



Since early childhood, her family has nurtured her with strong religious and cultural values, which have played a vital role in shaping her remarkable abilities. On this proud occasion, numerous social organizations, eminent citizens, and well-wishers extended their heartfelt congratulations to Delisha and her family. The Vardhman Family also conveyed their best wishes, describing Delisha's achievement as a proud moment for the entire city of Beawar. They prayed that she continues to achieve greater milestones and brings further glory to her parents, family, society, Rajasthan, and the nation. Delisha's inspiring success is a shining example for children across the country. It proves that with strong values, regular practice, dedication, and unwavering family support, even a five-year-old child can achieve extraordinary success and make the nation proud.

## Short news

Tortured, forced into scams:  
25 Maharashtra men trapped  
in Myanmar cyber fraud den

Agartala. (Agency)

At least 25 men from Maharashtra, including eight from Nashik, have allegedly been trapped by an international cyber fraud network operating along the Thailand-Myanmar border after being lured abroad with fake job offers. Families of those trapped have appealed to the government for urgent intervention to secure their release.

One of the trapped men recently contacted his family and described the alleged torture and inhuman conditions inside the camp. The 30-year-old resident of Nashik, whose identity has been withheld, has reportedly been held captive since April 25.

His family told India Today TV that he had left India after a friend promised him a call centre job in Bangkok with a monthly salary of Rs 70,000. A Class 12 pass and a former merchant navy worker, he travelled to Thailand hoping for better employment opportunities.

Instead, he was allegedly taken by unidentified individuals to a remote location along the Thailand-Myanmar border and confined there. His captors have reportedly demanded Rs 8 lakh for his release.

During a WhatsApp call with his family, the man alleged that those held in the camp are forced to work for up to 18 hours a day.

"We are made to work for 18 hours every day. We are served food that even rats and cockroaches would not eat," he reportedly told his family. He further claimed that the recruits were given a month of training with only minimal payment.

Woman climbs tower with 3  
children in Gonda, demands  
reunion with former lover

Gonda. (Agency)

A dramatic rescue operation unfolded in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda district on Friday after a woman climbed a nearly 100-metre-high tower near Gonda railway station with her three children, demanding to be reunited with a man she claims abandoned her after promising to live with her.

The woman remained atop the tower for nearly 8-10 hours, triggering panic among authorities and prompting a large-scale rescue effort involving local police, the Railway Protection Force (RPF), district administration and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).

According to officials, the woman had previously filed a case against the man, Ram Ikbal, accusing him of rape on the pretext of marriage. She alleged that despite assurances from the police that he would be called for talks, authorities had failed to keep their promise.

The incident occurred at a microwave communication centre complex opposite Gonda railway station. The woman, accompanied by her three children, climbed the tower early in the morning and refused repeated requests from police officials to come down.

As temperatures rose during the day, she reportedly climbed even higher and sat on the structure with her children. Rescue personnel deployed safety nets and an inflatable cushion beneath the tower to prevent casualties in case of a fall. SDRF personnel also climbed the tower carrying water and oral rehydration solution (ORS) while negotiators remained in constant contact with the woman over the phone.

Justify action: High Court to  
police on detaining  
Bangladeshi woman, 3  
children

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Bombay High Court has sought an explanation from the Maharashtra government over the detention of a woman alleged to be a Bangladeshi national and her three minor children, directing that the children be released to their father and that none of the four be deported pending adjudication of the case. Hearing a habeas corpus petition filed by the woman's husband and mother-in-law, a division bench of Justices Sarang V. Kotwal and Ashish Chavan



said the state would have to justify its actions through a formal reply. "The State of Maharashtra will have to justify their action by filing their reply," the court said in its interim order. The bench also directed that the three children be handed over to their father and be allowed to meet their mother regularly. The petition was filed by Kanta Subarallu Subbayya and Mohammad Imran Rauf Khan, the mother-in-law and husband of Sabina, who, along with her three children, was detained by Tilak Nagar police in Mumbai on allegations of overstaying visa permissions.

Maharashtra school under fire over 'sword'  
performance to 'sar tan se juda' song

A viral video showed students at a Jalna school function allegedly performing to a controversial song while holding mock swords. Police have booked school office-bearers as the episode fuels political reactions and scrutiny of event oversight. BJP also demands the demolition of the school building.

Jalna. (Agency)

An alleged controversial performance at the annual function of Kids World English School in Partur, Jalna district in Maharashtra, has sparked outrage after a video of students allegedly dancing to the controversial song 'Sar Tan Se Juda' while carrying mock swords went viral on social media.

The programme, held as part of the school's annual gathering, drew widespread criticism after clips from the event circulated online. The video allegedly showed students performing to the song while holding imitation swords, prompting

demands for action from various quarters. Following the video's circulation, Partur police registered a case against the school's president, a teacher and the programme's anchor. An investigation has been launched to ascertain how the performance was approved and organised.

Police are examining the circumstances under which the song was played during the school event and whether any laws were violated. Officials have said the investigation is ongoing and further action will be taken based on the findings. The incident has triggered a political controversy, with



leaders from different parties reacting to the viral video and calling for strict action against those responsible.

BJP leader Kirit Somaiya visited the school along with police officials and demanded strict

action. Following an inspection of the school premises, Somaiya claimed that the institution did not have valid recognition from the education department. He alleged that, under the rules, the school

building would have to be demolished and sealed, with further legal action to follow.

During his interaction with reporters, Somaiya also targeted Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, claiming that the BJP-led Maharashtra government was taking strict action against those supporting terrorism as well as illegal Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals.

The matter has also raised questions over the monitoring of performances at school events and adherence to educational guidelines.

Akola officer caught taking Rs 10,000  
bribe, Rs 2.94 crore assets unearthed

An ACB search at the Jalgaon home of arrested officer Kiran Purushottam Chaudhary uncovered assets worth Rs 2.94 crore. The recovery has widened the bribery probe into a disproportionate assets investigation.

Akola. (Agency)

What began as a Rs 10,000 bribery case has snowballed into a major anti-corruption investigation after the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) unearthed assets worth nearly Rs 2.95 crore from the Jalgaon residence of a senior Maharashtra government officer arrested last month.

Kiran Purushottam Chaudhary, the then Additional District Registrar and Stamp Duty Officer (Class-I) in Akola, was caught allegedly accepting a Rs 10,000 bribe on June 26. Subsequent searches at his sealed house in Jalgaon's Vishnunagar area led to the recovery of cash, gold, property documents and other valuables worth Rs 2.94 crore, officials said.

The seizure was made during a joint operation by ACB teams from Nashik,

Akola and Jalgaon as part of an ongoing probe into the corruption case registered



against the officer.

Rs 1.53 CRORE CASH, GOLD AND PROPERTY PAPERS RECOVERED

According to the ACB, the total value of assets recovered from the house stood at Rs 2,94,64,847.

The haul included:

Cash: Rs 1,53,84,630

Gold jewellery and gold biscuits (422.1 grams): Valued at Rs 60,57,135

Silver jewellery (154.1 grams): Valued at Rs 31,416

Gold purchase receipts: Rs 11,52,745

Property-related documents: Rs 62,13,376

Valuable household items: Rs 6,25,545

Among the gold recovered were two gold biscuits weighing 160 grams each, along with other jewellery items. Investigators also seized property documents, gift deeds and purchase records linked to assets allegedly owned by Chaudhary and his family members.

Woman, lover sentenced to death by  
Bihar court for killing her two children

Jharkhandpur. (Agency)

A court in Bihar's Jharkhandpur, in a landmark verdict, has sentenced a woman and her lover to death for the murder of her two young children, ruling that the crime fell into the "rarest of rare" category.

The verdict, delivered by District and Additional Sessions Judge-II Abhishek Ranjan, is believed to be the first instance in the history of the Jharkhandpur civil court where capital punishment has been awarded. The court convicted Anita Devi

and her lover, Jai Prakash Mandal, for murdering four-year-old Prince Kumar and 18-



month-old Srishti Kumari, whom they allegedly considered obstacles to their relationship. Both convicts

were sentenced to death under Section 302 of the IPC and fined Rs 50,000 each. They were also awarded seven years of rigorous imprisonment under Section 201/34 for destroying evidence, along with a fine of Rs 10,000 each.

CHILDREN KILLED TO CLEAR PATH FOR RELATIONSHIP

According to the prosecution, Anita, wife of Pramod Kumar Saffi of Narhi village in Madhubani district's Andhrumath police station area, left home with her two

children on July 3, 2023. When she failed to return, her family began searching for them.

Investigators later alleged that Anita and Jai Prakash Mandal had conspired to eliminate the children because they viewed them as an obstacle to living together.

The prosecution said the duo took the children near the Balan River under the pretext of visiting Anita's maternal home, strangled them and threw their bodies into the river. While the body of Prince was recovered, Srishti was swept away by the river's strong currents and could not be found.



stabbed Nisha multiple times, inflicting fatal injuries. As the attack unfolded, the couple's children witnessed the incident and began screaming for help. One of the children was also injured while trying to intervene, police said. After the assault, the accused allegedly turned the knife on himself in an apparent suicide attempt.

Neighbours rushed to the house after hearing cries for help and found Nisha dead, while Pradeep was lying unconscious and covered in blood. They alerted the police and arranged for him to be taken to hospital.

Police teams and forensic experts reached the scene and launched an investigation. Nisha's body was sent for post-mortem examination.

Following news of her death, several of Nisha's videos and social media posts began circulating widely online. Confirming the incident, Circle Officer (Sardhana) Ashutosh Kumar said police received information around 6 a.m. about the killing.

Zero-tolerance for milk adulteration:  
Maharashtra issues statewide compliance order

Maharashtra has issued a statewide order tightening compliance across the dairy supply chain. The move follows repeated adulteration findings and warns violators of strict penalties.

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Maharashtra government has announced a sweeping crackdown on milk adulteration, synthetic milk production and violations of food safety norms, issuing a statewide compliance order that places the entire dairy supply chain under stricter regulatory scrutiny.

The order, issued by the state's Food and Drug Administration (FDA), mandates uniform compliance standards for all stakeholders in the milk distribution network, including milk collection centres, bulk milk coolers, chilling centres, dairies, processing units, transporters, distributors and retailers.

Authorities said the move comes amid repeated instances of adulteration and food safety violations detected during inspections across the state. FDA Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe said the government has adopted a zero-tolerance

policy towards milk adulteration and that strict monitoring will be carried out across the supply chain. "Maharashtra will not tolerate adulteration in milk and dairy products. Every stakeholder in the supply chain will be required to comply with food safety regulations, and violations will invite administrative, civil and criminal action," Mundhe said while announcing the new compliance framework. According to the FDA, recent inspections have uncovered a range of irregularities, including the sale of milk without licences, dilution of milk with water, violations of fat and solids-not-fat (SNF) standards, and the manufacture of synthetic milk using substances such as urea, detergents, caustic soda, starch, glucose, hydrogen peroxide and formalin. Officials also flagged cases involving the sale of fake or

reconstituted milk as fresh milk, excessive levels of antibiotic residues and aflatoxins, failure to maintain the cold chain, mixing old milk with fresh stock



and handling dairy products under unhygienic conditions.

KEY REQUIREMENTS UNDER NEW ORDER

Under the revised compliance guidelines: Raw milk can be sold only under prescribed conditions. Every container must be clearly marked

"Raw Milk".

Consumers must be informed that raw milk should be boiled before consumption.

Pasteurised milk can only be sold in sealed, labelled and tamper-evident packaging.

Only food-grade equipment can be used for storage, transport and handling.

Cold-chain maintenance and temperature records will be mandatory throughout the supply chain. Businesses must maintain traceability records from the source of milk to the final point of sale.

