dewy glowing skin

Essential oils, coconut oil, petroleum jelly are few natural examples that can help you achieve that beautiful dewy and glowing skin, says an expert. Aakriti Kochar, beauty and make-up expert of Oriflame India, shared a few tips on how to achieve a flawless skin with a few basic tips.

- When applying your foundation or concealer, add a drop of essential oil like lavender, rose, avocado to your foundation. This gives a healthy glowing look to your skin without looking artificial, at the same time essential oil also nourishes your skin without making it dry.

- Coconut oil solidifies when cooled and when semi solid, use it on your cheeks, brow bone and center of your face as natural highlighter with or without makeup. Coconut oil is known for its nourishing qualities other than the dewy look. It repairs your skin as well. Also, you can also mix your golden, vanilla or rose powdered highlighter with coconut oil to use as highlighter.
- Use petroleum jelly on your lips and eyes. You can use on your cheeks, nose, chin and forehead as well like essential oils, coconut oil. Adding petroleum

jelly to your eyes and lips will make it glossy, you can opt for putting an eye shadow or lip color on top as well for a dewy look.

- For dewy skin, you can use a damp sponge or a beauty blender to apply liquid foundation. This will give it a dewy finish without adding any other product.
- Use a gel or cream based illuminator for instant glow. Do not apply it on your complete face, rather just dab on some on your highlight areas like cheeks, brow bone, center of your forehead, bridge of your nose, center of your upper lips and chin.



Oxblood lips

spider lashes: The perfect autumn look!

Surrounded by yellow and orange leaves, the breeze of autumn brings a new chapter of fashion every year. After the Paris, Milan, New York and London fashion weeks, people are completely enticed by the graphic eyeliners, glossy black lips, metallic shades, clumpy lashes and much more.

Accor

ding to the make-up artist and stylist Naunidh Singh, the three makeup trends which will get most celebrated this fall would be 'Oxblood Lips,' 'Spider lashes' and 'The Shimmery Golds.'

Firstly, the Oxblood is the color for the fall 2016. The year 2012 gave us a new name for a burgundy tilted red, oxblood. Deep and wild, this name does justice to the shade. With so much variety available in the market, it's crucial to choose the oxblood shade which suits your skin-tone and the shape of your lips.

"The thumb rule is to choose purple based red for cooler undertones and for warmer undertones, like the Indian skin, brick colour or brown loaded reds are recommended. Similarly, thin lips should go for lipsticks with a shiny or glossy look making them voluptuous and for fuller lips, matt should be the go to choice every time," Singh said.

"Remember, when doing such dark shades on your face, redness, blemishes and dark circles should be covered using correctors and concealers otherwise they will also stand out once you colour your lips with a deep red," added the artist.

Secondly, a teenager like attempt at lashes, clumpy and messy mascara look, is now desired by professionals in the name of spider lashes. Unlike before, perfectly defined lashes are not the only technique. This look is more fun than sexy. Spider lashes pop the eyes making it a hit among the younger women. Even though it sounds easy, a lot of mascara and efforts go into getting

the look.

"I suggest that the prominence of your lashes should be matched with the prominence of the brows. The bolder brows will bring out the effect of the spider lashes phenomenally and people won't be able to figure out what's so sexy about your eyes. Use a deep brown to fill them and shape them using a brow brush. See the difference and thank us later," Singh said. Thirdly, shimmery golds are going to be every girl's rule book for parties this season. Just grab the sparkly gold from your palette and dress your eyes with it. To achieve this look just outline your lash line and water line with a black kohl. Add a little warm brown on your crease, outer corner and a little outside your water line, blend well to achieve the ultimate smokey look. This will convert your look from an alien style to more edgy and chic. Now simply paste your shimmery gold on your lids and the inner corner.

Even though runways in Paris and Milan are setting trends in the world, our very own Desi style isn't far behind. Keep your mind open to the new techniques introduced by Indian artists as they are more probable to match your skin tone and type. Look around and if anything catches your eye, try it. Don't be afraid!



Why folks are obsessing over oil-based cleansers



This one is going to break age-old notions that you may have heard all along of how 'oil clogs the pores', how it's 'bad for sensitive skin' and more. But if the latest hype is anything to go by, oil-based face cleansers are becoming the new skin obsession. A case in point is how more celebs are turning to coconut oil to remove make-up as it is anti-inflammatory and a skin softener. Here's more...

HOW IT WORKS

Derived from natural plant oils, these cleansers use oil instead of the usual soap, grain, gel or milk-based cleansers, to remove dirt from the skin's surface. The oil attaches itself onto surface impurities, dissolving hardened dirt and when rinsed away, it takes the grime and dirt with it. Thus, the concept is based on using 'good oils' to remove the ill-effects of bad oils. We are often warned about how scrubbing the skin dry and depleting it of natural moisture can be harmful, and these cleaners fit right in as a solution. With their hydrating properties, they do away with that excess rubbing. You also have to find what suits you best. For instance, tea tree or even peppermint oil has astringent properties and works wonders for oily and troubled skin.

WHICH ONE SUITS YOU?

Normal to dry skin: Rose, argan oil, orange
- Very dry skin: Olive oil, sweet almond
- Oily skin: Lemon oil, tea tree oil

HOW TO USE

Massage the oil into the skin
Allow it to stay on for about 20 seconds
Wipe it off with a warm cloth
Splash on a toner
Usually no moisturiser is needed after oil cleaning



The beauty spot

Experts believe that fitness and beauty are two sides of the same coin.

The traditional understanding of beauty revolved around the external factors. Many a time, it was reduced to a few plastic elements, even if it came at the cost of health. But today, the understanding of what is essentially beautiful has undergone a sea change. While the previous focus delved solely on looks rather than personality, today the approach is a lot more holistic. The concept has taken a different turn for good. The idea of beauty has changed from good looks to a fit body. People are not only focused on looking good, they are also keen on maintaining the right weight, staying fit being at peace with oneself. "As much as external grooming is important to look beautiful, a good exercise regimen helps to keep the mind and body fit. I think it is essential to give importance to the aspect of fitness and it goes hand-in-hand with the concept of beauty. Eating the right kind of food, working out to stay within your Body Mass Index (BMI) and sleeping enough should be everyone's priority. Once these three important aspects are taken care of, your body will eventually show positive changes and your skin will look radiant and beautiful," says Vikram Mohan, CEO of Bounce Style Lounge, Chennai.

Incorporating fitness in your daily activities also improves your mental health. "Dedicating an hour's time in the morning to do yoga or your regular exercise makes a huge difference. You spend one hour meditating and prioritising your body's needs. During this period, you are cut off from all your stress. You can choose an exercise that suits you. For me, it is a combination of yoga and exercising at the gym. People can opt for aerobics, swimming, jogging, running or any other form," says Asha Jhabakh, a fitness freak. Adopting a particular fitness style alone is not enough. Sticking to the regimen is equally important. "A regular work-out session helps in reducing the aging process as exercising daily will help in keeping the skin healthy and young. Daily exercise will help strengthen muscles, correct one's posture, improve flexibility and increase metabolism," says Madhan of Acme Fitness, Chennai.

Apart from exercising, experts recommend that people need to take extra care of their skin and hair to enhance one's looks. "For a healthy skin, it is important to drink a lot of water and keep oneself hydrated. Before using a particular product, one needs to understand their skin

type and choose products accordingly. It is advisable to avoid a lot of exposure to direct sunlight to reduce tanning. Use the right kind of sunscreen," suggests Archana P, the head of strategic marketing at Naturals. For healthy hair, Archana suggests the use of a shampoo and conditioner regularly. "Conditioning nourishes your hair and gives it the right bounce. One should avoid warm water as it leads to drying and damages the hair. I would also recommend regular oiling," Archana says.



BJP in, TMC out, Kolkata to join Delhi NCR, Mumbai in race for airports

The BJP-led government in West Bengal has announced plans for a greenfield airport near Kalyani, around 50 km north of Kolkata. Once operational, it will make Kolkata India's third metropolitan region with multiple commercial airports. Mamata Banerjee, as the CM, had resisted the Centre's plan for a second airport.

New Delhi.(Agency)
India's civil aviation map is undergoing a big transformation. After the National Capital Region (NCR) and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), the urban agglomeration in and around Kolkata is set to become the country's third metropolitan region to be served by multiple commercial airports. Mamata Banerjee, as the Chief Minister of West Bengal, had opposed the Centre's push for a second airport for the Kolkata Metropolitan Area. With the BJP in power now, Kolkata has joined the race for airports. The West Bengal government on Monday announced plans for a greenfield airport near Kalyani, around 50 km north of Kolkata, reviving a proposal that has been discussed for years, but never executed. The project, after its completion, would give the Kolkata Metropolitan Area a second airport alongside the existing Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport at Dum Dum. The announcement was made during the presentation of the West Bengal Budget 2026-27. Bengal's Finance Minister, Swapan Dasgupta, said the government would develop a greenfield airport

near Kalyani as part of efforts to improve connectivity and support economic growth in the region. The announcement comes after the previous government of



Mamata Banerjee opposed the Centre's push for a second Kolkata airport. She argued that acquiring 1,000 acres would require evicting residents. Now, with the BJP now

in power in West Bengal, the long-pending Kalyani proposal appears to have regained momentum. The proposal places Kolkata in a small club of Indian metropolitan regions that operate, or are set to operate, multiple airports. INDIA'S EMERGING MULTI-AIRPORT CITIES Delhi was India's first major multi-airport urban region. For decades, the National Capital Region (NCR) was served primarily by the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi. In 2019, it gained a second civilian airport when commercial flights began operating from the civil enclave at Hindon Air Force Station in Ghaziabad. Then, earlier this month, the NCR added its third civilian airport and second international gateway with the opening of the Noida International Airport at Jewar in Uttar Pradesh. After the NCR, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) became the second urban agglomeration to host multiple airports. Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, with just one functional runway, has long operated near capacity.