Employees handling food products must possess valid health certificates.

Compliance with Food Safety Management System (FSMS), Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) protocols and Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) training requirements will be closely monitored.

When violence is embedded in the geography

Kapil Sibal

The ethnic conflict in Manipur has reached a point from where there is no tangible way left than to turn back. For the sake of those exposed to mayhem, hopefully this will be the case. To still not think of reconciliation and healing even at this juncture would be a betrayal of an innate Freudian death wish in them all.

Till February 7, on the edge of completing three years on May 3, the conflict was largely confined to two ethnic groups, the Meiteis in the Imphal valley and the Kuki-Zo group of tribes, who are spread thin across all districts of the state and are concentrated in the lower hills surrounding the central Imphal valley.

After February 7, the Naga who live on the higher reaches of the mountains were dragged into the conflict in a big way, complicating the equation. It started with a brawl that took place at Litan, a foothill village along the Imphal-Ukhrul road, in which a Tangkhul Naga private tutor returning after taking an evening class ran into two drunk Kuki youth, who took offence at him pointing his torch at them and badly beat him up. Patch-up efforts fell through for reasons that differ, depending on which side is offering the explanation. By February 9, open confrontations exploded and spread. It also rekindled dangerous old frictions between the Kukis and the Zeliangrong Nagas in Kangpokpi and Tamenglong districts, vel document but also proof of citizenship. Things took a nightmarish turn after a May 13 ambush by unknown militants along a stretch of a road between two Kuki villages in Kangpokpi district—Kotlen and Kotzim—killing three respected Thadou pastors of the Thadou Baptist Association and injuring five others. The entourage was returning to Kangpokpi from Churachandpur, where the association had organised a peace conclave.

Kukis allege that the ambush was a handiwork of Naga militants. Nagas, however, counter this saying it was the outcome of factional fights among Kukis. They point out that a section of the Thadou population has been claiming they are not in the Kuki fold, thus causing frictions within. This section of the Thadou tribe has been reaching out for a settlement of the ethnic problem in the state.

Whatever the truth behind the ambush, it provoked tragic repercussions almost immediately. Kukis accosted 20 Naga villagers returning to their village Kongsakhul while they were passing through Kuki village Leilon Vaiphei. In reciprocation, Nagas took 28 Kukis hostage from the Taphou and Hengbung villages. On the third day after the kidnapping, both sides released 14 captives each, essentially women, children and older men, on humanitarian grounds. This left six Nagas still in Kuki custody and 14 Kukis in Naga custody.

A dangerous stalemate followed, but 27 days later, on June 9, responding to insistent appeals from all quarters, the Naga captors released the remaining 14 Kuki captives, bringing hope. The Kuki captors, however, did not reciprocate, prompting a combined operation by a team of central and state security forces at Leilon Vaiphei and nearby areas on June 10 that recovered the badly mutilated and decaying corpses of the six Naga captives. In all likelihood, intelligence reports were available that the Nagas had not eliminated their captives but the Kukis had. Which is why there was urgent pressure on the Nagas to release their captives, for if it became known that the six Nagas in Kuki custody had been killed, the lives of the 14 Kukis in Naga custody could also have been endangered. Much atrocity has happened on all sides during the three years of the conflict. But none can match the chillingly cold-blooded execution of the six Naga captives. No boastful angry claims of vengeance, no hateful swears, no bargains for concessions as hostages are normally used for. They were simply eliminated and made to disappear.

Gulf anchors India’s energy security

Diversification doesn’t trump the reality that the region is Delhi’s most proximate source of oil & gas

Navdeep Suri

A recent visit to Abu Dhabi provided an opportunity to meet senior Emirati officials and get their perspective on India-UAE ties amid the ongoing conflict and tensions in West Asia. Some of the conversations were focused on the unprecedented global energy shock unleashed by the twin blockades of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran and the United States. They also revealed the extent of support that India and the UAE had extended to each other over the past four months. The virtually complete closure of the Strait since February 28 was a worst-case scenario, and the UAE proved to be a steadfast partner. Friends at the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) spoke in hushed tones about midnight conversations between their CEO Dr Sultan Al Jaber and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri.

There were situations that needed urgent, multi-agency coordination, and both sides showed that they could go the extra mile. ADNOC took calculated risks by sending ships laden with much-needed LPG to India. The vessels would typically switch off their transponders, use jamming equipment to keep the Iranian drones at bay and coordinate with the US Navy and Omani maritime authorities using specialised communication equipment as they sailed through a channel that bugs the Omani side of the Strait. Other officials spoke of ship-to-ship transfers of LPG in the dark of the night at the Emirati port of Fujairah that lies beyond the Strait. Back in New Delhi, there were similar whispers of coordination by India’s security agencies with Iranian officials to secure the exit of a number of LPG tankers without paying any fee or toll. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in regular contact with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, even as External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval visited Abu Dhabi in April and stayed in touch with their counterparts. The PM’s decision to visit Abu Dhabi on May 15, while the Iran-US ceasefire still looked fragile, delivered a strong message of India’s support, and the Emiratis sent a couple of F-16s to ceremonially escort Air India One as it entered the UAE’s airspace. The visit was short but resulted in substantive agreements that would contribute to India’s energy security, including long-term supply of LPG, a



major expansion of India’s strategic petroleum reserves and establishment of new strategic gas reserves in partnership with ADNOC. The UAE’s decision to quit the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) amid the crisis was also an indication that it planned to raise its crude oil output from 3.2 million to almost 5 million barrels per day over the next year or so. It could end up supplying a larger share to the Indian market in the coming years. It wasn’t just a one-way street. India also stepped up by creating an air bridge to the UAE and a maritime corridor from Nhava Sheva to Fujairah and Khor Fakkan to ferry everything from basmati rice and wheat flour to fruits, vegetables, medicines and toiletries. Several Etihad and Emirates aircraft that were lying idle due to the war were pressed into service to provide additional cargo capacity. The Lulu Group alone organised 78 flights from India to ensure that their supermarkets remained well-stocked. The Indian government moved with exceptional speed to provide all clearances for the special flights; close coordination at senior levels on both sides ensured that the system functioned like clockwork.

However, India’s energy diplomacy wasn’t limited to the UAE. Hardeep Puri visited Qatar during the early days of the conflict to affirm India’s interest in remaining a long-

term buyer of Doha’s vast LNG stocks. With Venezuela back in the field as an exporter of its uniquely heavy crude, it was no coincidence that New Delhi hosted acting President Delcy Rodriguez on an official visit. The Ministry of External Affairs also sent instructions to key diplomatic missions, and global networks of India’s oil majors were pressed into service to reach out to other significant energy producers, including Algeria, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Mozambique in Africa, and Brazil, Argentina and Guyana in Latin America. A similar diplomatic agility was also on display in the way India pivoted from Russia to the US for its energy requirements. For over two years, Russia’s emergence as the largest supplier of crude oil to Indian refineries had become a major sticking point in India’s ties with the US. A combination of factors, including the spectre of US sanctions, the desire to finalise a trade agreement with Washington DC and the disappearance of discounts on Russian crude following the Hormuz crisis persuaded India to rapidly increase its purchase of American crude oil and gas. There aren’t many countries that could have swivelled so smoothly from east to west to keep the petrol pumps stocked and the kitchens running. In the long term, diversification of oil supplies is an essential hedge for a heavily import-dependent country like India. Diversification, however, doesn’t trump the geographical reality that the Gulf is India’s most proximate source of oil and gas. Iran, freshly liberated from the yoke of sanctions, has already reached out to Indian officials and refiners. The UAE, meanwhile, is doubling the capacity of its pipeline to Fujairah to reduce its dependence on the Strait; the Saudis are planning a similar expansion of their pipeline to Yanbu on the Red Sea. Among the other producers, Iraq is trying to revive its colonial-era pipelines to the Mediterranean, while Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar have fewer options to bypass the Strait of Hormuz. Having successfully weathered an unprecedented energy crisis, India should quickly take advantage of softer energy prices and plentiful supplies to rebuild its strategic petroleum reserves and start working on similar reserves for LNG. The next closure of Hormuz could be lurking around the corner!

Fatal borewells : Another child, another avoidable death

Prevention, not rescue, should be the true measure of governance

TWENTY years after the dramatic rescue of Prince from a borewell in Haryana captured the nation’s imagination, another four-year-old has lost his life in almost identical circumstances. Nirvair’s death in Ambala, despite a relentless 21-hour rescue operation involving the Army, the National Disaster Response Force and other agencies, is not merely an accident; it is a damning indictment of administrative apathy and human negligence. The rescue teams did everything they could. Battling rain, loose soil and a shaft over 200 feet deep, they displayed courage and professionalism. However, the far more important question is: why was an abandoned borewell left open in the first place? Prevention, not rescue, should be the true measure of governance.

This tragedy is indefensible because we have clear safety norms. The Supreme Court mandated over a decade ago that unused



borewells be securely sealed, fenced and reported to local authorities. District administrations are expected to maintain records and ensure compliance. Yet these directions remain honoured more in the breach than in practice. An open borewell is no different from an uncovered manhole or an exposed live wire. Leaving one unattended is an act of recklessness that endangers lives.

Those responsible — landowners, contractors and officials who fail to enforce the law — must face criminal liability, not merely administrative action. Every borewell tragedy follows a depressingly familiar script: frantic digging, anxious prayers, blanket media coverage and promises of strict action. Then the outrage fades until another child falls. India does not lack rescue expertise or legal safeguards; it lacks enforcement. Nirvair must not become another name in a growing list of forgotten victims. The only fitting tribute is to ensure that no abandoned borewell is left open again.

India-Pakistan, Track 2 and RSS

Sending an RSS member to a Track 2/1.5 meeting in a third country is not people-to-people contact

Nirupama Subramanian

In recent weeks, media has focussed its attention on “Track 2” meetings that have taken place between groups of individuals from India and Pakistan over the last year. This is new, as such meetings have been held at the rate of two or three annually since 2007, perhaps even earlier. In the years that formal press releases were issued at the end of these sessions, naming the participants and listing suggestions to the two governments, getting them published was a challenge. The newsroom verdict then was, who are these “Track 2 types” anyway, and why are they pretending they can change anything?

The rush of interest in these non-official meetings is thus intriguing. Perhaps it is due to Pakistan’s new moment under the geopolitical spotlight, and a heightened awareness about what this implies for India. The apparent good ties between Field Marshal Asim Munir, the de facto ruler of Pakistan, and US President Donald Trump have certainly injected more variables in the fraught India-Pakistan relationship. Considering that the reported “Track 2” meeting in Colombo was the 10th edition of the annual “IISS-NESA Track 1.5 South Asia Security Dialogue”, that previously met last July, just two months after Operation Sindoor, the sudden public discovery of this format may owe to some quarters wanting to spread the word that India and Pakistan have not lost all contact.