Delhi rape-murder: Accused cab driver had 5 cases, assaulted cop — but red flags ignored

New Delhi.(Agency)
Bashu Kumar (29), accused of kidnapping, raping and killing a 10-year-old in South Delhi's Mehrauli, had been driving cabs for ride-hailing apps in Delhi-NCR for 10 years — despite a long criminal history that included two attempt-to-murder cases. The cab was registered with two online aggregators and police believe he had not undergone the mandatory police verification. A senior officer said investigators are checking records with the ride-hailing firms. Police have also questioned the vehicle's owner about the verification of the accused. Officers said five cases were filed against Kumar in 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2022



in Bihar: two of attempt to murder and three of thrashing and quarrel. He also allegedly attacked a police officer in Bihar's Khagaria district, said police. **'No remorse'** Around 4 am on Monday, the child, who was sleeping with her family on a footpath near a Metro Station in South Delhi's Mehrauli, was allegedly abducted by Kumar, raped, strangled and later dumped near the Gurgaon-Faridabad border, said police. During questioning, the accused, who lives in Gurgaon, showed no remorse for the crime. "He is violent in nature and loses his temper quickly. He has shown no remorse for his actions and has repeatedly changed his statements. At present, he was staying in a rented accommodation with his brother in Gurgaon," a police source said.

WHO guidelines missed on 99% days for particulate pollution in Delhi: Study

New Delhi.(Agency)
With the monsoon expected to improve air quality conditions in the Capital in the upcoming weeks, a new analysis by think tank EnviroCatalysts shows that Delhi's pollution levels presented a contrasting trend during the first half of 2026. The study released on Tuesday analysed air quality data from January 1 to June 20 with the corresponding period in 2025. It found out that while nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and ground-level ozone concentrations decreased this year, fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) — particles capable of penetrating deep into lung tissue — remained persistently elevated, accompanied by increasingly intense winter pollution episodes. During peak regional pollution events in mid-January, Anand Vihar recorded a peak hourly PM_{2.5} concentration of 876 µg/m³, followed by RK Puram (792 µg/m³), Ashok Vihar (768 µg/m³) and Mundka (738 µg/m³). "…neighbourhoods bordered by high-density transit corridors and commercial construction became severe 'red zones'," the study noted. Red zones refer to pollution hotspots. In comparison, stations at the Cantonment area, IMD Lodhi Road and JNU consistently recorded relatively lower pollution levels. According to the study, average PM_{2.5} concentrations fell marginally by 2.2%, from 90 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³) in 2025 to 88 µg/m³ in 2026. The proportion of days exceeding the national PM_{2.5} standard of 60 µg/m³ also declined from 64.4% to 58.2%. However, severe pollution episodes continued during winter. The highest hourly PM_{2.5} concentration recorded this year reached 484 µg/m³ on January 18, exceeding last year's peak of 450 µg/m³.

Video: Men smash smartphones in Haryana village after ban to tackle cybercrimes

A viral video from Sukhpuri village in Haryana's Nuh district showed some men smashing smartphones with stones as a symbolic gesture of cutting addiction and pledge to stay from crimes.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Residents of a Haryana village smashed as many as 55 expensive phones as part of a community campaign to sever ties with crime and cut smartphone addiction. A video of the incident, showing some men destroying the phones in Sukhpuri village in Nuh district, has gone viral on social media. The young men in the video pledged to join the mainstream of society and lead their lives with integrity, hard work and respect for the law. Police said the move followed a panchayat decision to completely ban smartphones in the village. The governing body has now decided to switch to keypad phones, saying the goal is to keep youngsters away from cybercrime, reduce their dependence on smartphones, and motivate them

to embrace an honest life. According to officials, Nuh Superintendent of Police Dr Arpit Jain had recently launched a special awareness campaign encouraging individuals



involved in criminal activities to abandon crime and follow the law. Inspired by the campaign, the youth decided to take the symbolic step. During the programme, they vowed to cut all links with their past criminal associations and activities, setting an

example for others in the community. Deputy Superintendent of Police Abhishek Khatkar said the incident took place last week following the panchayat's decision. Asaf Ali, a villager from Sukhpuri, said, "It was a symbolic initiative. We cannot stop everyone, but if the young people stay away from mobile phones, they will stop getting involved in cybercrime." Khatkar and other police officials were present at the event. They praised the young men's decision, saying the police's objective is not only to take action against offenders but also to provide opportunities for reform and rehabilitation. They added that the police are ready to extend all possible support to those who wish to leave crime behind and adopt a normal, law-abiding life.

Hoodie in June heat, phone left at office: How cops cracked Pune fort murder

New Delhi.(Agency)
What was initially being seen as a tragic trekking accident at Pune's historic Lohagad Fort turned into a murder investigation after one unusual detail caught the attention of police — a man wearing a hoodie on a warm 33-degree day in June. A CCTV camera installed near the fort's ticket counter captured the hooded man, later identified as Chetan Chaudhary, following 26-year-old Pune businessman Ketan Agarwal and his 20-year-old fiancée, Siya Goyal, on June 18. **Just hours later, Ketan was dead.** The footage soon emerged as a crucial lead. The man's concealed face, unusual clothing and suspicious movements prompted investigators to take a closer look at what had

initially been registered as an accidental death. Their suspicions deepened when they discovered that Chetan had left his phone behind at



his workplace on the day of Ketan's death and had switched off its internet services. Piece by piece, investigators began reconstructing what they believe

happened that day. **THE MAN WEARING A HOODIE IN JUNE** A police officer involved in the investigation said the initial probe raised questions about the circumstances of Ketan's death. "While investigating the case, we stumbled upon certain circumstances surrounding the incident that raised suspicion and prompted a deeper probe. We checked the CCTV cameras installed at the ticket counter of the fort, where we spotted Ketan and Siya walking together," the officer said. While analysing the footage closely, investigators noticed another person following the couple.

'20 lakh set to benefit': Slum rehabilitation eligibility cut-off gets Delhi government nod

New Delhi.(Agency)
The Delhi government on Tuesday approved rehabilitation benefits for all eligible residents of settlements established till January 1, 2025 — a move expected to cover nearly 20 lakh people and facilitate permanent housing for about 4-5 lakh families living in JJ clusters across the Capital. "...Unprecedented efforts have been made across the country to provide the poor with dignified living conditions, better housing and essential amenities. In Delhi, the government is working swiftly to rehabilitate slum residents in line with the spirit of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas' and the commitment of 'Har Gharib Ko Pakka Ghar,'" Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said. "With the revision of the cut-off date, a much larger number of eligible families will now be



able to benefit from the scheme. The decision will open the door to permanent housing for around 4-5 lakh families, or nearly 20 lakh people, living in various JJ clusters across Delhi. Eligible families will be provided multi-storey flats equipped with all essential civic amenities," the CM added. The decision was taken at the 36th Board Meeting of the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), chaired by the CM, with Delhi's Urban Development Minister Ashish Sood, Chief Secretary Rajeev Verma and senior officials from the departments concerned in attendance. The decision is in line with the outcomes of a recent high-level review meeting chaired by Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah and the provisions of the Delhi Slum and JJ Cluster Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy 2026, said the CM's Office in a statement.

Who are Nihangs? Sikh saint-warriors associated with weapons, horses, and controversies

A handful of Nihang Sikhs captured a Rudrapravag gurdwara and engaged in a stand-off with the Uttarakhand administration. The blue-robed Nihangs are associated with war, weapons, horses, cannabis, and controversies. What is their history, and who controls them? It's all explained here.

New Delhi.(Agency)
Armed with spears, swords, and kirpans, around six Nihang Sikhs stormed a gurdwara in Uttarakhand's Rudraprayag district, vandalised parts of the premises, barricaded themselves on the top floor, and locked access for three days. The group demanded the release of four Nihangs who had been arrested after a dispute over parking in nearby Karnaprayag that allegedly escalated into violence, injuring several locals. The Nagrasu Gurdwara standoff, which began on Saturday (June 21), was finally resolved on Tuesday. The incident drew national attention to one of Sikhism's most distinctive communities — the Nihang Sikhs. For more than three centuries, Nihangs have occupied a

unique position within Sikhism as a warrior order founded during a period when the Sikh community faced repeated persecution and wars were thrust on it. Revered by many as the guardians of Khalsa martial traditions and viewed with fear by others because of their militant image, the Nihangs have long stood at the intersection of faith, military power, and political authority. The Nihangs stand out because of their blue dress, their dumalla turbans and weapons. The weapons of the Nihangs are not simply ceremonial objects like for other baptised Sikhs who carry a kirpan as part of the five Kakars. Traditional Sikh texts describe the Nihangs as

warrior-saints whose duty was to defend the faith, protect the vulnerable, and

command both reverence and controversy — it is necessary to look back at the history and traditions that shaped them. However, the weapons of the Nihangs signify their vow to defend the weak, protect religious freedom, and uphold justice. They aren't meant to attack the unarmed. The association of the Nihangs with cannabis has also come for criticism. While consumption of cannabis was done for military campaigns and to alleviate pain, Sikh scholars criticise the practice as incompatible with Rehat Maryada, which prohibits intoxicants.



remain prepared for battle at all times. To understand why Nihangs continue to carry arms — and why they continue to

Sensex jumps 600 points: Why is stock market rising after last session's selloff?

New Delhi.(Agency)

Stock markets staged a strong comeback on Wednesday, with the benchmark Sensex surging more than 650 points and the Nifty reclaiming the 23,950 mark, as investors returned to banking and IT stocks after the sharp selloff witnessed in the previous session. The S&P BSE Sensex jumped 665.79 points, or 0.87%, to 76,866.47, while the NSE Nifty50 rose 144.15 points, or 0.61%, to 23,968.25 at around 11:20 am. The rally comes a day after the Sensex plunged nearly 900 points amid concerns over slowing economic activity, weak monsoon progress and a selloff in global technology shares.

LOWER CRUDE PRICES BOOST SENTIMENT One of the biggest factors supporting the market was the continued decline in crude oil prices.