Coming at the same time as pronouncements by top RSS leaders Mohan Bhagwat, Dattatreya Hosabale, and Sunil Ambekar for “people to people” dialogue between India and Pakistan, questions if all this is linked are not out of place. Especially as Hosabale, the first from his organisation to declare India should not shut its doors to Pakistan, made the remark soon after a visit to the US, where he and Ram Madhav, a national executive member of the RSS, had been invited to speak at a conservative

think tank in Washington DC. Some definitions are in order. The Western definition of Track 2 is a bilateral or multilateral meeting of “influential” non-official individuals. Track 1 is official diplomacy. Track 1.5 meetings have senior officials in the mix with non-official participants. In India, however, Track 2/1.5 tends to get mixed up often with “secret” or “backchannel” diplomacy. The latter is an ultra-secret, super-official track, usually a bilateral one, in which the interlocutors are ideally just two, one from each side, empowered by the



senior most leaders of their respective countries. India and Pakistan have had several such backchannels, including in the last decade. Some of the confusion arises because organisations that host the Track 2 or 1.5 insist on keeping the names of participants and the agenda hush-hush. Given the backlash to the reported meeting in Colombo, they cannot be blamed. Large swathes of the country are under the influence of a cocktail of hyper-nationalist politics, “destroy Pakistan”-themed Bollywood flicks and hate speech. Thus it is no surprise that any hint of Indians meeting Pakistanis in a setting other than through the crosshairs of a gun at the LoC is enough to unleash an

“anti-national” tirade against those individuals. These Track 2/1.5 engagements are neither a substitute for official diplomacy, nor do they qualify to be called people-to-people engagement. The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) casts its dialogues as a “private” exercise held on an “invitation-only” basis.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri may be right that these meetings count for nothing. At the same time, it is also true that the government is aware that these meetings take place, and does not prevent them. Organisations that enable such engagement are no lightweight NGOs. The London-based IISS, for instance, is considerably funded by the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, international defence corporates and American foundations. It has hosted NSA Ajit Doval as a guest speaker, and keeps in close touch with the Indian High Commission in London. It is the main organiser of the Shangri La security dialogue where India is represented by officials. Some participants in Track 2/1.5 meetings, especially politicians and retired officials, are wont to keep their government informed that they are attending such a meeting, and even seek permission to attend. And most participants arrive at the table to repeat official positions, treating it as an exercise in “listening to each other”. Track 2 or 1.5 meetings that feel truly empowered to present new ideas are rare, and take place only when there is official engagement between the sides, and such non-official meetings are used as sounding boards for proposals already under discussion or to be discussed at the official level. Likewise, people-to-people engagement cannot happen in a vacuum. It flows from decisions taken during official engagement. Thanks to social media, individuals do not yet need government permission to engage with friends across the border, and doing this has its own

subversive charms in these times. As policy though, it needs full government backing. So, when Hosabale says there should be “people to people engagement, visas must be given and trade and commerce should take place to ensure some channels of communication remain open” with Pakistan, he must know that all this is the stuff of Track 1, aspects of a bilateral relationship to be agreed upon by officials. Sending an RSS member to a Track 2/1.5 meeting in a third country is not people-to-people contact. From the 2000s until about 2015, people from both sides visited each other, cultural and sporting exchanges took place, buses and trains took passengers from Amritsar to Lahore and the other way, and there was even a robust “Aman ki Asha” project, sponsored by an Indian and a Pakistani media house. All because the two governments were engaged in what was called a “Composite Dialogue” in which “people-to-people” was a separate topic. Even then, it all depended on officials deciding who or what was kosher. Against the tide, a constituency for peace that came up at that time in both countries has continued to exist. A statement by over a 100 prominent personalities in both countries, including two former Jammu & Kashmir chief ministers, Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, RJD parliamentarian Manoj Jha, and former TMC minister Humayun Kabir on the Indian side, addressed to the two Prime Ministers “to take meaningful and sustained steps” towards restoring peace in the interests of the welfare and aspirations of the people of both countries, speaks to this constituency. It is not clear from the statements of the RSS functionaries if they share this vision. Bhagwat’s own explanation -- of defence, as one report put it -- of Hosabale’s remarks cast them as part of the RSS’s long-standing organisational position of “Akhand Bharat”. That is hardly a credible basis for cross-border engagement with any neighbouring country, let alone Pakistan.



# Guidelines for getting pearly white Teeth Naturally

You can use strawberries, banana peel or even coconut oil to get sparkling white teeth, but try these options only after proper research, suggests an expert.

Uchenna Okoye, clinical director at London Smiling Dental Group, doles out guidelines, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

**- Strawberries**  
**Claim:** Mash up a ripe strawberry, dip your toothbrush in it and brush carefully over teeth. Within two weeks, your teeth will be whiter.  
**Dentist's Verdict:** True. Strawberries contain citric acid, which can weaken the surface hardness of your teeth. But it also contains the more gentle malic acid, and the riper the strawberry becomes, the higher the concentration of malic acid compared to the more harmful citric acid. So choose a really ripe strawberry, rub it on your teeth and just like exfoliating the skin, it does remove superficial debris. The malic acid won't actually break down the stain molecules, but the surface clean gives your

teeth a whiter appearance. A gentle and effective natural whitener.

**- Turmeric powder**  
**Claim:** Mix half a teaspoon of dried turmeric powder with a few drops of water and stir to create a thick paste. Dip your toothbrush in (it will be stained yellow) and clean teeth. The usual cleaning time of two to three minutes is doubled, because of the time it takes to rinse the yellow from your teeth and gums. The abrasive qualities of the bright yellow spice (derived from a root) will clean your teeth.  
**Verdict:** False. This is a recipe for disaster. The rule in dentistry is that anything that will stain a white shirt will stain your teeth. All spices stain teeth but yellow spices are the worst. Far from whitening your teeth, using turmeric will make them even more discoloured.

**- Banana peel**  
**Claim:** High levels of potassium, magnesium and manganese in bananas can help remove stains from teeth. Simply peel a ripe banana, and rub your teeth with the insides of the peel for about two minutes. After three weeks, your teeth will have whitened.

**Verdict:** True. If you rub the skin it can act as a gentle exfoliator and will remove some surface stains, but the banana will not reach inside the pores on the surface of your enamel - so no true 'deep' clean will take place.

**- Cider Vinegar**  
**Claim:** Rinsing with apple cider vinegar (mixed two parts of water) will make teeth whiter and protect teeth and gums from bacteria.

**Verdict:** False. Cider vinegar is a favourite of 'detox' devotees. Once swallowed, it mixes with pancreatic secretions in the intestines and turns alkaline, but when it hits your teeth, it is an acid, albeit a weak one. This makes the enamel on your teeth less resistant to damage - like wetting a chalk and then scraping off the surface.



**- Coconut oil**  
**Claim:** A 3,000-year-old Ayurvedic way to clean teeth is to swish a tablespoon of oil (usually coconut, sesame or olive oil) around your mouth for 20 minutes every morning. The coconut oil sticks to the oil in the cell membranes of any bacteria in your mouth, so when you spit it out, you are ridding your mouth of unwanted micro-organisms. Used by stars including Gwyneth Paltrow, who claim it whitens teeth and improves complexion.

**Verdict:** False. There is no scientific evidence at all that 'oil pulling', as it's called, will whiten teeth, or even remove bacteria. It's possible that the act of swishing the oil around your mouth will dislodge some bacteria or debris, so followed by a careful brushing session, your teeth may look cleaner. But no science shows that oil pulling will make your teeth any whiter.



# The benefits of essential oils



Want to de-stress your self at home without going to the spa? Essential oils are here to give you a similar soothing experience. Extracted from various flowers and plants, these body oils help to unwind both physically and mentally. Some of these oils have antimicrobial, antiseptic, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties that can also help in deodorizing the body. TO talks to aroma therapists to know more about the benefits of essential oils...

Naushad, an aroma therapist at the spa in Bengaluru, says, "Body oils helps the skin glow. Lavender, eucalyptus and cinnamon oils are used as a stress buster. The aroma of these oils improves blood circulation and provides a soothing experience. It also improves the texture of the skin and gives you a healthy skin. A combination of lemon and rosemary oils and anti-cellulite oils helps to reduce body fat." Ajay, another essential oils expert, says, "Extra virgin olive oil contains a good amount of minerals,



which are good for hot oil massage. It helps to reduce body pain. Harmony oil, made from flower and leaf extracts, is also good for mental health."

So, how often should one go for massage and what should be the ideal duration of the therapy? "People who have a sedentary lifestyle should go for aroma therapy at least once in a week, while for others once in every 15 days or a month is good enough," Ajay adds.

**OLIVE**  
Olive oil is considered good for dry skin. It brings out the skin's natural texture and acts as a conditioner for the hair and nails. The oil is rich in Vitamin A and E, which also helps to regenerate skin cells. It can be used as body lotion, eye makeup remover, lip scrub as well as used in homemade face packs. Aroma therapists mix olive and lavender oils for the cooling effect in summers.

**ANTI-CELLULITE**  
Regular massage with this oil helps to remove toxins

from the body. It burns fat and reduces cellulite. The different varieties of these oils include hazelnut, juniper, citrus and jojoba.

**EUCALYPTUS**  
This oil helps to keep respiratory infections, body pain, wounds, burns and ulcers at bay. It is also used in tooth paste, cough drops and lozenges. It is beneficial for mental health and used in many medicines.

**LAVENDER**  
Lavender oil has the quality of providing good sleep and helps to improve your nervous system. This oil also helps to remove dandruff, and tackle eczema and hair loss.

**CINNAMON**  
Cinnamon oil is rich in manganese, iron and calcium. It improves brain function, purifies blood and helps to ward off diabetes and heart disease. Application of the oil on the body during winter nights keeps us warm and protects us from cold, cough and breathing problems. As other oils, this oil is also used as room fresheners.



# A natural solution to Backache



Many of us are afflicted with back pain, which we tend to ignore or pay very little attention to, during the course of a busy day.

But you cannot overlook the fact that back pain can make it difficult for you to stand up, sit down or even walk around comfortably. So it's best you try some of the following natural remedies and get yourself some relief.

**Increase your intake of Vitamin D -**  
A study looked at the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in 150 people with chronic musculoskeletal pain and found that 93 per cent of patients had vitamin D deficiency! So all people with persistent, non-specific musculoskeletal pain should get themselves screened for vitamin D deficiency.

**Indulge in some music therapy -**  
Low cost and enjoyable, music has been found to reduce the disability, anxiety, and depression associated with chronic back

pain. It has an immediate effect on reducing pain, although the results are not statistically significant.

**Try some breathing techniques -**  
To reduce pain, try some breathing techniques that make use of the mind-body connection. These techniques integrate body awareness, breathing, movement, and meditation. The best thing about them is that they are safe, free of cost and you can do them at home!

**Get a soothing massage -**  
The first thing that comes to your mind when you think of a backache is to get a nice massage. Massages may be effective for sub acute and chronic pain. What's more, they reduce anxiety and depression associated with chronic pain. In fact, massage therapy is the most popular therapy for low back pain during pregnancy.

# How kids respond to differently Foods

How children perceive high-calorie foods depends on how much fat have accumulated around their waistlines, a new study says.



So lean children will have more powerful brain responses while looking at high-calorie foods compared to children with lower lean body weight. On the contrary, the researchers found that children with higher body fat had lower activity in this same brain area when they saw pictures of healthier, low-calorie foods. "Kids with more lean body weight might have a greater reward response to higher calorie foods, in part because they have greater energy needs compared to children with less lean body weight," said Nicole Fearnbach from Pennsylvania State University's department of nutritional sciences in a statement.

"Bigger kids burn more calories and our results show that their brains respond differently to foods," Fearnbach added. The study involved 38 children aged seven to 10 and their parents. Interestingly,



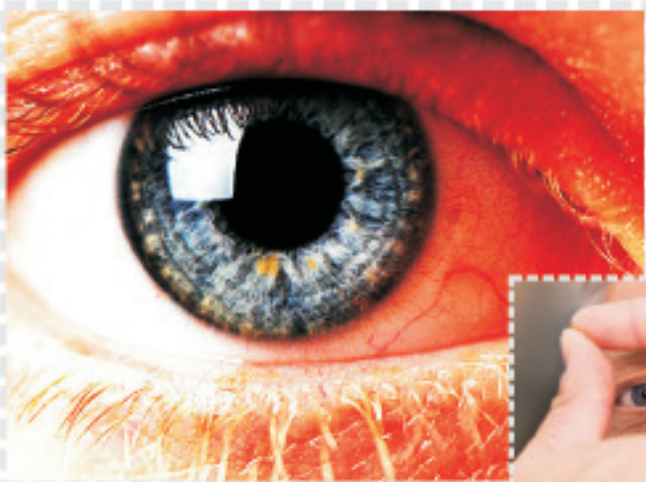
the team also found that children with more body fat had a reduced brain response to healthy foods. It might be that kids with higher body fat find those healthier foods to be less rewarding. The results suggest that children's body composition may influence how their brains respond to food. Future studies are needed to determine how these findings relate to children's food intake or their body weight over time, the authors said.

## What your eyes say about Your health

Here is what a few common eye symptoms could reveal about your body's health

Is there more to your health than meets the eye? According to experts, your peepers may hold clues to undiagnosed health problems and a routine eye test could reveal the truth. Eyes are the window into the body, offering a great pre-warning for many life-threatening illnesses. Most of us think we only need their eyes checked for vision problems, but all of us should have regular examinations, as conditions such as diabetes can be detected in the eye before they start to cause problems in the body. Here are some common eye symptoms that can be detected by opticians and what they could reveal about your health.

diabetes. A big change to your glasses prescription is another. Early diagnosis is key to avoiding long-term, sometimes fatal, complications. Iris rings **Could be: High cholesterol** White rings around the iris — the coloured part of the eye — are a sign of



**Red eyes** **Could be: High Blood pressure** When an optician shines a light into your eyes, they see the tiny blood vessels in your retinas - the sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. High blood pressure can make these blood vessels appear twisted - or even cause them to burst so the eyes look red. A quarter of adults with high blood pressure don't know they have the condition, which can cause strokes. Yellow deposits behind the eye **could be: Diabetes** Yellow deposits of fat, or small tears in the retina, are signs of Type 2

may be evidence of an overactive thyroid. Abnormal levels of thyroid hormone cause the tissues around the eye to swell, making it appear the eye is popping outwards. **Droopy eyelid** **Could be: Bell's Palsy or Stroke** A drooping eye can indicate Bell's Palsy, a temporary facial paralysis. It can also be a symptom of a stroke, especially if the speech is slurred. More rarely, it could also be evidence of a brain tumour or an autoimmune disease that is known as myasthenia gravis. Yellow eyes **Could be: Liver disease** Liver conditions, including hepatitis and cirrhosis, can turn the whites of your eyes yellow — a symptom which requires an immediate doctor's trip. The colour is caused by bilirubin, a chemical created by the



breakdown of hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying molecule inside red blood cells. **Pale optic nerve** **Could be: MS or Brain tumour** The optic nerve, which transmits information from the retina to the brain, is visible at the rear of the eye to an optician. A pale optic nerve can be an early manifestation of MS or evidence of a brain tumour. **Different sized pupils** **Could be: Stroke or tumour** Healthy pupils are around the same size and react similarly to light. If this is not the case with you, check yourself for problems such as stroke, brain or optic nerve tumour, a brain aneurysm or MS. **Bulging eyes** **Could be: Thyroid problems** Prominent-looking eyes can run in families, but eyes that appear to bulge

breakdown of hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying molecule inside red blood cells. **Pale optic nerve** **Could be: MS or Brain tumour** The optic nerve, which transmits information from the retina to the brain, is visible at the rear of the eye to an optician. A pale optic nerve can be an early manifestation of MS or evidence of a brain tumour. **Different sized pupils** **Could be: Stroke or tumour** Healthy pupils are around the same size and react similarly to light. If this is not the case with you, check yourself for problems such as stroke, brain or optic nerve tumour, a brain aneurysm or MS. **Bulging eyes** **Could be: Thyroid problems** Prominent-looking eyes can run in families, but eyes that appear to bulge

## Ways to improve immunity during monsoons

After all, who amongst us doesn't have fond memories of dancing or playing games in the rain, sipping a cup of steaming tea, munching on fresh home made pakoras, or just sitting in the veranda happily watching the rain pouring down - a welcome relief from the scorching summer heat.

However, over the past few years our relationship with the monsoon season has soured. We no longer want ourselves or our kids to get wet in the rain for fear of catching a cold or infection. The monsoon munchies we used to savour earlier, now threaten to upset our stomach, and most of all, the rainwater we used to enjoy dancing in, is no longer safe and free of pollutants. What's more, most doctors too warn that the monsoon season brings with it a plethora of illnesses, infections, and digestive ailments, which is why we it is critical to take extra precautions to be fit during this season.

So what's the reason behind us not being able to enjoy monsoons? Weak immunity - the increased pollution, humidity, and moisture reduces our metabolic rate and thus suppresses the body's ability to fight diseases. A lower metabolic rate also means that our digestive system's ability to break down and absorb food is weaker, leading to stomach ailments from constipation and bloating to diarrhoea.

That said, we can take adequate steps to increase our immunity and metabolic rate and not miss out on our favourite monsoon activities. Here are 5 tips to help us do so:

- 1. Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water and water-based drinks such as green tea during monsoons because the increased humidity makes us sweat more and leaves our bodies dehydrated and more susceptible to falling ill.
- 2. Increase Fibre Intake:** Increase consumption of light fibrous grains such as oats, brown rice, and barley that are easy to absorb by the body and also have high fibre content that cleanses our stomach and intestines. Avoid watery cereals

The arrival of the Monsoon season always tends to stir a feeling of nostalgia and excitement in our hearts.

such as curried rice which can cause bloating during Monsoons.

- 3. Switch to Light Cooking Oils:** As much as you love eating pakoras during monsoons - avoid deep fried foods as they make one feel heavy,



slow metabolic rate, and are difficult to digest. If you still want to indulge in a few monsoon munchies use lighter oils such as Corn oil or Olive oil instead of heavy cooking oils such as Mustard or Sesame oil.

- 4. Use Natural Immunity Boosters:** Take a leaf from your grandmother's remedy book, literally! Herbs such as neem, turmeric powder, and methi seeds boost metabolic rate and are natural antibiotics - great at increasing immunity and digestion.
- 5. Add Lime and Honey:** To further boost our metabolic rate and immunity, add lemon juice and honey as they assist in the digestion process and help the intestines carry out their functions properly and effectively.

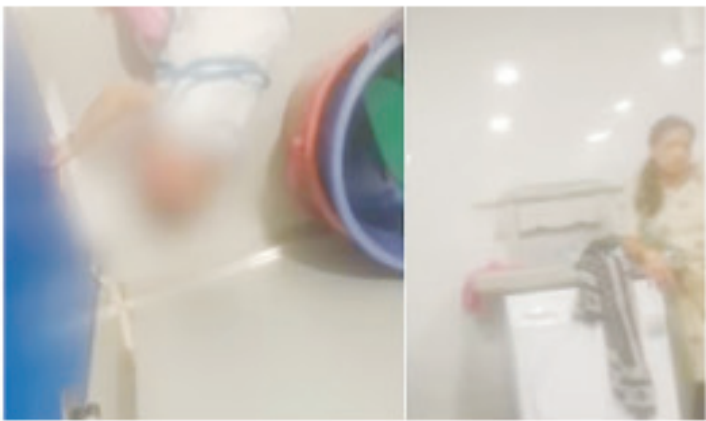
# Human Rights body seeks report from Karnataka govt over abuse of toddlers at daycare

The NHRC has sought reports from Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh over two cases involving toddlers. The intervention puts child safety, caregiving standards and hospital accountability under scrutiny.

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Friday said it has issued notices to the Karnataka government and the state police chief over the abuse of toddlers by nannies at an on-campus daycare of IT giant Capgemini in Bengaluru.  
In a separate case, the rights panel also sought a report from the Madhya Pradesh government over allegations that a one-and-a-half-year-old child lost his eyesight due to medical negligence at a civil hospital in Sagar district.  
The Commission said it took suo motu cognisance of both matters on the basis of media reports and has asked the

authorities concerned to submit detailed reports within two weeks. It said the allegations, if true, raise serious issues of human rights violations.  
On the Bengaluru case, the NHRC said the incident reportedly came to light after a child helpline official received videos showing "cruelty towards toddlers" at the facility, where professionals working on the campus leave their children while on duty. The Commission said it took note of media reports about "some toddlers being treated inhumanely by the nannies at a creche operating on the premises of an IT company in Bengaluru". The horrific video, which surfaced on July 2,

purportedly showed nannies stuffing toddlers into washing machines, locking them in bathrooms and spraying water into their mouths with a toilet jet spray to make them stop crying and behave. The NHRC said the creche has been temporarily closed as a precaution. It has issued notices to the Karnataka chief secretary and the director general of police over the matter. In the Madhya Pradesh case, the NHRC said it took suo motu cognisance of a media report that a one-and-a-half-year-old toddler



lost his eyesight due to alleged medical negligence at Banda Civil Hospital in Sagar district. The child had reportedly

been taken to the hospital for treatment for a cold and redness in his eyes, but doctors allegedly put nasal drops into his eyes. The Commission said he later developed an infection that led to the loss of vision.  
The NHRC has asked the Madhya Pradesh chief secretary to submit a detailed report within two weeks. The Commission said both cases have been taken up on the basis of media reports and concern alleged violations involving the safety and well-being of young children.

## Delhi's waste workers keep city running despite being underpaid, overworked and largely invisible

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
Delhi generates more than 12,000 tonnes of garbage every day; the people who keep the city functioning remain largely invisible. Long before the city roads witness movements of commuters, at dawn thousands of rag pickers and sanitation staff begin a different kind of journey. With tools like hooks, sacks, brooms, and carts, they navigate overflowing dumping grounds, narrow lanes and dustbins to collect, sort, and transport the city's waste.  
From formal and informal ragpickers and waste sorters to contractual sanitation workers employed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and other civic agencies, these workers form the backbone of the capital's waste management system. Yet their contribution continues to be overlooked, exposing the deep human cost behind the city's sanitation infrastructure.  
Delhi's waste economy depends heavily on two broad categories of workers. The first consists of informal workers—primarily ragpickers, waste sorters, and recyclers—who recover recyclable materials from streets, garbage bins, markets, and landfill sites. Working without formal recognition or employment contracts, they earn a livelihood by selling recyclable plastic, paper, metal, and glass to scrap dealers.  
The second group includes sanitation workers employed with the MCD. Nearly half of the total strength of Group D employees of the civic bodies have been working as contractual employees and are waiting for proper facilities, like regularisation, health benefits, safety equipment, utility centres near their working areas, etc. The majority of sanitation workers in the MCD were engaged 10-20 years ago and even more, but they have yet to get permanent employment in the corporation.

## Supreme Court stays CAG audit of Delhi power discoms

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
The Delhi government had ordered a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit of power discoms. On Friday, the Supreme Court stayed the audit. At stake is '38,500 crore accumulated as regulatory assets (RA), which are scheduled to be recovered from city's power consumers.  
A vacation bench headed by Justice K V Viswanathan directed the parties to maintain the status quo on the audit of the discoms by a CAG-appointed independent CA. The court clarified that the stay applies only to the CAG audit and does not bar Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) from exercising its powers. "All rights and contentions are left open," it noted. The court issued a notice on a plea filed by the DERC, which challenged an order of the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL). It stayed the order for CAG audit of discoms and fixed the matter for further hearing to July 15. The court issued notice to the Delhi government, CAG, DERC, and the Union Ministry of Power.  
The bench noted that the legality of the DERC assigning such an audit to the CAG needs closer judicial scrutiny. It also stayed an order of the APTEL, which had directed the DERC to conduct an audit through an independent chartered accountant.  
Appearing for DERC, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that the audit contemplated by the SC's August 6, 2025, judgment had to be completed before any recovery of RA could be made from electricity consumers. Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the Delhi government, argued that substantial public funds flow to discoms as a subsidy, justifying CAG scrutiny in the public interest. The court said RA which are created to shield consumers from sudden hikes, should not remain unresolved for long.