Brent crude slipped below \$77 per barrel, extending its recent decline as progress in US-Iran peace negotiations eased fears of supply disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz. For India, which imports the majority of its crude oil requirements, lower oil prices are a major positive. They help reduce inflationary pressures, improve the country's current account position and support corporate profitability. Market participants have increasingly viewed falling crude prices as a strong tailwind for the Indian economy and equity markets.

RBI GOVERNOR'S COMMENTS CHEER INVESTORS

Investor sentiment also received a boost after Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra indicated that it was premature to discuss any rate hikes in India. Malhotra told ET Now that the central bank does not yet see signs of inflation becoming broad-based, suggesting borrowing costs could remain supportive for growth.

Crude oil prices hover near four-month lows as supply concerns ease

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Global crude oil prices remained under pressure on Wednesday, with benchmarks hovering near four-month lows after easing geopolitical tensions in West Asia and progress in US-Iran peace talks reduced concerns over potential supply disruptions.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading over 1 per cent lower at near \$76 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) hovered around \$72 per barrel, a decrease of 1.5 per cent. Over the past month, both benchmarks have seen a sharp decline of more than 20 per cent after concerns about a prolonged disruption to oil supplies from the Strait of Hormuz eased. Market sentiment improved as signs emerged that oil tankers stranded in the Gulf since the onset of the Iran conflict were preparing to resume movement through the strategically important waterway. In addition, diplomatic efforts involving the US, Iran and regional stakeholders have also helped ease supply concerns.

The decline in crude prices is being viewed as a positive development for India, one of the world's largest oil-importing nations. "This excessive volatility is favourable to India, which is growing at a steady pace. The crash in Brent crude has removed the macro headwinds for India. The rupee has stabilised and FII selling appears to have tapered off. This is positive for the market," the experts said.

Brent crude continuing to hover near the \$76-per-barrel mark reflects easing geopolitical tensions and progress in US-Iran peace talks, which have helped alleviate concerns over global oil supplies, they added. Despite the recent decline, analysts cautioned that uncertainties surrounding the Strait of Hormuz remain. Any disruption to shipping activity through the route -- which handles a significant share of global oil trade -- could once again trigger volatility in energy markets.

The \$629 million BrahMos export deal: Which stocks can benefit; check details here

Kolkata.(Agency)

The \$629-million deal to export BrahMos missiles to Vietnam is going to take Indian defence exports past the \$4 billion mark, it has been reported. The missile deal is certainly one of the country's most high-profile achievements in this sector. The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile deal encompasses the supply, training and logistical support to Vietnam. It is supposed to act as a strategic deterrent in the South China Sea. The export is said to primarily focus on the naval version of the BrahMos. BrahMos Aerospace is an Indo-Russian defense corporation. It is a 50:5:49.5 joint venture between India's DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya. It has a subsidiary Brahmos Aerospace Thiruvananthapuram Limited based in Kerala. But how can stock market investors profit from it? BrahMos Aerospace is an unlisted company. Therefore, the only way one can eye gains from the deal is to tap stocks that form the critical supply chain of the missile. Let's have a look at this attractive proposition.

Bharat Dynamics

This public sector unit is the primary agency for manufacturing guided missile systems for the Indian Armed Forces. Its shares have rallied as reports of New Delhi negotiating with the UAE regarding BrahMos and the Akash-Teer air defense system surfaced. The company holds an order book exceeding Rs 26,000 crore and is also setting up new manufacturing plants.

Jindal Stainless

With this deal, the Indian government is targeting cumulative defense exports of 500 billion by 2030, with BrahMos playing a pivotal role in this target. One of the prominent companies that supplies parts to the missile is Jindal Stainless. It has a strategic division called 'Jindal Defence and Aerospace' and it is a qualified vendor for BrahMos Aerospace. It supplies low-alloy steel sheets for missile carriers. This division has earlier supplied materials for Chandrayaan and PSLV. Over the past five years, the sales and net profit of Jindal Stainless have grown at a CAGR of 25% and 103% respectively.

Did India's compliance push come at the cost of innovation?

A debate is intensifying over whether India's decade-long compliance push left it behind in AI and semiconductors. Economists say stronger institutions mattered, but research and strategic-tech investment now need greater focus.

MUMBAI.(Agency)

For much of the last decade, the government has focused on making India a cleaner, more transparent and more compliant economy. The rollout of GST, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, tighter compliance requirements and a broader push towards formalisation transformed the way businesses operated. The expectation was that stronger institutions, greater transparency and improvements in the ease of doing business would make India a more attractive destination for investment. Yet while India

was focused on formalisation, compliance and improving the investment climate, a different race was unfolding around the world, one that was increasingly attracting global investors. Countries such as the United States, Taiwan, China and South Korea were pouring resources into artificial intelligence, semiconductors, advanced manufacturing and deep technology. Taiwan has established itself as the nerve centre of the global chip industry. South Korea emerged as a major beneficiary of the AI and memory-chip boom. The United States attracted unprecedented investment into AI infrastructure and computing.

The consequences are increasingly visible in capital flows. Despite being the world's fastest-growing major economy, India has struggled to attract foreign capital at the pace many expected. Why that gap persists, despite strong economic growth, is a question we explored in detail in our earlier analysis, "India's economy is booming. So why are foreign investors looking

away?" Which brings us to a broader question: Has India's focus on compliance, formalisation and ease of doing business been matched by a similar push into



innovation, research and strategic technologies? The answer, according to economists, policymakers and the data, is at best complicated. The debate has gained traction among investors, economists and entrepreneurs, many of whom argue that while countries such as the United States,

Taiwan, South Korea and Vietnam built capabilities in AI, semiconductors and manufacturing, India concentrated on compliance, formalisation and regulatory reform. Some economists believe there is merit to at least part of that argument.

"Since 2014, India has prioritised balance-sheet repair, regulatory tightening and tax and corporate compliance to reduce execution risks and improve investor confidence," said Manoranjan Sharma, Chief Economist at Infomeries Ratings. But Sharma also points to what he sees as a missing piece. "Modest public R&D spending, modest patent approvals, and limited support for deep-tech and hardware ventures were headwinds. China, South Korea and several ASEAN economies invested heavily in applied research, AI infrastructure and semiconductor capacity," he said.

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.

AI, automation, data centres to power India's next growth phase, says Gautam Adani

Speaking at the Adani AGM, Chairman Gautam Adani said the group remained focused on nation-building despite facing challenges over the past year.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani on Tuesday said "India's future cannot wait" as he outlined the conglomerate's vision for the next decade, defended the group's resilience amid heightened scrutiny, and announced organisational changes aimed at speeding up execution and improving accountability. Speaking at the Adani AGM, Adani said the group remained focused on nation-building despite facing challenges over the past year. However, we did not bend. We did not pause. Because what we have always been defined by is not the noise that surrounds us, but the strength of our response." Adani told shareholders. Calling the Rs 25,000 crore



It was one of the largest rights issues in the history of India," he said.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND INTELLIGENCE TO DRIVE GROWTH

The billionaire industrialist said the theme of this year's address was "accelerating infrastructure, leveraging intelligence", arguing that the two had

Major relief for certain NPS subscribers; Avail PoP services at a flat fee -- Check which services are covered

GUWAHATI.(Agency)

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has provided relief to certain government entities under the National Pension System (NPS) by announcing that government entities wishing to avail Point of Presence (PoP) services may do so by paying a flat charge of Rs 500 per subscriber on an annual basis. In a circular dated June 16, 2026, PFRDA said, "A government entity desirous of getting PoP services may avail the services of a PoP at a flat charge of Rs 500 per subscriber on an annual basis."

Why PoP services was made available at flat charge? The PFRDA issued a circular on March 10, 2026, under which certain organisations were reclassified as "Government Entity" under NPS. The concerned government entity had been given full technical and operational capability to integrate directly with the CRA system for NPS subscriber onboarding, contribution remittance, uploading of Subscriber Contribution Files, grievance

management, processing of exits and withdrawal cases and other related functions, without the involvement of any PoP. Under the March 2026 circular, for an entity to be classified as a government entity, certain conditions were required to be met. The conditions are that all employees under the respective government entity are mandatorily covered under NPS from any cut-off date.

Next, the Assets Under Management under the Superannuation Fund, whether managed directly by the government entity or through any third party, will be fully transferred to NPS architecture within one year. The PFRDA said that several corporates have represented that they be allowed to continue availing PoP services because of various operational requirements and constraints. The PFRDA said that based on the representations received from the CPSEs, the matter was duly examined and it was decided that a government entity desirous of getting PoP services may avail the services of a PoP at a flat

charge of Rs 500 per subscriber on an annual basis.

What is the charge and how will it be paid?

The PFRDA said that a government entity can avail PoP services by paying a flat charge of Rs 500 per subscriber on a yearly basis. The PFRDA said that the aggregate charges can be paid by the organisation directly to the PoP where the organisation bears the charges based on an inter se arrangement. In cases where the individual subscriber has to bear the charges, such charges shall be payable through deduction of units from the individual pension account on a quarterly basis.

Which services are covered?

The PFRDA said that the flat charge of Rs 500 will cover all services like opening of an NPS account, upload of information and remittance of contribution, switching pension fund, scheme change, updation of nomination, partial withdrawal related transactions or other transactions to be performed by a PoP.

Malhotra said the RBI is keeping an eye on whether higher oil prices start affecting the prices of other goods and services across the economy. According to him, such broader inflationary pressure has not appeared so far.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is not thinking about raising interest rates at the moment, Governor Sanjay Malhotra has said. Speaking to ET Now, he said it was too early to discuss rate hikes and that the central bank would continue to closely monitor inflation and global developments before making any decision. His comments come at a time when investors and economists are watching how rising oil prices and global uncertainties could affect India's inflation outlook.

RBI WATCHING INFLATION

CLOSELY

Malhotra said the RBI is keeping an eye on whether higher oil prices start affecting the prices of other goods and services across the economy. According to him, such broader inflationary pressure has not appeared so far. He said the RBI had not yet observed signs of inflation spreading across the broader economy, indicating that the impact of higher oil prices had not become widespread. The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) had kept the benchmark interest rate unchanged at its policy meeting earlier this month. It also retained its policy stance as "neutral".