## From Rs 1,000 to Rs 600: Earnings of Delhi's e-rickshaw drivers hit by Bluetooth hack

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
On Wednesday, 20-year old Anu Kumar's e-rickshaw stopped in the middle of the road in front of Bangla Sahib Gurdwara. He tried switching it on multiple times, but to no avail. A long line of angry drivers kept honking behind him.  
By the time a couple of kind strangers helped him push the e-rickshaw to the roadside, his passengers had left, and that too without paying. "No one will pay if you drop them before their destination," he said. Kumar took the e-rickshaw to a mechanic, afraid how much he will have to shell out to get it fixed. But the mechanic just opened an app and tapped on the screen, and to his relief, the vehicle whirled back to life.  
But the relief was short-lived. His rickshaw stopped the same way three more times the same day. On

Thursday, too, it shut down thrice. "I went home. What can you do when your vehicle stops three times in a day?" Kumar is not alone. For the last three days, e-rickshaw drivers in the Capital have found themselves at the



mercy of strangers using Bluetooth-enabled mobile applications to connect to their vehicles' battery management systems (BMS) and remotely switch them off, stopping their vehicle dead in the middle of the road. On Friday, the Union government directed Apple and

Google to remove at least three battery-management apps – BAT-BMS, Lossigy and Epoch Li-ion – from their app stores following reports that they were being misused. Drivers, meanwhile, are a harried lot. "I usually earn Rs 1,000 a day. After paying for charging and maintenance, I am left with about Rs 800. But for the last two days, I have earned only Rs 600-700 because my vehicle was stopped four times each day," said Mukhiya Yadav (24), who operates between Chuna Mandi and Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.  
"While some people demanded Rs 200 to restart the vehicle, yesterday, one person even asked me for a beer," he added. By Friday, Yadav had downloaded the BAT-BMS app himself and was helping stranded drivers restart their e-rickshaws.

## Court directs FIR against two DU assistant professors over publication fraud

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
For 29-year-old Ankita Kilsan, landing a job as an Assistant Professor at Delhi University's (DU) Bharati College in November 2023 felt like the ultimate validation of her hard work. A Jawaharlal Nehru University alumni, she believed her academic career was finally taking off. But just months later that dream disintegrated.  
Kilsan, a resident of Shalimar Bagh, was allegedly the victim of a scam run by people she considered peers. She allegedly paid Rs 1 lakh to get three of her articles published in journals, which later turned out to be fake, leading to the termination of her service. On Wednesday, a Delhi court directed the registration of an FIR against two DU assistant professors for allegedly duping Kilsan. The court was hearing an application

seeking the registration of an FIR moved by Kilsan – formerly employed in Bharati College's Political Science department.  
The court directed the Station Head Officer (SHO) of Shalimar Bagh



police station to register an FIR based on a complaint filed on November 5, 2024, and submit a compliance report within 30 days. "I trusted them fully. Thought they were a fraternity. I found out in July 2024 that my

articles are fake. I kept questioning them and they kept fooling me," Kilsan told. "For people who know me well, it was absolutely unbelievable. We all thought how could this happen to someone like me. My mental health deteriorated so much," she added.  
"Since 2024 I have been suffering. I completed my PhD in such a stressful situation. The work I could have done in six months took over one year. I am not an isolated example. Lots of people face such a situation," Kilsan said. The accused against whom the FIR is to be registered are Sanjeev Kumar, who allegedly misrepresented himself as a senior medical officer at AIIMS, Delhi, Pramod Kumar and Luke Khanna, assistant professors at Dayal Singh and Bharati College, respectively.

## How Mysore's Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan helped America gain

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
"Come, all ye lads who know no fear... Embark in our Hyder-Ally!" These words were not sung on the streets of Mysore in India. They echoed through Philadelphia during the American War of Independence. Ballads celebrated a warship named after Hyder Ali, public toasts hailed him as a hero, and for many Americans fighting the British Crown for Independence, the ruler of India's Mysore was a symbol of resistance against empire. Even a ship was named after the ruler of Mysore. As George Washington battled British forces in North America, Hyder Ali and later his son Tipu Sultan were fighting on another front of the same Imperial power. It was thousands of kilometres away from northern America, in southern India. The two never exchanged letters, nor did the state of Mysore send troops to America. But the two theatres became intertwined in Britain's imperial ambitions and France's attempt to humble Britain after the latter's defeat in the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763.  
The American Revolution, historians say, was not just an American story. It stretched from the Caribbean and Europe to the Indian peninsula. Britain's East India Company, the same corporation whose tea helped trigger the Boston Tea Party, was simultaneously locked in a costly war against Mysore. French fleets and finances supported both Washington's revolutionaries (or rebels) and Hyder Ali's armies, forcing Britain to fight on multiple fronts at once.  
As the United States marks the 250th anniversary of its Declaration of Independence (1776) this weekend, the celebrations offer an opportunity to revisit a largely forgotten chapter from the late eighteenth century. The declaration came in 1776, but the American Revolutionary War (between Britain and its 13 North American colonies) had begun in 1775. Britain's decisive defeat came in 1781, and American independence was formally recognised only by the Treaty of Paris in 1783. That was a time when the rulers of Mysore, Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, were admired across America as comrades in a struggle against British imperial power.  
The admiration did not mean Mysore "won" America its independence. The Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-1784) opened another major front against Britain just as the American Revolutionary War was entering its decisive phase.

# Most hotels and B&Bs shut since Delhi B&B fire, Hauz Rani Market awaits customers

Many shopkeepers in the market are migrants who operate from rented shops.

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
Anyone visiting Hauz Rani Market in South Delhi's Malviya Nagar cannot miss the yellow sealing tapes outside most of the hotels and B&Bs in the area. A month after the fire at Flourish Stay B&B killed 23 people, including 14 foreign nationals, the crackdown by the MCD on hotels flouting norms continues. Around almost every corner, hotels and B&Bs are shut, with safety violation notices pasted across their entrances. The gutted building where the fire broke out on June 3 stands hidden behind a pink sheet and police barricades. The shops, however, are open again. Pharmacies, grocery stores, restaurants, crockery and pottery shops have resumed business after a brief closure. But beneath the appearance of normalcy, traders say business has all but disappeared. With the crackdown in

effect, the streets are empty and so are the shops.  
For years, many establishments in the area relied on medical tourists who came for treatment at the Max Hospital in Saket, located across the road, and stayed in nearby hotels, guest houses and B&Bs.  
A foreign national, who has been running a store of imported food items for two years in the market, said his business depended almost entirely on overseas visitors. "Footfall has dropped by at least 70%. My store survives on foreign customers. I have three employees who depend on me. I feel like a leaf floating on water. At any moment, the current can carry everything away," he said. Many shopkeepers in the market are migrants who operate from rented shops. Thahlath Azeez from Bodh Gaya

in Bihar, who has been running a tea shop in the market for more than a decade, said, "I wish the building owners understand our situation. They only care about getting the rent on time. We are really worried about how we will cover our expenses this month."  
Fifty-seven-year-old Kesar, who has run a pottery shop next to the gutted building for more than three decades, still

remembers the morning of the fire. "We were having breakfast when we heard the screams. My husband and son ran towards the building and returned hours later covered in soot. I can still hear the screams," she said.  
Her shop hardly sees any customers these days. "I have only made Rs 30 selling a clay pot since we opened the shop in the morning. We barely scrape by. The government should do something," she said. A few metres from the burnt building, Mansuri Cotton Shop has reopened days after the fire.  
Riyazuddin Mansoori (62), the proprietor, became a local hero after he attempted to save victims of the fire by laying down blankets from his shop to cushion the blow as many jumped from the upper floors of the B&B to save their lives.



## Maersk places maiden India order for 1,000 containers with DCM Containers

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Danish shipping giant AP Moller-Maersk on Friday announced that it has placed an order for 1,000 containers with India's DCM Containers, the first such order by a global carrier.

The announcement was made by senior Maersk executives at the unveiling of an export-import (Exim)-grade container manufactured by DCM Containers, headed by Rudra Shriram.

The container has been produced in accordance with internationally accepted quality and safety standards, including ISO specifications and the International Convention for Safe Containers (CSC), making it suitable for global deployment, the shipping ministry said. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal unveiled the container at an event here. The order is a small share of Maersk's container demand. "Maersk requires around 400,000-500,000 containers every year," said Amdi Krogh, global head of ocean assets partnership at the Danish company.

Other executives of the company said this is just the beginning, and Maersk will look at more opportunities in India across the maritime and logistics space. China holds a near-monopoly in container manufacturing. India wants to compete on a global scale, but the lack of scale means there is a price difference that puts Indian manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage.

Much like French carrier CMA CGM's recent foray, the seeds of the current Maersk expansion were sown during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with Robert Maersk Uggla, chairman of the Supervisory Board of A.P. Moller-Maersk, in February 2025, during which the Prime Minister encouraged the company to actively support the development of world-class container manufacturing in India. Maersk has a \$6.5 billion investment plan for India, including a \$2 billion expansion of its wholly owned Pipavav port in Gujarat. India launched an ambitious Rs 10,000 crore plan to subsidise container manufacturing until it achieves a large enough scale to compete with global giants. Notably, the Maersk order with DCM Containers has come even before the scheme has been rolled out, but executives at the company said any sustained momentum in manufacturing will require the assistance programme to be rolled out. A senior DCM Containers executive said the order will take around two months to complete.

**Disable 7 apps, Government tells Apple, Google after e-rickshaw shutdown videos**

**NEW DELHI.(Agency)**

The government Friday directed Apple and Google to take down seven apps following reports that these were being misused to remotely switch off some e-rickshaws, triggering cybersecurity concerns and passenger safety risks. The move follows the circulation of video clips on social media showing individuals connecting to nearby e-rickshaws through Bluetooth and disabling their battery management systems or BMS while the vehicles were in motion. The apps that have been directed to be blocked include BAT-BMS, Lossigy, Epoch Li-ion, and Smart BMS, among others. At least a couple of them are of Chinese-origin. A battery management system essentially tracks the state of a battery, with the primary aim of eliminating variations in performance of individual battery cells to allow them to work uniformly inside a battery pack. This system is incorporated in an EV powered with a large-capacity lithium ion battery, and plays a key role in extending the service life of the battery and ensuring the safe use of the battery. Top vendors of BMS systems include Texas Instruments, NXP Semiconductors, Analog Devices, Infineon Technologies, LG Chem, Panasonic and Renesas Electronics. Chinese battery makers such as CATL and BYD are also big players in this space, alongside a host of smaller companies that cater to the unorganised segment. Automotive is the largest segment for BMS systems with a 50% market share that is primarily driven by EV battery management and hybrid vehicle energy optimisation.

**Identify imported goods for manufacturing: Piyush Goyal tells states**

**NEW DELHI.(Agency)**

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Friday urged states to identify products that are currently imported but can be manufactured competitively in India. He said such efforts would not only reduce import dependence and save foreign exchange but also strengthen domestic supply chains and reduce vulnerabilities arising from excessive dependence on foreign suppliers. This suggestion was made by the minister during the meeting of the Board of Trade here. Minister of state for commerce and industry Jitin Prasada, newly inducted members of the board of trade, ministers and representatives from states and Union territories, export promotion councils, apex industry chambers and non-official members participated in the meeting. Goya also urged states, line ministries, EPCs and industry associations to establish export committees, hold regular engagements with exporters and conduct monthly review meetings. The minister encouraged industries affected by unfair trade practices to approach the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR). He stated that DGTR would support domestic industries facing injury due to dumping or predatory pricing by foreign producers and could provide remedies through anti-dumping measures and safeguard duties. The minister announced a time-bound 90-day drive under the districts as export hubs initiative, covering 120 priority districts across 27 states and Union territories. Supported by 24 DGFT Regional Authorities and 11 partner agencies, the drive will focus on measurable outcomes, including new exporter registrations and export value growth, while converging with the One District One Product initiative, GI products and MSME clusters.

# Why motorcycles have different tyre sizes at front and rear? The real engineering reason

**Motorcycle front and rear tyre size: Bike manufacturers deliberately fit different tyre sizes at the front and rear because each wheel handles a completely different job: steering and power delivery.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Motorcycle front and rear tyre size: Every motorcycle rider has noticed it at some point: the front tyre looks noticeably slimmer than the rear one, and it's not just a styling choice. Bike manufacturers deliberately fit different tyre sizes at the front and rear because each wheel handles a completely different job: steering and power delivery. Getting this wrong can directly affect how safely your motorcycle handles corners, braking, and acceleration on Indian roads.

**Why the rear tyre is wider than the front**

The rear tyre carries most of the weight and does most of the heavy lifting when it comes to power. Since the rear wheel carries most of the bike's weight and handles power delivery from the engine, it needs a larger contact patch for better traction. A wider rear tyre also helps the bike stay stable while accelerating hard, as it spreads the engine's force across more rubber in contact with the road. This is why sportier or more powerful bikes almost always come with noticeably wider rear tyres than commuter motorcycles.

**Front tyre size and motorcycle steering precision**

The front tyre plays a completely different role. It's built narrower and often has a slightly taller profile to keep steering light and responsive. Several adventure and touring bikes run a 19-inch front tyre paired with a 17-inch rear tyre. That taller, narrower front wheel rolls over broken roads, gravel, and potholes more easily, while the shorter, wider rear tyre keeps the power delivery planted. The gyroscopic



effect of the front tyre while rolling accounts for most of the steering torque during quick manoeuvres like lane changes, so a narrower front tyre significantly improves how quickly the bike responds to steering input. In simple terms, a narrower front wheel makes the bike easier and quicker to turn. This helps a lot when riding through traffic or taking sharp corners.

**Braking, tread patterns, and everyday safety**

Tyre tread design also plays an important role. The front brake provides around 70 to 80 percent of a motorcycle's stopping power, so the front tyre is designed to offer better grip during hard braking and on wet roads. The rear tyre usually has deeper grooves to provide better traction while accelerating. On the other hand, the front tyre has a tread pattern designed for accurate steering and better water drainage. That's why using the wrong size or mismatched tyres, even if they fit the bike, can affect its handling, balance, and braking performance.

Always follow OEMs recommendations. For daily riders, the lesson is simple: always replace tyres with the size and type recommended by your bike's manufacturer, whether that's a 19-inch front with a 17-inch rear or any other factory combination, even if a wider or more stylish-looking tyre seems tempting. Fitting oversized tyres can cause rubbing against the frame and wiring, while undersized tyres may not handle the bike's weight and manoeuvring properly, increasing the risk of a blowout.

## EPF 2026: What has changed and how you can benefit; check details here

**The EPF Scheme 2026 under the Social Security Code, 2020 has been implemented which replaces the 1952 scheme, when EPF was legislated as the first social welfare scheme for employees. The new scheme incorporates greater flexibility for voluntary contributions, the ability to allow partial withdrawals if needed and improved protections for contract workers.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Legislated in 1952 in a young Independent nation, Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) was the first social security scheme for employees. It is the key retirement funds that most employees look forward to. It also



provides financial security during employment. The government has notified the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 2026 under the Social Security Code, 2020. Along with this, the Employees' Pension Scheme, 2026 and the Employees' Deposit-Linked Insurance Scheme, 2026 have also been implemented. The new system replaces the EPF Scheme of 1952 but many key features of the old system have been retained in the new scheme. The changes that have been incorporated are designed to provide greater convenience and security to employees. Let's have a look at the EPF Scheme 2026.

**Automatic transition for old EPF**

**account holders**

One comforting factir is that EPFO subscribers, ie, employees who are already members under the EPF Scheme 1952, will automatically be considered members of the new scheme. The funds deposited in their PF accounts remain intact and they don't need to register again.

The sum and substance is that if you are an existing EPF member, nothing will change for you. Your membership will continue and your savings will be protected. The scheme's "excluded employee" provision will also continue as before. According to rules, if an employee's salary exceeds the threshold when they first start a job, currently Rs 15,000/month, he/she will not be covered by the mandatory EPF benefit unless they are included under applicable rules.

**New contribution options**

Under the new scheme, both the employee and the employer will be required to contribute 12% of their salary to the PF.

## Rapido founders booked in Nagpur over bike taxi operations without govt nod

**NEW DELHI.(Agency)**

The founders of Rapido app have been booked in Nagpur for allegedly operating "petrol powered" bike taxi services in Maharashtra without requisite permission from the government, an official said on Friday.

A case was registered at Sitabuldi police station against Rishikesh S R, Pavan Guntupalli, and Aravind Sanka, founders of Roopen Transportation Services Private Limited, which operates the Rapido app, on the complaint of Nagpur (City) Regional Transport Office (RTO) Motor Vehicle Inspector Vishal Madhukarrao Bhoyte on behalf of the state government, he said. According to the complaint, the RTO conducted a special drive against illegal passenger transport on June 23, during which a bike ride was booked through Rapido app from Ravi

Bhavan to Priyadarshini Colony for Rs 22, the official said. "The bike (MH-31/GC-0850) reached the pickup point and was later brought to



the RTO office for inspection. It was found that a private two-wheeler was allegedly being used as a bike taxi without the required licence or permit.

The vehicle was seized and action was taken under the Motor Vehicles Act," the official said.

As per the complaint submitted by Bhoyte, Rapido has not received approval from the Maharashtra government or the Regional Transport Authority to operate petrol-powered bike taxi services. The complaint contended that the company encouraged the use of private vehicles for commercial passenger transport, violating transport rules, putting passenger safety at risk, and causing financial loss to the government. A Sitabuldi police station official said a case was registered under sections 318 (3), 3 (5) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), sections 66, 93, 192 A, 193 and 199 of Motor Vehicles Act, as well as section 66 (d) of Information Technology Act.

## Manipal Hospitals IPO: Plans to mobilise Rs 8,000 crore, could list by end of July

**Bengaluru.(Agency)**

The list of big IPOs in the second half of 2026 is getting longer with Manipal Hospitals planning to float its public issue this month. Manipal Health Enterprises, which is backed by Singapore government's investment firm Temasek, has received the nod from market regulator Sebi for approval for its proposed IPO. Manipal Health Enterprises filed draft documents for an IPO with SEBI earlier this year. Now, with regulatory approval, the listing process is expected to accelerate. The company could be listed on the stock exchange by the end of July. SBI Funds Management IPO is the other big IPO to hit the market this month which could raise \$1.2 billion.

Manipal Hospitals IPO size

The Manipal Hospitals' IPO will be designed to raise approximately Rs 8,000 crore, says reports. However, the final issue size will be determined based on market conditions and ongoing discussions with investors. If it proceeds as planned, it will be one of India's largest healthcare IPOs.

In FY26, Manipal Health Enterprises a revenue of about Rs 9,426.10 crore and a net profit of Rs 1,143.66 crore.

Valuation of the company

The company is targeting a valuation of \$10 billion to \$13 billion. However, the final valuation has not yet been finalised. The IPO will include a fresh issue as well as an offer for sale (OFS) from existing investors. There are as many as 49 hospitals across more than 24 cities in the Manipal chain. Cumulatively they have more than 12,600 hospital beds and serve 70 lakh patients annually.

Lead managers

According to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP), there are multiple high-profile book running lead managers for this IPO. They are Axis Capital, DBS Bank, Kotak Mahindra Capital, Goldman Sachs, Jefferies, JPMorgan and UBS. All these investment banks will put their heads together to manage this big issue.

The IPO market was tepid at the beginning of 2026, but now large issues have begun to emerge. In this context, Manipal Hospitals' IPO could attract investor attention. Therefore, if the company launches by the end of July, it will be among the most anticipated IPOs of the year. However, the most highly anticipated issue this year will be the two of the largest to hit Dalal Street ever.

# Trustworthy, stable monthly income: Qualities that make Post Office MIS tick; know details

**A sovereign guarantee that ensures non-volatile cash flow every month. This sums up the attributes of a monthly income scheme perfectly which is of great value to a large number of Indians. Those who don't have a regular job, value it immensely. That's why the post office monthly income scheme is trusted by generations.**

**Kolkata.(Agency)**

The instruments of the good old Post Office is synonymous with trust for millions of Indians. Of all the small savings schemes that the post office runs in India, Monthly Income Scheme, or Post Office Monthly Income Scheme or simply POMIS is one of the most popular. Anyone can open a POMIS account. It is a deposit scheme backed by the government that generates interest income for the account holder every month. Since it enjoys sovereign guarantee, the depositor need not worry

about the safety of funds. What must be noted is the universality of the scheme. A POMIS account can be opened by a single individual or jointly without someone else. Its popularity is high with elderly and retirees, who don't have a regular income from work or pension. But the POMIS offers some sort of a substitute. Let's have a look at how POMIS continues to maintain its appeal in this fast-changing financial world.

**Interest rate in MIS**

The government has announced the interest rates applicable on this scheme for the July-October quarter. There is no change from the existing rate which is 7.4%. One must note that capital invested in this scheme does not expand over time but generates a cash flow every month. Also the scheme envisages payment of interest on completion of a month from the date of opening of the account. The process of payment continues once in a month every month till the scheme matures. Another important point to underscore is that if one does not withdraw the interest amount

every month, it will not earn any interest in the subsequent months. However, an account holder can take out the interest portion through auto credit into savings account at same post office, or ECS.



**Minimum & maximum deposit in POMIS**

The minimum amount that one has to deposit is Rs 1,000. Any higher amount must be in multiples of Rs 1,000. However, there is a ceiling in POMIS investment. One can deposit a maximum amount of Rs 9 lakh in a single account and Rs 15 lakh in joint account. If an account is opened by a

guardian on behalf of a minor, its limit will be treated separately.

**The taxation angle of POMIS**

POMIS interest income is not tax free. The interest paid in POMIS is taxable in the hand of depositor at the applicable income tax slab rate. The tenure of a POMIS account is five years from the date of opening of the account. If the account holder expires before the maturity of the account, the account will be closed and the entire amount will be given to the nominee/legal heirs. Interest will be paid till the month preceding the expiry of the account holder.

How much does Rs 9 lakh yield in POMIS?

One can easily find out the answer by using a post office MIS calculator. Such a calculator is available online for free and the website of prominent agencies has this calculator. It shows that if one invests Rs 9 lakh in POMIS, the interest payable every month will be Rs 5,550. Similarly, a monthly interest of Rs 9,250 will be paid to the joint holders of an account where Rs 15 lakh is invested.

## Short news

## Accidental fire from cop's gun injures 3 near Varanasi's Kashi Vishwanath temple

Srinagar.(Agency)

A bullet fired accidentally from a Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) jawan's service carbine injured three flower vendors near Gate No. 4B of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi on Saturday, triggering panic in the busy temple area.

The incident occurred near Gate No. 4B, close to Nandu Fariya, where devotees and local traders were present. According to preliminary information, the firearm discharged after the sling of a PAC jawan's service carbine reportedly snapped, causing the weapon to fall to the ground. The injured have been identified as local flower vendors Nikhil Gupta, Ram Babu and Vikas Yadav, all of whom were present near the temple gate when the accidental firing took place.