NO SIGNAL OF RATE HIKES YET

The RBI Governor made it clear that the central bank is not preparing markets for higher interest rates.

He said that if the RBI wanted to signal future rate increases, it would have changed its policy stance from neutral to restrictive. Since that has not happened, discussions about rate hikes are premature. Malhotra added that the MPC

would continue to assess economic conditions and take decisions on a meeting-



by-meeting basis rather than following a fixed path.

WEST ASIA DEVELOPMENTS OFFER SOME RELIEF

Speaking about global risks, Malhotra said currency movements and external uncertainties remain major concerns for policymakers. However, he noted that easing tensions in West Asia is a positive development. Lower geopolitical tensions could help reduce pressure on oil prices and financial markets, which in turn would support economic stability.

RBI SEES POSITIVE RESPONSE TO RUPEE-SUPPORT MEASURES

The Governor said the initial response to the RBI's recent measures aimed at supporting the Indian rupee has been encouraging. He expressed confidence that India would continue to receive healthy foreign inflows. According to him, movements in the foreign exchange market have remained orderly after the steps taken by the central bank to curb excessive speculation.

COMFORTABLE FOREX RESERVES POSITION

Malhotra also highlighted that India's foreign exchange reserves remain at comfortable levels. He said the RBI's reserve management strategy is based on three key principles — safety, liquidity and returns. The central bank believes the current reserve position provides adequate protection against external shocks. The Governor also spoke about gold holdings, saying they form an important part of the country's foreign exchange reserves and contribute to safety and liquidity when needed.

Short news

Actor Mammooty meets PM Modi with family after receiving Padma Bhushan**Thiruvananthapuram.(Agency)**

Thiruvananthapuram, June 24 (UNI) Malayalam cinema legend Mammooty met Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with his family shortly after being conferred the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian honour, during the second Civil Investiture Ceremony held in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The interaction between the veteran actor and the Prime Minister drew widespread attention, with both sharing warm messages on social media.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared photographs from the meeting and wrote, "Met the noted actor Mammooty and his family after the Padma ceremony earlier today." Responding to the meeting, Mammooty expressed his gratitude, saying, "Grateful for this memorable interaction with Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji alongside my family. A moment to cherish forever."

Mammooty attended the ceremony with his wife Sulfath, daughter Surumi and actor-son Dulquer Salmaan. Earlier in the day, President Droupadi Murmu presented him with the Padma Bhushan in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Indian cinema.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, union Home Minister Amit Shah and several other dignitaries were present at the ceremony.

Reacting to the prestigious honour, Mammooty said he was "deeply humbled and honoured" to receive the Padma Bhushan and conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India.

Haryana: Two arrested for attacking youth in Kaithal**Kaithal.(Agency)**

A team led by Sadar Police Station in-charge SI Kuldeep and CIA-1 in-charge SI Jaswant, along with ASI Jaipal of Kyodak Police Post, arrested two people while investigating the case of an alleged deadly attack on a youth due to a personal enmity. The arrested accused have been identified as Rawal alias Rahul, a resident of Belerkha village, and Shekhar, a resident of Kyodak.

SHO, Sadar Police Station, SI Kuldeep, stated that Sagar, a resident of Kyodak village, complained that he works as a sewerage bore operator in Sun City, Kaithal, and shares reels on Instagram. Shekhar harbored a grudge against him over his reels and issued death threats on social media.

On the evening of June 12, he and his friend Ajay alias Bulla were on their way to buy fuel on a motorcycle. As they approached an overbridge on the Kyodak main road, a car coming from the opposite direction struck their motorcycle.

After the collision, Sangam, Ankit, Rohan, Rocky and Shekhar, residents of Kyodak village, came out of the car with axes, sticks and rods. Then Arun, Rohit and 6-7 other boys, residents of Kyodak village, who came riding on 3 bikes, attacked them. The attackers attacked him with axes, sticks and iron rods and inflicted serious injuries.

Haryana: Auto mutation system, paperless registration 2.0 implemented in tehsils**Kaithal.(Agency)**

District Collector Aparajita today said that Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has launched the Auto Mutation System and Paperless Registration 2.0 from Chandigarh.

Revenue officers in the district should ensure that people get these facilities within the stipulated time. The government has taken a new initiative of automatic mutation upon registration, which will greatly benefit the general public. Similarly, many new provisions have been made in Paperless Registry 2.0. These new provisions have been added to the Paperless Registry Scheme launched by the Chief Minister last year after suggestions from the general public. Now, mutation has also been included in it along with registration.

After the inauguration of both the facilities by the Chief Minister, Aparajita was addressing the officers of the Revenue Department of the district.

Aparajita stated that the implementation of these two new initiatives will enhance the Revenue Department's efficiency, transparency, and accountability, and provide citizens with better, simpler, and faster services. All officers should ensure 100 per cent compliance with the prescribed SOPs.

The new system should be implemented with utmost seriousness, and any negligence will not be tolerated. She also urged that pending transfers be resolved as quickly as possible to avoid inconvenience to the public.

Mumbai records over 200 mm of rainfall in 8 hours after monsoon onset**Mumbai.(Agency)**

Mumbai woke up to flooded roads and severe traffic snarls Wednesday after an intense overnight spell of rain dumped more than 200 mm of rainfall across several parts of the city within eight hours, after the India Meteorological Department (IMD) officially announced the arrival of the Southwest Monsoon.

IMD, which issued a yellow alert and predicted heavy rain, issued a red nowcast warning for Mumbai and Palghar districts at 4 am, amid the possibility of intense spells, thunderstorms, and gusty winds. The weather bureau downgraded the district's nowcast to an orange alert at 7 am. It has also sounded a yellow alert for Mumbai until Thursday morning.

On Tuesday, light rain swept parts of Mumbai throughout the day, with the suburban station recording 8.9 mm and the Colaba coastal observatory recording 36 mm between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm. Light rain swept parts of

Mumbai throughout the day, with the suburban station recording 8.9 mm and the Colaba coastal observatory recording 36 mm between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm on Tuesday.

**Heavy rain**

After that, monsoon showers gathered pace with intense spells of downpour lashing Mumbai's southern and suburban divisions. Records from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's automatic weather stations showed that from 10 pm onward, the city

received more than 200 mm of rainfall over the next eight hours.

Between 10 pm Tuesday and 6 am Wednesday, Malvani in the western suburbs recorded 272 mm, followed by 248 mm in Powai, 244 mm in Charkop, 241 mm in Kandivali, 241 mm in Malad, 217 mm at Vihar Lake, 237 mm in Borivali, and 210 mm of rainfall in Dadar and Vikhroli. According to data, the western suburbs received an average of 190 mm of rainfall in eight hours, followed by 184 mm in the island city, and 154 mm in the eastern suburbs. Amid the heavy rain in Mumbai, a large tree fell on a car near Dadar TT.

Traffic snarls

Amid intense showers, low-lying areas such as Andheri Subway, Hindmata Junction, Dadar, Gandhi Market, and Malad Subway were flooded, bringing traffic to a standstill. Waterlogging was also reported in the King Circle junction, forcing pedestrians and vehicles to wade through accumulated water. To facilitate traffic movement, the civic administration deployed dewatering pumps

Honey-Trap, Suicide Attack Angles Emerge In Jaipur Woman's Jaish Links Probe**According to sources familiar with the investigation, Babita had allegedly been in contact with Pakistan-based handlers linked to the terror outfit for nearly two years.****Jaipur.(Agency)**

Fresh leads have emerged in the investigation into Babita Dhakad alias Khadija, the alleged Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) sleeper-cell operative arrested by the Rajasthan Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) in Jaipur.

During her seven-day custodial interrogation, investigators have uncovered several key leads, including suspected online radicalisation, attempts to recruit young women, and a possible honey-trap module targeting security personnel.

According to sources familiar with the investigation, Babita had allegedly been in contact with Pakistan-based handlers linked to the terror outfit for nearly two years.

Agencies suspect she was being groomed for a larger role within the network and are

examining digital evidence related to online training and radicalisation. Investigators are scrutinising her internet activity after



reportedly finding searches related to suicide attacks and extremist content. Her mobile phones and digital devices have been sent for forensic examination to establish the extent of her contacts and activities.

Preliminary findings suggest that Babita was allegedly trained to establish contact with Indian Army personnel through social media and attempt to lure them into honey-trap situations. Investigators are examining her social media interactions and communication records to determine whether such efforts progressed beyond the initial stages.

Agencies have also found indications that she was in touch with individuals across multiple states and may have been attempting to influence and recruit young women into radical networks.

Officials suspect social media platforms were being used to spread extremist narratives and identify potential recruits. Another key aspect under investigation is a suspected plan to route financial assistance through cryptocurrency channels.

Viral Video Of Chicken, Beer Party On Ganga Boat Lands 5 In Jail In Varanasi**Five people were arrested after a video allegedly showing them cooking chicken and consuming beer on a boat in the middle of the Ganga river in Varanasi went viral on social media, a police officer said on Tuesday.****VARANASI.(Agency)**

Five people were arrested after a video allegedly showing them cooking chicken and consuming beer on a boat in the middle of the Ganga river went viral on social media, police said. Dasasvamedh Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Atul Anjan Tripathi stated that following an investigation, the individuals were identified and sent to jail, and the boat used in the incident was seized.

Authorities identified the arrested individuals as Deepak Kumar, Ajay Sahni, Arun Kumar Sahni, Anurag Nishad, and Rahul Sahni, all aged between 25 and 32.

The video, which surfaced a few days ago, triggered widespread outrage both online and among local residents. Many social media users claimed the act hurt religious sentiments, given the sanctity associated with Varanasi and the

Ganga river. Several locals also expressed strong objections, calling the behaviour completely unacceptable.