Sources said the weapon belonged to PAC Diwan Amarnath Chauhan of the 48th Battalion. The carbine was reportedly slung across his back when its belt came loose. As the weapon fell to the ground, it accidentally discharged, with the bullet and shrapnel striking the three shopkeepers.

One of the injured sustained a wound to his finger, another suffered injuries to the waist, while the third was hit in the leg by shrapnel. The extent of their injuries was not immediately known, though initial reports suggested they were conscious when shifted for treatment.

The injured were rushed to the Mandaliya Hospital at Kabir Chaura for medical attention. Senior administrative and police officials reached both the hospital and the spot to monitor the situation and assess the circumstances surrounding the incident.

## Ram Mandir 'theft': Cops seize 'proceeds of crime' — car bought by accused

Mumbai.(Agency)

Ayodhya Police Friday seized Ram Temple 'theft' accused Avinash Shukla's car, which they suspect was purchased with proceeds from the alleged crime, said a senior police officer. Police took Shukla into custody remand during the day. Sources said police had sought his custody as part of efforts to recover more of the allegedly stolen money and trace a vehicle suspected to be linked to the case.

Sources had earlier said that fresh searches at his home had led to the recovery of Rs 20.39 lakh in denominations of Rs 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, and 10; and USD 1,121 in the denominations of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, and 1. The maximum cash was in Rs 500 denomination — over 3,000 currency notes.

His family has refused to comment on the allegations. At his village, Babpur Nariyawa in Pratapgarh, pradhan Raju Yadav said, "The Shukla family has long depended on agriculture and runs a small paan shop in the village. After moving to Ayodhya about two years ago, Avinash would return home only occasionally, often in a second-hand car he had bought recently. The family home had also been undergoing renovation in recent months." "It is a large family, and we assumed that several members were earning and their financial situation had improved," Yadav said. Residents said Avinash, one of four brothers, had worked at a local shop in Pratapgarh before moving to Ayodhya reportedly with the help of an acquaintance there.

## Citizens should be comfortable entering police stations, not "shiver": Bombay HC refuses to recall cost on Palghar cop

Mumbai.(Agency)

Observing that the state government should ensure citizens are "comfortable to walk into a police station" and "not shiver" due to uncertainty, the Bombay High Court rejected the Maharashtra Police's plea seeking recall of the order that imposed a cost of Rs 25,000 on a Palghar police officer for refusing to provide copies of the complaint or FIR to the accused persons. The HC also remarked that while the police officers act "innocent" and "cooperative" before the court, they "behave like lords in police stations".

A division bench of Acting Chief Justice (ACJ) Ravindra V Ghuge and Justice Gautam A Ankhad had on June 25, while imposing a cost on the police officer, observed that such petitions continue to reach the court because officers fail to comply with settled legal requirements, compelling petitioners to spend on litigation. The petitioners, accused in economic offence cases, told the HC through advocates Manuj Borkar and Prasad Borkar that despite receiving Economic Offences Wing (EOW) complaint copies "after strenuous efforts", Wada police station refused complaint copies in separate offence, allegedly calling it "time killing".

On Friday, Additional Public Prosecutor Mankunwar Deshmukh for the police "made a valiant attempt to convince the court" that the concerned senior PI from Wada police station was not guilty of not providing the copies of the complaints to the petitioners.

## Surat SBI branch heist: 1 accused granted bail

On May 4, the police arrested two accused — Shubham Thakur (24) and Vikas Singh Rajput (30) from Ayodhya and Gonda districts in Uttar Pradesh.

Surat.(Agency)

The Surat district court on Friday granted bail to Vikas Singh Rajput, one of the accused arrested in connection with a Rs 50 lakh heist from a State Bank of India branch in Varachha in April.

The crime took place on April 27, when a gang of five-six robbers entered the SBI branch and fled with around Rs 50 lakh in cash after holding six bank employees and other customers present then at gunpoint. The in-charge branch manager Prakash Bhoge of SBI, registered a police complaint the same day. The police subsequently booked six persons aged between 20 and 26 years in connection with the case. On May 4, the police arrested two accused — Shubham Thakur (24) and Vikas Singh Rajput (30) from Ayodhya and Gonda districts in Uttar Pradesh.

During the remand period of both the accused, police learnt that the "mastermind" behind

the robbery is Kundan Bhagat, a wanted criminal who was lodged at Beur jail in Patna, Bihar in connection with another case. Police said Vikas Singh Rajput was involved in



providing logistical support to Shubham Thakur and also arranged a hideout for him. Kundan Bhagat was also arrested by the Surat police from Beur jail in Patna

Rajput, presently in judicial custody at Surat Central Jail, filed a bail application in the Surat District Court through his lawyer P T Rana. Assistant Public Prosecutor Santosh Gohil told the court Surat District Additional Session Court of Judge A N Dave that Rajput was "involved in harbouring the main accused involved in the crime." The defence lawyer, P T Rana, mentioned in court that Vikas Rajput runs Chandra Traders, a garment shop in Rae Bareilly, UP. Subhash Thakur also runs a shop near to that and the two are friends. Vikas Rajput had not visited Surat for recce nor he was not present on the spot when the crime was committed, the lawyer told the court. The court observed, "In the present case, the possibility of false implication of the applicant-accused (Vikas) cannot be ruled out. So, prima facie, there is no material implicating the applicant accused in the commission of alleged offences other than harbouring the main accused..."

## ATS arrests 7 from Gujarat, 1 from MP for 'Jaish-e-Mohammed links'

Rajkot.(Agency)

Thujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) on Friday said it has arrested eight persons, including seven from Gujarat and one from adjoining Madhya Pradesh, for their alleged association with proscribed terror organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).

The arrested accused were identified by the ATS as Ahmed Abdullah Gajiwala (19), Ibrahim Mohammad Husen Ghagha (30), Mudassir Abdullah Ghaziwala (22), all from Palanpur, Banaskantha; Zakariya Durani Mohammad Ammar Ghagha (21), Mufti Faujan Ismail Dawwa (40), and Mohammad Amin Shera (21), all from Siddhpur, Patan; Mohammad Abdul Rahman Savdi (22) of Chikhli, Navsari; and Bilal Durani Mohammad Ammar Ghagha (18) of Dewas, Madhya Pradesh. The ATS said the arrested persons "established an active network of

JeM in Gujarat" and "were in contact with Pakistani handlers". "The arrested accused had formed an organisation (Tanzeem) named 'Darul Islam Gujarat Jaish-e-



Mohammed (JeM)". They were working to extend Dawat (invitations) to other individuals in their areas to join the organisation. These accused were in contact

with Pakistani handlers 'Abdullah and Mohammad Umar', the ATS said in a statement.

"They translated JeM literature into Gujarati to propagate its ideology and were actively participating in the conspiracy to execute terrorist acts on behalf of JeM in Gujarat. To execute this conspiracy, they had received funding of approximately Rs 3 lakh using which an old car was purchased, which has not been transferred to their name to date," the agency said. The ATS said terrorist literature including "Jihadi books, speeches, audio, videos, photographs, and the flag of JeM" were recovered from them.

"Eight letters typed in Urdu addressed to Masood Azhar (JeM founder) to join the terrorist organisation were seized. A Gujarati translation of 'Dars-e-Jihad', the book authored by Azhar, was also seized from them," the statement said.

## Adani power infra: Gujarat agrees to key demands of protesting farmers

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

The Gujarat government on Friday agreed to several key demands of the farmers who have been protesting in Jetpar village in Morbi for higher compensation for use of their land for power infrastructure being erected by Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL).

The government announced its decision on the day The Indian Express reported on the farmers' protest that has been ongoing for more than three weeks, and a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to travel to Gujarat to inaugurate a semiconductor facility in Sanand.

The government has agreed to take the market price of the farmers' land as the baseline instead of the jantri (circle) rate, and to award them double that amount as compensation.

This is a significant concession, even though this compensation is still less than what the farmers have been demanding. The farmers said on Friday that the agitation would

continue until a Government Resolution (GR) was issued conceding their demands.

The farmers in Jetpar have been protesting against the installation of a 756 kV DC line by Halvad Transmission Limited over a distance



of 246 km from the KPS-2 Pooling Station in Khavda, Kutch, to a new switching station at Halvad in Morbi. Halvad Transmission Ltd is a Special Purpose Vehicle of AESL, the country's largest private-sector power transmission and distribution company.

Gujarat Agriculture Minister and government spokesperson Jitu Vaghani said on Friday that the government, after studying the policy in other states, had decided "to increase the compensation to ensure lakhs of farmers in the state get fair and market-based compensation for their land". The farmers had demanded compensation at the rate of 400% of the market price of their land. Vaghani said they would be paid double the market price.

Also, the compensation will now be calculated on the basis of an area larger than the actual base area of the electricity tower. "From now on, for the benefit of the farmers, more compensation will be paid by calculating one additional square metre on each side of the base area of the tower. For example, in the 765 kV transmission line, compensation was earlier given for 625 square metres, which has been revised to 729 square metres," Vaghani said.

## Three-month notice given, 141 km of footpaths cleared: Minister Krishna Byre Gowda

BENGALURU.(Agency)

After allegations that the vendors have been evicted without giving any notice, Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said that they have been given three months' notice. He shared a media byte of Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on March 20, when he held the Bengaluru Development portfolio, announcing that arterial and subarterial roads will be cleared of all encroachments to ensure pedestrian movement. Byre Gowda said that the government had given a three-month notice.

"This decision was made in an all-party meeting on March 20. The suggestion was made by several MLAs. The matter was discussed and was unanimously supported by all MLAs and MPs of all parties. All present raised their hands to support the resolution. Government has consulted elected representatives and officials," the minister said.

Byre Gowda reviewed the progress of the ongoing Safe Footpath Campaign, stating that approximately 141 kilometres of encroached footpaths had already been cleared during the first two days of the drive.

He reiterated that the campaign presently covers only around 20 per cent of Bengaluru's arterial and sub-arterial road network, where pedestrian movement is the highest, while commercial activity and street vending can continue on the remaining roads in accordance with the law.

## Punjab Congress row: 20 MLAs, former legislators turn up at Channi's residence

At least six party MLAs, several former legislators and many senior leaders of Punjab Congress gathered at Channi's residence in Morinda, Rupnagar, in a show of strength for the Jalandhar MP.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Factions emerged in Punjab Congress Friday with more than 20 sitting and former MLAs throwing their weight behind former CM Charanjit Singh Channi for state unit chief after the party decided to retain Amrinder Singh Raja Warring for the post.

At least six party MLAs, several former legislators and many senior leaders of Punjab Congress gathered at Channi's residence in Morinda, Rupnagar, in a show of strength for the Jalandhar MP.

The development comes after the party's central leadership decided to retain Warring as the state unit chief. The announcement came on Wednesday, alongside the

unveiling of the party's various committees for the 2027 Assembly polls.

Prominent attendees included former Deputy CM OP Soni, sitting and former MLAs such as Bharat Bhushan Ashu, Sukhbinder Singh Sukh Sarkaria, Rana Gurjeet Singh, Hardev Singh Laddi Sherowalia, Gurpreet Singh Kangar, Darshan Singh Brar, Harminder Singh Gill, Tarsem Singh DC, Lakhvir Singh Lakha, Inderbir Singh Bolaria, Dalvir Singh Khangura, and several others.