The incident comes on the heels of a Varanasi Municipal Corporation



(VMC) decision two weeks ago to relocate all meat, fish, and poultry shops outside city limits before the commencement of the holy month of Sawan—a move that has drawn mixed reactions from residents, traders, and political leaders. VMC Public

Relations Officer Sandeep Srivastava said on Wednesday that there are around 350 to 400 meat, fish, and poultry shops operating within the city, all of which will be shifted to designated locations on the outskirts before Sawan begins.

Five sites have been identified for this purpose: Ramnagar, Sujabad, Ganeshpur, A w a l e s h p u r, and Shivpur. Srivastava noted that meat traders suffer significant financial losses every year during Sawan because shops within the city are usually forced to shut down.

Relocating them outside municipal limits will allow these businesses to continue operations and minimize disruptions to their livelihoods. Nevertheless, the decision continues to generate both support and criticism among local residents.

Kerala CM writes to Karnataka, TN, Puducherry CMs seeking joint action against interstate drug trafficking**Thiruvananthapuram.(Agency)**

Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan has written to the Chief Ministers of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, proposing a joint strategy to crack down on interstate drug trafficking by strengthening coordination among the neighbouring states as part of the state government's intensified anti-narcotics drive, Operation Toofan. In the letter, the Chief Minister said Kerala is stepping up Operation Toofan with intelligence-led enforcement measures aimed at eliminating the spread of narcotic drugs, dismantling trafficking syndicates, breaking their financial networks and confiscating assets acquired through illegal drug trade.

He stressed that the fight against organised drug trafficking cannot succeed without close cooperation between neighbouring states and union Territories.

Satheesan pointed out that drug trafficking networks operate across state borders, making coordinated and sustained action essential. He said the border regions shared by Kerala with Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, as well as major highways, tourist destinations, student communities and urban distribution hubs, are vulnerable to misuse by organised drug mafias. The Chief Minister noted that Kerala Police has arrested several interstate and international drug traffickers in recent operations. However, he said dismantling these organised criminal networks requires real-time intelligence sharing, coordinated planning and joint enforcement operations involving all neighbouring states.

Shigella: 15 new cases reported in Kerala: June tally reaches 165, six deaths recorded**Thiruvananthapuram.(Agency)**

Kerala reported 15 fresh cases of Shigella infection from five districts, taking the total number of infections reported in June to 165, while the death toll linked to the disease this month stands at six, according to the Health Department on Wednesday.

Of the 15 new cases, Kozhikode accounted for eight, followed by Malappuram (3), Wayanad (2), and Kannur and Kollam with one case each. Since the beginning of 2026, the state has confirmed 241 Shigella infections.

Kozhikode, Malappuram, and Wayanad continued to be the worst-affected districts in June. Outbreaks have been officially declared in Kozhikode (57 cases), Wayanad (22), Thrissur (12) and Alappuzha (3).

Other districts that have reported Shigella infections this month include Malappuram (24), Thiruvananthapuram (17), Kannur (11), Kollam (10), Idukki (3), Ernakulam (3) and Palakkad (3).

Meanwhile, in the state's ongoing Nipah surveillance, 11 people classified as low-risk contacts were discharged from observation after successfully completing the mandatory 21-day monitoring period without developing any symptoms.

Health officials said no additional contacts with the Nipah patient required hospitalisation. At present, four persons in the very high-risk category and 14 in the high-risk category remain under quarantine, while 75 low-risk contacts continue to be monitored.

The lone Nipah patient is continuing treatment on ventilator support at Kozhikode Medical College Hospital.

Bombay High Court upholds decision to restrain use of New Indian Express outside permitted territories**Mumbai.(Agency)**

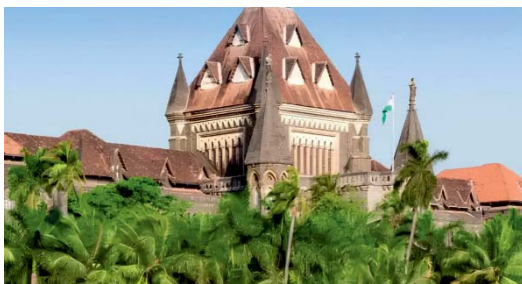
A two-judge division bench of the Bombay High Court last week upheld a decision of a single judge that restrained the Express Publications (Madurai) Pvt. Ltd (EPML) from using the title The New Indian Express outside the states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh and specified Union Territories. This prohibition emanates from a Memorandum of Settlement signed between EPML and The Indian Express (P) Limited in 1995 which became a decree of the Madras High Court.

The division bench of Justice Bharati H Dangre and Justice Manjusha A Deshpande held there was "no perversity or patent error" in the November 13, 2025 order of Justice Riyaz I Chagla. The bench of Justice Dangre and Justice Deshpande,

by a judgement pronounced on June 15, 2026, dismissed an interim application in the appeal filed by Express Publications (Madurai) Pvt. Ltd against the November 2025 decision by the bench of Justice Chagla, which had passed the order on an interim application in a commercial intellectual property rights suit by plaintiff The Indian Express (P) Ltd. Challenging the order, EPML filed an appeal before a two-judge bench.

Senior Advocate Darius Khambata, Advocates Arun Mohan, Abhinav Chandrachud and others instructed by Advocate Poorvi Kamani for The Indian Express (P) Ltd argued that it was the "absolute owner" of the registered titles and what was conferred on EPML was permitted use. The lawyers submitted

that the MoS which formed a part of the decree restricted the publication by EPML of the newspaper with the title New Indian Express to five states and specified UTs



along with other restrictions. They also said the defendant "shall not directly or indirectly use or adopt any of the said titles in any way whatsoever or any title similar

to or resembling thereto," except for the permitted use in the MoS.

They submitted that "though the parties had perfectly understood the terms of settlement," EPML attempted to hold an event in Mumbai called the New Indian Express-Mumbai Dialogues in September 2024, which was in breach of the settlement terms and the decree of the Madras High Court. Senior Advocate Zal Andhyarujina, for EPML, argued that the settlement between the parties nowhere restrained it from promoting its publication outside the five states referred to in the MoS. Andhyarujina claimed "acquiescence" by the plaintiff "when advertisements were issued by each of the parties in each other's publications".

NEWS BOX

Brave Panama's World Cup fight ends as Croatia stays alive with 1-0 win

New Delhi., (Agency)

A brave fight from Panama wasn't enough as Croatia secured a 1-0 win in Toronto to keep their World Cup knockout hopes alive on Tuesday, June 23. Ante Budimir's 54th-minute strike was the difference in a game that saw Panama give the 2018 finalists a run for their money.

CROATIA VS PANAMA HIGHLIGHTS

This was Panama's second loss in the tournament by a margin of one goal, meaning that they were eliminated from this year's World Cup. While Croatia did have most of the possession, it was Panama who tested them with 8 shots on goal with Cristian Martinez and others providing a lot of fast breaks during the contest.

PANAMA PUT CROATIA UNDER EARLY PRESSURE

The first half of this Group L fixture was similar to the England vs Ghana game when it comes to the chances created as they were coming at a premium for both teams. Croatia started off quickly with Luka Modric, who was playing his 200th international game, headed the ball over the goal. While Panama were



happy to play on the counter, the pace that they had was frightening especially with Martinez being target and always on the move for side. Slowly, Panama got into the contest with consistent attacks as Croatia appeared to be under pressure. In the 16th minute, Amir Murillo sent a fine pass into the six-yard box and Jose Fajardo just couldn't make it to convert it. But the confidence kept growing within the Panama ranks and Dominic Livakovic had to step in to save Croatia. Livakovic is a cult hero for his performance against Brazil in 2022 ad he saved Jose Luis Rodriguez's header. The Croatian boss Zlatko Dalic was frustrated and he made his players know about it. But they still remained under the pump with Pongracic struggling.

Croatia finally got a shot on target in stoppage time as Martin Baturina took aim from 25 yards, and his low strike was turned around the post by Panama goalkeeper Orlando Mosquera. As the first half whistle was blown, it was Panama who seemed to have al the momentum and was by far, the best team on the field.

All-round Ellyse Perry gets Australia ready for India tie with Pakistan hammering

New Delhi. (Agency)

Ellyse Perry delivered a match-winning all-round performance as Australia thrashed Pakistan by 113 runs to move a step closer to the semi-finals of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026. The dominant victory in Leeds leaves the tournament favourites on the brink of qualification from Group A ahead of their final league fixture against India. Australia posted a formidable 199/7 after being asked to bat, with Perry leading the charge through a superb knock of 71. Pakistan



never managed to recover during the chase as Australia's bowlers dismantled the innings, dismissing them for just 86. Perry also made her mark with the ball, claiming 2/9 in a brilliant spell that included two wickets in her opening over. The 113-run triumph became Australia's second-largest winning margin in Women's T20 World Cup history, narrowly behind England's 114-run victory over Pakistan in the previous edition. Australia have now won all four of their group matches and possess a healthy net run-rate heading into their blockbuster clash against India at Lord's.

PERRY ANCHORS AUSTRALIA

Australia's innings began on a disastrous note when Beth Mooney departed without scoring. Sadia Iqbal induced an outside edge, and Gull Feroza completed a stunning diving catch at slip to send the wicketkeeper back. The early blow only brought the experienced Perry to the crease sooner, and she immediately shifted the momentum. Consecutive boundaries through the off side and midwicket signalled Australia's attacking intent. Georgia Voll matched Perry's aggression as the pair quickly rebuilt the innings. Perry even scooped Diana Baig over the wicketkeeper, while the duo raced to a half-century partnership inside five overs.

FIFA World Cup: Munoz sends Colombia into knockouts with narrow win over DR Congo**Daniel Munoz's second-half goal finally broke DR Congo's resistance as Colombia secured a hard-fought 1-0 victory in Guadalajara on Tuesday to book a place in the knockout stage of the FIFA World Cup 2026.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Daniel Munoz spared Colombia's blushes with a second-half winner as the South Americans laboured to a 1-0 victory over DR Congo and secured their place in the FIFA World Cup Round of 32 in Guadalajara on Tuesday. After dominating possession and creating a string of chances, Colombia looked set for a frustrating night against a resilient DR Congo side inspired by goalkeeper Lionel Mpsasi. But Munoz eventually broke the deadlock in the 76th minute to send Nestor Lorenzo's men into the knockout rounds with a game to spare. The result moved Colombia to

six points from two Group K matches, ensuring qualification regardless of results elsewhere. Portugal, who thrashed Uzbekistan 5-0 earlier in the day, also advanced, setting up a showdown between the two sides for top spot in the group.

For DR Congo, the defeat was a cruel outcome after an organised and disciplined display. They remain on one point but still have a realistic chance of progressing if they beat Uzbekistan in their final group-stage match.

Colombia arrived in Guadalajara brimming with confidence after their 3-1 win over Uzbekistan in the opener and immediately imposed themselves on the contest. James Rodriguez orchestrated attacks from midfield, Luis Diaz provided a constant threat down the flank and Jhon Arias repeatedly found pockets of space in dangerous areas. Yet for all their control, Colombia found themselves repeatedly denied by Mpsasi.

The DR Congo goalkeeper produced a series of outstanding saves to keep the score level. He reacted sharply to keep out a James effort from inside the box, stood firm against Diaz

and then frustrated Arias as Colombia's pressure intensified. With every save, belief grew among the Congolese players while anxiety began to creep into Colombia's game. DR Congo rarely threatened for sustained periods but remained dangerous on the



counterattack. They defended compactly, closed passing lanes effectively and forced Colombia to search for openings that never seemed to arrive. As the match wore on, Colombia's dominance began to resemble wastefulness.

The breakthrough finally came when Juan Quintero unlocked the defence with a clever

World Cup: Neymar available but not certain to play vs Scotland, says Ancelotti**Neymar is available for Brazil's final Group C clash against Scotland at the FIFA World Cup, but coach Carlo Ancelotti remained tight-lipped on whether the forward will feature in Miami after recovering from a calf injury.**

New Delhi. (Agency)

Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti refused to reveal whether Neymar would feature against Scotland in their final Group C match at the FIFA World Cup, despite confirming the forward is available for selection after recovering from a calf injury. Neymar returned to Brazil's World Cup squad after nearly three years away from the national team but has yet to make an appearance in the tournament. The 34-year-old missed Brazil's opening two matches, a 1-1 draw against Morocco and a 3-0 win over Haiti, while continuing his recovery. Neymar is available," Ancelotti told reporters on Tuesday. "He worked this week and can be available for the match. We

are very happy that he is back because, obviously, with his quality, he can help the team." The Italian praised Neymar's attitude during rehabilitation and highlighted the influence he has continued to exert within the squad despite not playing. "I've really got to know him well. He has worked very



seriously, trying to recover as quickly as possible," Ancelotti said. "I'm very happy with him. Even if he doesn't play, he brings experience, he brings knowledge of the game, he helps the younger players. He is doing very well." When asked how many minutes Neymar could manage if selected, Ancelotti initially joked before offering a more measured assessment. "He can play 90

minutes -- walking," he said with a smile. "No, he's fine, he worked very well, he trained very well." Brazil can secure a place in the Round of 32 with victory over Scotland in Miami, and Ancelotti believes his side are improving with every outing. "Obviously we have a very big commitment, representing this shirt in the World Cup," he said. "I think the first match wasn't the best, the second match was better, and we are confident that the third match will be the best."

Ancelotti must also cope without Raphinha, who has been ruled out with a hamstring injury. However, the former Real Madrid manager declined to reveal who would replace the winger in the starting line-up. Scotland head into the contest with one win and one defeat and remain firmly in the hunt for a place in the knockout rounds, either through the top two positions or as one of the best third-placed teams. Ancelotti expects a stern examination from Steve Clarke's side. "Scotland has quality," he said. "They are fighters, they are very well organised."

"(Scott) McTominay and (John) McGinn are experienced players who are used to this kind of game."

I don't deserve it: Jude Bellingham's blunt take on MOTM award after Ghana draw

New Delhi. (Agency)

England midfielder Jude Bellingham offered an honest assessment after being named Man of the Match in his side's frustrating 0-0 draw against Ghana at the FIFA World Cup, insisting the award should have gone to one of the opposition players. England were handed a timely reality check in Boston on Monday as Ghana's disciplined defensive display halted Thomas Tuchel's side following their entertaining 4-2 win over Croatia in the opening Group L fixture. Ghana sat deep, remained compact and disrupted England's attacking rhythm throughout a contest that produced few clear-cut chances. The Three Lions struggled to find spaces against a resolute back line, with Harry Kane missing the game's best opportunity late on after blazing over from close range. Despite a relatively quiet outing, Bellingham was named the official Player of

the Match. The Real Madrid star, however, felt the honour was misplaced. "I didn't



deserve it, to be honest," Bellingham told FIFA's in-house media after the match. "It should have gone to one of their lads who defended so well. I had a couple of moments, it was hard to get into the game and I'm grateful for whoever voted, but it should've gone to one of their lads." The 22-year-old

also pointed to England's familiar pattern at major tournaments. "Like always, it's second-game fever with England. Win the first one, do well and draw the second. It's OK though, they played for a draw that would've seen them go through and fair play to them," he added. The result marked the fourth consecutive major tournament in which England have drawn their second group-stage match. Declan Rice echoed the sense of frustration but urged calm, insisting England remain well-placed to finish top of Group L. "You have to give credit to Ghana," Rice told the BBC. "They were 5-4-1 off the ball, very compact, tight spaces to play through. Maybe we can do a little bit more with the ball and create a bit more, but it's tough as they're good players and it was never going to be an easy game." The Arsenal midfielder stressed there was no reason for panic despite England surrendering their perfect record.

Jeremy Doku is set to rejoin Belgium after leaving camp for the birth of his son. His absence sparked debate, but teammates backed him before a crucial match against New Zealand.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Belgium forward Jeremy Doku is set to rejoin the national team at the FIFA World Cup after briefly leaving camp for the birth of his first child — a decision that unexpectedly drew criticism during the tournament. Doku had missed Belgium's goalless draw against Iran on Sunday after initially dealing with a respiratory illness before being cleared to



travel to London and be with his wife for the birth of their son, Praise. Ahead of Belgium's training session on Tuesday, defender Arthur Theate confirmed that Doku was expected back with the squad. "We are very happy to have him back, of course," Theate said. "He's an important player and an important part of

the group. I hope he can help us for the next game."

DOKU CRITICISED HEAVILY

Doku's brief absence became an unexpected talking point after French commentator France Pierron criticised the idea of leaving the World Cup for childbirth, saying on

pass into the path of Munoz. Timing his run perfectly, the defender burst into the penalty area and drilled a low effort towards the near post. A slight deflection helped the ball evade Mpsasi and nestle into the net, ending the goalkeeper's remarkable resistance.

The goal sparked relief more than celebration among the Colombian players, who knew they had been made to work far harder than expected. DR Congo attempted to mount a late response, but Colombia managed the closing stages comfortably and protected their slender advantage to secure back-to-back wins at the tournament. While Munoz delivered the decisive moment, much of the post-match discussion is likely to centre on Mpsasi's performance. The goalkeeper finished with eight saves and was the primary reason the contest remained alive for as long as it did.

The victory continues Colombia's impressive World Cup trend. They have now progressed beyond the group stage in each of their last three tournament appearances, having also reached the knockout rounds in 2014 and 2018.

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.

Jeremy Doku set to rejoin Belgium after childbirth trip drew World Cup row

television that fathers were "useless" during the process. The remarks triggered backlash, with French sports daily L'Equipe later apologising and distancing itself from the comments. Belgium captain Youri Tielemans publicly backed his teammate and congratulated him on becoming a father.

"I think having a child is the most beautiful thing in the world," Tielemans said. "Being there as a dad — for myself, I have three — it's memories you can't take back." On Tuesday, Doku also posted a message thanking supporters. "Shireen and Praise are doing great, and my heart is full of gratitude," Doku wrote on social media. "Welcoming my son into the world is one of the greatest blessings God has ever given me. Thank you to the team for the support, now it's time to get back to football and represent my country on the biggest stage." Belgium now turn their attention back to football. The Red Devils face New Zealand on Friday in Vancouver, a match that could decide whether they advance into the knockout rounds after drawing each of their opening two games.

Deepika Padukone

Spent Months Training Before Om Shanti Om, Says Farah Khan: 'See How SRK Is Working'

Farah Khan did not throw Deepika Padukone straight into the deep end when she signed her for Om Shanti Om. Nearly two decades after the film's release, the filmmaker has revealed the extensive preparation she arranged for the newcomer before cameras started rolling. The revelation came during a recent episode of Farah Khan's cooking vlog, where she visited actor Dia Mirza's home along with her cook, Dilip. The conversation turned to Bollywood debuts, with Dia recalling how little preparation she received before entering the industry.

Dia Mirza Recalls Her Own Debut Experience



Dia said, "People whom you say you launched, when I used to hear stories about the level of love, care and attention you gave them. Unke workshops karwaye, classes lagwaye, tameez seekhayi ki acting kya hoti hai, dance classes karwaaye (you made them attend workshops, enrolled them in classes, taught them proper

etiquette and what acting really is, and even arranged dance classes for them), diction coaching, I had nothing of that sort." She contrasted that experience with her own early days in films, revealing that she was pushed into working long hours without workshops, acting lessons or dance training.

Farah Khan On Deepika Padukone's Training Before Om Shanti Om

Farah Khan then shared details of the groundwork that went into preparing Deepika Padukone for her first Hindi film. According to the filmmaker, the future star spent months training before stepping in front of the camera. Farah said, "Deepika, how much care I took of you. Pehle toh maine usse 3-4 mahine Anupam Kher ki classes mein bheja, fir maine usse Kathak classes mein bheja (First, I sent her to Anupam Kher's acting classes for three to four months. After that, I enrolled her in Kathak classes). We did so many look tests."

The filmmaker said the preparation went beyond formal training. She also ensured Deepika spent time on set before shooting her scenes. Farah further revealed, "Uski shoot bhi I started 10 days later. I said 10 din toh aake (I started her shoot 10 days later as well. I told her, 'For the first 10 days, just come to the set') and just be there on set, see how Shah Rukh Khan is working, how Shreyas Talpade is working. Just come and sit there every day."



'My Cheerleader': Sharvari Reacts As Alia Bhatt Celebrates Main Vaapas Aaunga's Huge Growth At Box Office



Imtiaz Ali's latest directorial, Main Vaapas Aaunga, is emerging as a classic example of how strong audience appreciation can change a film's trajectory. Featuring Sharvari, Vedang Raina, Diljit Dosanjh, and Naseeruddin Shah in pivotal roles, the romantic drama had a modest start at the box office upon its release last week. However, positive reviews and enthusiastic reactions from viewers quickly gained momentum, helping the film witness remarkable growth in its second week. In fact, it recorded an impressive 130 per cent jump on its second Friday. Amid the film's successful run, Sharvari expressed her gratitude to audiences through a heartfelt Instagram post. Now, her Alpha co-star Alia Bhatt has also joined in to celebrate the film's achievement.

Sharvari recently treated fans to a photo dump featuring memorable moments from the past few days, along with behind-the-scenes glimpses from the sets of Main Vaapas Aaunga. Among the images was a screenshot of a report highlighting the film's remarkable box-office growth and the increasing demand for additional screenings across theatres. Her caption read, "I don't know if there's a greater feeling than seeing something you poured your heart into find a place in other people's hearts. The messages, the videos, the tears, the conversations, the love... I've been reading and watching all of it, often with tears in my own eyes."

She further wrote, "Every actor dreams of being a part of a story that stays with people long after they leave the theatre. Seeing so many of you connect with Main Vaapas Aaunga the way you have has been incredibly humbling. Thank you for showing up. Thank you for feeling every emotion with us. Thank you for carrying this film forward with your love. My heart is very, very full P.S. The polaroid in the last slide... iykyk." Alia shared Sharvari's post on her Instagram story and wrote, "The magic of the movies." A while ago, she reposted the story and replied, "My cheerleader."

Meanwhile, Alia and Sharvari are currently busy promoting their upcoming film, Alpha. Also starring Anil Kapoor and Bobby Deol, the film is set to hit theatres on July 3.

From Salman Khan To Rhea Chakraborty: Here's A Look At Actors Who Faced Jail Time



Several Bollywood celebrities including Salman Khan, Sanjay Dutt, Rhea Chakraborty and others have found themselves making headlines not just for their work on screen but also for their jail term. Over the years, stars have been to jail in cases that drew nationwide attention. Here's a look at Bollywood celebs who have spent time behind bars and the cases that put them in the spotlight.

Salman Khan: The actor was sentenced to five years in jail for killing two blackbucks in 1998 during the shooting of his film Hum Sath Sath Hain. He spent 18 days in jail in connection with the blackbuck killing case. The Tiger Zinda Hai actor was also sentenced to two years in jail in the 2002 hit-and-run case.

Sanjay Dutt: The actor was found guilty in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blast case. He was then sentenced to six years in jail but his sentence was reduced to five years by the Supreme Court in 2013. He was released in February 2016.

Rhea Chakraborty: The actress and girlfriend of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in 2020, in connection with a drugs-related investigation. She spent nearly a month in custody and was released in October 7, 2020, after the Bombay High Court granted her bail.

Rajpal Yadav: The comedian and actor served 10 days in Tihar Jail in 2013, and later three months in civil prison in 2018, for non-repayment of a Rs 5 crore business loan.

Fardeen Khan: He was detained by Mumbai Police in 2001 in a drug possession case and was released after three days. He was later granted immunity from prosecution by a Mumbai sessions court in 2012.

Shiney Ahuja: The actor was sentenced to seven years in prison by a special fast-track court in 2011 in a rape case involving his domestic help. He was later granted bail by the Bombay High Court.

Sooraj Pancholi: he was arrested in 2013 on charges of abetting actor Jiah Khan's suicide under Section 306 of the IPC. He was later granted bail on July 1, 2013.

'Yahan Sabka Ego...'

Akansha Ranjan

Says Priyanka Chopra Auditioned 'Dhakke Kha Ke' In Hollywood

Gram Chikitsalay proved to be a game-changer for Akansha Ranjan Kapoor. The series sees her playing a rural doctor, a role that required her to shun the sheen and marked a stark detour from the modern and urban image she's known for. Now, speaking exclusively to News18, she talks about bearing the brunt of her social media image, that led to losing out on parts. "I feel our casting is a bit lazy where everybody casts according to what they already know and have seen. Agar hot ladki chahiye toh hot ladki ko hi lenge. There's no innovation, no novelty there. That's why the same people are cast in the same kind of roles all the time. They also want to cast someone who's popular irrespective of whether they fit the part or not," she asserts.

"I wanted to really break the mould. The work that I was getting, I was really scratching and clawing to get them. During auditions, they would tell me that they want a more rooted girl. Then when I would look at the cast locked, I would feel that I could've also pulled this off. I feel the industry has lost all its hope on versatility!" Akansha adds. But auditions, according to her, isn't a completely democratic process of testing actors

like her either. Elaborating further, she remarks, "Even though they are auditioning 1000 actors, the makers know who they want. They already know their first, second and third options. So, most of the times, you're auditioning just for the sake of it. But I guess it's part of the game."

"I would also like to request them to message me if



my audition hasn't worked out and I haven't made the cut. It's basic decency," she continues. And while she has no qualms about auditioning, Akansha points out how most actors let their egos come in the way during screen tests and the like. And this is why, she looks up to Priyanka Chopra Jonas.



NEWS BOX

Kim Jong Un Unveils Plans For 10,000-Ton Warships, Nuclear Navy

MANIL. (Agency)

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country was "equipping the Navy with nuclear weapons," state media reported Wednesday, as he also unveiled plans to build 10,000-ton warships. The remarks came at the commissioning of the Choe Hyon -- one of two 5,000-ton class warships the nuclear-armed state launched last year -- in the port city of Nampo on Tuesday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported. "The programme of equipping the Navy with nuclear weapons is following its planned course unerringly," Kim reportedly told the ceremony. "This is a strategic course of crucial importance as it will make it possible to keep the nuclear force of our state ready for multifaceted and efficient operation," he said.

North Korea has previously said the Choe Hyon is equipped with the "most powerful weapons", and Kim has made multiple inspections of vessels in its class this year, including overseeing a cruise missile test from the Choe Hyon in April. "Following the Choe Hyon, we will soon commission destroyer Kang Kon for operations. After that we will launch 10,000-ton strategic warships one after another," Kim said in his speech. Under his scheme, the North should "build every year two surface ships, whose class is higher than the Choe Hyon, including 10,000-ton cruiser", he added. At a three-day party plenary meeting that wrapped up on Monday, Kim vowed to beef up defence capabilities, citing military modernisation efforts by South Korea and the United States as pushing the region "to the brink of a nuclear war".

Pyongyang has repeatedly declared itself an "irreversible" nuclear state since a 2019 summit between Kim and Trump in Hanoi collapsed over the scope of denuclearisation and sanctions relief. The North is under multiple sets of sanctions over its nuclear programme, and the two Koreas remain technically at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

Marco Rubio Rejects Iran Tolls On Hormuz As Deal Strains Multiply

World (Agency)

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Tuesday that Washington would not accept Iranian tolls or fees on the Strait of Hormuz, as disputes over the vital waterway, nuclear inspections, and missiles exposed early strains in negotiations to end the Middle East war. Washington and Tehran have signed a preliminary agreement to halt the conflict and concluded a first round of talks in Switzerland, opening a 60-day negotiation period on sanctions relief, Iran's nuclear programme and the future of Hormuz. An Iranian blockade early in the war choked maritime traffic through the strait, sending global oil prices surging, but crossings have begun rising since the deal was signed. Iran has repeatedly insisted it will retain control over the waterway. On Tuesday, Tehran and Oman said in a joint statement that they would study the administration of the trade route and the costs to be charged for services, while insisting on their sovereignty over the strait. Rubio, opening a regional tour in the United Arab Emirates, said Washington would oppose any such move.

"It's an international waterway. No country is allowed to charge tolls or fees on an international waterway," he said, adding that he believed "all the countries in this region would agree". Tehran's top negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, had earlier said Hormuz "will never return" to the pre-war status quo, despite both sides agreeing to set up communication lines to keep it open. The UN's maritime agency, meanwhile, said it would begin evacuating more than 11,000 sailors stranded by the blockade, working with Iran, Oman and the United States after securing "the necessary safety guarantees".

Alibaba Sues US For Being Linking It To Chinese Military

world.(Agency)

Alibaba, the Chinese technology and e-commerce giant, sued the US government on Tuesday over being placed on a list of businesses from China that the Department of Defense linked to that country's military.

The complaint was filed in the San Jose, California, federal court after the Pentagon expanded its blacklist of alleged "Chinese military companies" on June 8 to 188 entities, reflecting concern that China's military could tap that country's private sector for advancements. Alibaba was accused of being a "military-civil fusion contributor to the Chinese defense industrial base" through an affiliation with China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. The Pentagon also said Alibaba is indirectly affiliated with China's state asset regulator, known as SASAC. "The determinations have no basis in fact or law," Alibaba said. "Alibaba is governed by an independent board, none of whom has any military affiliation," it continued. "Its products and services are built for retail, logistics, and enterprise information technology — not weapons, defense, or intelligence." The lawsuit seeks Alibaba's removal from the list. A Pentagon spokesperson declined to comment, saying the agency does not discuss pending litigation.

BAIDU, BYD ALSO ADDED TO LIST

Under recent U.S. law, the Pentagon cannot contract with companies on the blacklist starting this month, and cannot buy their products or services via third parties beginning in 2027. Inclusion on the list does not mean formal sanctions. Other businesses joining the list this month include internet search company Baidu, automakers BYD and NIO, and biotechnology company WuXi AppTec. WuXi filed a lawsuit similar to Alibaba's on June 11. Alibaba called its designation arbitrary and capricious, and said it has already caused irreparable harm.

Senate backs resolution to end Trump's Iran war, delivering fresh rebuke to White House

World. (Agency)

The US Senate passed a largely symbolic resolution Tuesday calling for an end to President Donald Trump's war with Iran, delivering a fresh rebuke to the White House as it tries to negotiate a lasting settlement with Tehran. The House-passed measure, adopted by the Senate in a 50-48 vote, directs Trump to remove US forces from hostilities with Iran unless Congress explicitly authorizes military action. Because the measure is a "concurrent resolution," it does not go to Trump's desk for signature and carries disputed legal force. But its passage still puts both chambers of Congress on record against a conflict that began with US and Israeli strikes on Iran in late February, rattled global energy markets and opened a broader regional war involving Lebanon and Gulf states. The vote came as the Trump administration pursued a 60-day diplomatic push to turn a preliminary memorandum of understanding with Iran into a final agreement covering Tehran's nuclear program, sanctions relief and the Strait of Hormuz. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer forced the vote to put

Republicans on record after several Trump allies voiced alarm over both the war and the president's deal to end it. "Republicans can complain about Trump's war, his secrecy, and his disastrous deal with Iran all they want behind closed doors, but the only way to ensure this war ends once and for all is for Republicans to act," Schumer said in a floor speech ahead of the vote. The resolution earlier cleared the Republican-controlled House after four Republicans joined every Democrat in backing it, a rare break with Trump on matters of war and national security. Democrats say Trump violated the Constitution by launching military operations against Iran without congressional approval.

'Dangerous prospect'

Under the 1973 War Powers Act, presidents must obtain authorization from Congress within 60 days of introducing US forces into hostilities, though administrations of both parties have often contested how the law applies. The White House has argued that resolutions seeking to curb Trump's powers to wage war in Iran are unconstitutional and says the conflict had already ended under an



April ceasefire ordered by Trump. It has also warned that restricting the president's authority could weaken Washington's leverage as negotiators seek to lock in a final deal with Iran. Speaker Mike Johnson, a Trump ally, said before the House vote that limiting the commander-in-chief during negotiations was a "very dangerous prospect." But Democrats and some Republicans say the fighting continued well beyond the legal deadline and that Trump has repeatedly threatened renewed strikes. The vote also reflects growing unease in Congress over the cost of the war,

which disrupted trade routes, drove up energy prices and placed new strain on US voters already worried about inflation ahead of November's midterm elections. The administration's diplomacy with Tehran has moved quickly since Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed the preliminary agreement, which was meant to halt the wider regional conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

But major disputes remain.

Iran said Tuesday that the UN nuclear watchdog would not be allowed to inspect nuclear sites bombed by the United States and Israel last year, rejecting Vice President JD Vance's claim that Tehran had agreed to allow inspectors back in. Trump later insisted on social media that Iran had accepted "the highest level" of nuclear inspections. Meanwhile, Tehran's top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the Strait of Hormuz would "never return" to the days of free passage before the war, despite new communication lines aimed at keeping the vital shipping route open.

Police Find Drugs In Bag Labelled 'Definitely Not A Bag Full Of Drugs', 2 Arrested

World (Agency)

Two people have been arrested in the US state of Kentucky after a detective found suspected narcotics in a bag labelled, "definitely not a bag full of drugs". The two accused, identified as Tricia Croley, 51, and Damon Bennett, 48, of Williamsburg, were caught inside a vehicle parked in an employee area of a local business, at around 11:30 am local time on June 18 (Thursday).

Upon being questioned by the law enforcement, Croley handed the police officer a plastic bag containing contraband and a second bag containing tablets. She also allegedly provided authorities with an ID belonging to another individual. "Laurel Sheriff's Detective Justin Taylor arrested Tricia Croley, age 51, of Williamsburg, KY and Damon

Bennett, age 48, also of Williamsburg, KY. The arrest occurred after Detective Taylor observed an occupied vehicle parked in an employee area of a local



business in southern Laurel County," read a statement by the Sheriff's Office. While searching the vehicle, Taylor found a black bag with the ironic label. Inside the bag, he found a crystal-like substance, a bag of a green leafy

substance and several drug paraphernalia items. "Detective Taylor located another black bag with 'Definitely not a bag full of drugs' inside the vehicle. Located in the bag were several suspected narcotics," the Sheriff's Office said, adding that both were taken to Laurel County Corrections Center. A check of Croley's Social Security Number (SSN) provided her correct information. She is now facing several charges, including possession of a controlled substance, and Bennett, who had outstanding warrants, was charged with failure to appear. "The male occupant in the vehicle also had outstanding warrants and both individuals were placed under arrest and were transported to Laurel County Corrections Center without further incident," the statement added.

Women Drugged, Raped, Stabbed As France's Annual Music Night Turns Deadly



world.(Agency)

Multiple stabbings, sexual assaults, and robberies turned France's annual Fete de la Musique street festival into scenes of chaos and violence over the weekend, leading to the arrest of 243 people nationwide, according to a report by The Daily Mail. More than two million people attended the free, open-air music festival in Paris, which attracts thousands of British and Irish tourists each year. However, The Daily Mail details that the event descended into widespread disorder, with witnesses describing the streets as resembling an apocalypse. In Paris, the initial trouble

broke out after 11:00 PM in the Chatelet area near Notre Dame Cathedral, where overcrowding allowed groups of young men to start fights and punch bystanders. Police later used tear gas to manage crowds in the St Germain de Pres district. A total of 148 arrests were made in the capital alone, where gangs smashed car windows, vandalised vehicles, and attempted to break into shops. A major concern during the event was the targeting of women. Police received more than ten reports of women being injected with syringes containing unknown substances, a repeating trend from the previous year's

festival. A young woman was raped in a private residence in Paris after being injected, while a 15-year-old girl reported being raped in the suburb of Nogent-sur-Marne. In another suburb, Gagny, a 48-year-old man was arrested for the sexual assault of a 12-year-old girl. Violence spread to other parts of France as well. The Daily Mail reported that in the south-west, a 40-year-old man was stabbed in Toulouse and a 40-year-old woman was stabbed in nearby Colomiers. Both remain in a stable condition in hospital while detectives review CCTV footage to identify the attackers. The violence occurred despite the deployment of nearly 5,000 police officers and gendarmes, who had been instructed to avoid escalating tension and only intervene when absolutely necessary. It also follows recent riots in the city after Paris St Germain won the European Champions League Final, an event that resulted in two drownings. Reactions to the incidents have surfaced on social media, with many users sharing comparison videos showing how the festival looked in the 1990s versus now.



ready for multifaceted and efficient operation," he said. North Korea previously said the Choe Hyon is equipped with the "most powerful weapons", and Kim oversaw a cruise missile test from the vessel in April. "Following the Choe Hyon, we will soon commission destroyer Kang Kon for operations. After that we will launch 10,000-ton strategic warships one after another," Kim said according to a KCNA report released in English. He added the North aimed to "build every year two surface ships, whose class is higher than the Choe Hyon" including one 10,000-tonne cruiser. A 10,000-tonne class naval ship such as the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer of which the US Navy has dozens or South Korea's Sejong the Great-class at full load -- is typically 150-170 metres (about 492-557 feet) long, roughly the size of 1.5 football pitches, and weighs as much as several thousand cars. The South Korean navy runs more than 10 ships over 5,000 tonnes compared to the North's two. "The 10,000-tonne mark will carry symbolism for the North," said military studies professor Choi Gi-il at Sangji University. "A ship of that size will indicate Pyongyang's determination not to fall further behind the maritime power of Seoul," he told AFP. Pyongyang has repeatedly declared itself an "irreversible" nuclear state since a 2019 summit between Kim and US counterpart Donald Trump in Hanoi collapsed over the scope of denuclearisation and sanctions relief. North Korea remains technically at war with the South because the neighbours' 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

Iran's missile programme never part of US-Iran talks: Pakistan PM Sharif

Sharif said he would state "without fear of contradiction that Iran's ballistic missile program was not a subject of discussion between the US and Iran."

New York.(Agency)

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said Iran's ballistic missile programme was never discussed during negotiations between Tehran and Washington, stressing that the issue was not included in the recently signed Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Speaking at a joint press conference with visiting Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian after delegation-level talks in

Islamabad, Sharif dismissed suggestions that Iran's missile capabilities were part of the US-Iran dialogue. Responding to a question on Iran's nuclear and missile technology, Sharif said he would state "without fear of contradiction that Iran's ballistic missile program was not a subject of discussion between the US and Iran." "It was not on the table." "It is not possible that others have missiles and Iran does not have them," he said. Iran's missile programme remains a key concern for Israel, which came under heavy missile attacks during the recent conflict.

Last week, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei reiterated Tehran's position that its defence capabilities are non-negotiable. "Our missiles do not like at all to be talked about by anyone," Baqaei said in an interview with state television. "Iranian missiles are only for firing, not for negotiations. Iran's defence capability will not be discussed in

any way, in any process or with any party," he had said. The US and Iran signed the



Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding on Thursday, aimed at restoring peace in West Asia and advancing negotiations on regional security and other contentious issues. Sharif welcomed the agreement, saying "the peace deal between the US and Iran would bring a new era in the region." He thanked Iran for placing its trust in Pakistan and praised the Iranian people for

displaying unity and dignity throughout the crisis. Referring to the Islamabad MoU, Sharif said it was "a matter of great happiness that this war has come to an end, which could have engulfed the entire region and beyond".

The prime minister also commended the "sagacious" leadership of Pezeshkian and his team, describing Pakistan as an "honest and sincere mediator" in the US-Iran peace process. Referring to the US-Iran technical talks held in Switzerland, he added, "God-willing, this arrangement will usher in a new era of peace, stability and prosperity for this entire region." Sharif also announced that he would visit Iran next month to attend the funeral of assassinated Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. President Pezeshkian said Pakistan-Iran relations were rooted in trust and mutual respect, adding that recent developments had given fresh momentum to bilateral ties.