Several Congress leaders who spoke to the media openly rejected the high command's decision to retain Amrinder Singh Raja Warring as PPCC president and not appoint



Channi. Senior Congress leaders, including MLA Tripti Rajinder Singh Bajwa and former MP Mohammad Sadiq, said that any decision regarding the next course of action, including approaching the high command

with a list of demands has been left with Channi. "Everyone has said that whatever Channi decides will be acceptable to all. He has been given all the authority. This is not a meeting of rebels. This is a meeting of Congress," said Mohd Sadiq. Tripti Bajwa said the list of party appointments recently issued has come not as per the wishes of the people. "There is a feeling of disappointment and despondency. We are not against the high command... We have asked Channi to approach the high command again for reconsideration and put up the points so that a decision which is acceptable to all Congressmen is made," he said.

## Badrinath Dham temple committee orders probe into donation theft allegations

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

The Shri Badarinath Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC) on Friday ordered an inquiry into allegations circulating on social media about the "misappropriation" of offerings and donations at Shri Badrinath Dham.

A BKTC official said Dehradun-based outfit Bhairav Sena had alleged that an employee at Shri Badrinath Dham was embezzling donation money and offerings. "While no evidence was provided by the outfit, BKTC has ordered an inquiry into the matter," said the official. The BKTC has also sought responses from the employees looking after the donation counting, he said.

Speaking to , BKTC Chairman Hemant Dwivedi said, "BKTC has taken the allegations very seriously. Since it is a very sensitive matter associated with the sentiments and faith of crores of people, an order has been issued to constitute a committee to probe the allegations."

The Chairman also said that the inquiry report will be made public and strict action will be taken against the wrongdoer, if any. A BKTC official said that allegations were made on social media that the "personal assistant" of the BKTC Chairman was involved in the alleged embezzlement. Dwivedi, however, said, "I have no personal secretary. That person is a regular employee of BKTC and has worked as personal secretary with three chairmen in the past. If allegations made against him on social media are found to be true in the inquiry, action will be taken against him." BKTC Chief Executive Officer Sohan Singh Rangar, in a statement, said that the footage of the CCTV cameras installed on the Badrinath shrine premises was checked on Friday, but there was nothing conclusive in the videos.

NEWS BOX

Chess federation suspends former world champion who accused Naroditsky of cheating

**BILLINGS, Mont. (Agency)**  
The international governing body for chess on Friday suspended former world champion Vladimir Kramnik for at least a year after he leveled unproven allegations of cheating against fellow players, including Daniel Naroditsky, who died last year at age 29. Kramnik accused Naroditsky of cheating last year and continued to share suspicions on social media. Naroditsky, a prodigious chess player and American grandmaster who helped usher in the game's online boom with educational YouTube videos and livestreams, denied the allegations. Kramnik said in an email to The Associated Press that he plans to appeal the suspension. "I am absolutely confident that this unlawful verdict will ultimately be overturned, and I intend to pursue all necessary instances to the very end in order to restore justice and, in particular, my reputation," Kramnik said in a social media post. The chess federation said Kramnik publicly alleged cheating without "adequate evidentiary support," violating its rules against cyber bullying. The federation said combating cheating was one of its priorities, but that allegations must be addressed through its procedures and supported by appropriate



evidence. "He exposed identifiable players to unjustified reputational harm and undermined the safeguards established by the disciplinary framework," federation representatives said in their decision. Naroditsky was found dead at his North Carolina home in October. He was killed by an abnormal heartbeat caused by an accidental overdose, according to a toxicology report. Naroditsky had said before his death that Kramnik's allegations had taken a toll on him. Ever since the Kramnik stuff, I feel like if I start doing well, people assume the worst of intentions. The issue is just the lingering effect of it," Naroditsky said in his last livestream before his death. Kramnik called Naroditsky's death a tragedy. He said there had been a cynical campaign to link him to Naroditsky's death without any factual basis.

Will Sooryavanshi make his India debut in 2nd T20I? 15-year-old drops cryptic hint

**New York. (Agency)**  
Vaibhav Sooryavanshi may finally get his long-awaited India debut when the side takes on England in the second T20I in Bristol on Saturday. The 15-year-old opener has travelled with the Indian squad throughout the tour of the United Kingdom but is yet to feature in a match. He sat out both T20Is against Ireland before remaining on the bench for the opening T20I against England, which was washed out after India completed their innings. On Friday, the teenage opener posted an Instagram story with the caption "New chapter," sparking speculation that he could be in line for his first international appearance.



The left-hander earned his maiden India call-up after a breakthrough IPL season and has emerged as one of the most exciting young talents in Indian cricket. Videos of his clean striking during training have gone viral during the tour, further fuelling calls for his inclusion. India bowling coach Morne Morkel, however, suggested the team management would not rush the teenager into the XI at the expense of established players. "I think we need to respect the fact that we had our No. 1 batter in T20 cricket, Abhishek Sharma. Sanju was the player of the World Cup," Morkel said on Friday. "Samson had a great IPL. As a coaching staff, it's only fair to show trust and support for your players. Yes, a young man is knocking on the door, and that's exciting. But for not just those two players at the top, but for the entire group, it's good that we show our support." Morkel said India wanted to back players who had consistently delivered on the international stage. "It's about standing by some of the guys who have won World Cups, who have performed well in tough situations, and then building from there to strengthen our top order as much as possible in these conditions," he said. The former South Africa fast bowler also praised the youngster's attitude since joining the squad. "I think he's fitted in very well. At the nets as a 15-year-old on the international stage, it can be intimidating.

FIFA World Cup: Unbeaten Colombia edge Ghana 1-0, set up Switzerland clash in last 16

**➔ Jhon Arias scored the only goal as Colombia beat Ghana 1-0 in Kansas City on Friday to secure a place in the FIFA World Cup Round of 16, where they will face Switzerland in Vancouver on Tuesday.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Jhon Arias scored the only goal as Colombia extended their unbeaten FIFA World Cup campaign with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Ghana in Kansas City on Friday, booking a Round of 16 clash against Switzerland. Arias struck in the 14th minute, turning home from close range after Luis Suarez, who had replaced the injured Jhon Cordoba only moments earlier, delivered a dangerous cross from the right. The early goal was enough for Colombia, who controlled the game for long



periods and never allowed Ghana a shot on target. The South Americans, who failed to qualify for the 2022 World Cup, have now reached the knockout stage for the third time in their last four appearances after advancing to the quarterfinals in 2014 and the Round of 16 in 2018.

Colombia created chances throughout but were repeatedly denied by Ghana goalkeeper Lawrence Ati Zigi, who kept his side in the contest with a string of impressive saves. The goalkeeper finished with seven saves as Colombia dominated the statistics, outshooting Ghana 20-8 and forcing eight

efforts on target. Luis Diaz came close to doubling the lead before the break but dragged his shot wide from inside the box. In first-half stoppage time, Johan Mojica's header from Daniel Munoz's cross was tipped away by Ati Zigi to keep Ghana within a goal. The pressure continued after the restart. Ati Zigi produced another fine save to deny Gustavo Puerta before reacting quickly to keep out Diaz from close range minutes later. Diaz did have the ball in the net shortly afterwards, but the goal was ruled out for offside. Colombia continued to press for a second goal and nearly found it in the closing stages when Davinson Sanchez met Juan Fernando Quintero's corner with a powerful header, only for Ati Zigi to make yet another save. Ghana struggled to trouble Colombia's defence throughout the match. Goalkeeper Camilo Vargas had a quiet evening as the Colombian backline kept the African side from registering a single shot on target. Colombia will now face Switzerland in Vancouver on Tuesday for a place in the quarterfinals, while Ghana's World Cup campaign comes to an end after a spirited but ultimately unsuccessful display.

England bank on secret weapon ahead of Round of 16 match vs Mexico: Viagra

**➔ England could legally use Viagra to help cope with the high altitude in Mexico City ahead of their FIFA World Cup Round of 16 clash against co-hosts Mexico. While there is no indication the squad plans to use it, the medication is not prohibited by WADA and has previously been studied for its potential benefits in low-oxygen conditions.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
England's toughest opponent ahead of their FIFA World Cup Round of 16 clash against Mexico might not just be the home crowd or the Azteca Stadium - it could also be the altitude. With Thomas Tuchel's side preparing to play at the iconic Estadio Azteca, situated around 2,240 metres (7,350 feet) above sea level, the challenges of thinner air and reduced oxygen levels have become a major talking point ahead of Sunday's knockout fixture. And while England have made no suggestion that they will use it, there is one unusual aid available

to them if they choose. Viagra. The drug, more commonly associated with treating erectile dysfunction, is permitted under the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) rules



and has been studied for its potential benefits in helping athletes perform at high altitude. WHY ARE ENGLAND USING VIAGRA? Originally developed as a treatment for high blood pressure, Viagra (sildenafil) works by widening blood vessels, particularly in the lungs, allowing blood to circulate more efficiently in low-oxygen environments. Scientists have long examined whether those effects could help athletes delay

fatigue when competing at altitude. According to WADA's research, sildenafil does not offer a meaningful performance advantage at or near sea level and is therefore not included on its prohibited substances list. Studies have suggested it may improve exercise performance for some athletes at extreme altitudes above 3,800 metres, although evidence indicates its benefits are minimal at lower elevations such as Mexico City's 2,240 metres. That has not stopped teams from exploring the idea in the past. Argentine club UniA'n de Santa Fe reportedly used sildenafil before playing a Copa Sudamericana match in Quito, Ecuador, nearly 2,850 metres above sea level. Tuchel has already admitted England will have little time to adapt after travelling from their base in Kansas City. "We will go one night earlier. It makes sense. The ball will fly differently. It will fly maybe five yards more. It's just difficult. We just need the experience," Tuchel said earlier this week. "The recommendation is you either go ten days before, which is too long for us, or last minute, which is not allowed."

Brandon Miller storms past 17-year-old Cooper Lutkenhaus to win the 800 at Prefontaine Classic

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
This was shaping up to be the Cooper Lutkenhaus Show. The 17-year-old phenom was leading the 800 meters with the finish line just around the corner. That's when Brandon Miller made his move and stole not only the win but the show. Miller finished in 1 minute, 43.68 seconds to hold off Lutkenhaus during the Prefontaine Classic at Hayward Field on Friday night. "He's an amazing competitor. Everything he does, it makes me so excited because it pushes me to be better," the 24-year-old Miller said about Lutkenhaus on the Peacock broadcast. "At the end of the day, I'm out here competing with the best and he's one of them." The theme of the night was close finishes. Wilma Nielsen held off Juliette Whittaker by 0.18 seconds to win the 1,500. In the men's mile, Liam Murphy used a lean at the finish line to narrowly edge Stefan Nillessen by 0.01 seconds. The men's two-mile race, though, was all



Parker Wolfe as he powered down the home stretch. A pair of reigning Olympic champions earned wins Friday with Valarie Sion taking the women's discus and Ethan Katzberg capturing the hammer throw. The women's pole vault saw Sandi Morris edge fellow American Katie Moon. Women's 100 showdown Reigning 100 and 200 world champion Melissa Jefferson-Wooden is easing into this

season. She's only raced in two individual events so far heading into a stacked 100 on Saturday. Scheduled to be in the field with her will be fellow American Sha'Carri Richardson, Jamaican twins Tia and Tina Clayton and another powerful Jamaican in Shericka Jackson. There will be heats and those who advance will race again about two hours later. Jefferson-Wooden won the Pre event last season, while Richardson was victorious in 2024. "My goal is to execute. That's always been my goal," Jefferson-Wooden said. "That's the thing that has gotten me to where I am today." Men's 100 showdown Kenny Bednarek and Noah Lyles had a spicy competition in the 200 a year ago, leading to a shoving and shouting match after they crossed the finish line of a hotly contested race won by Lyles. Lyles won't be in the field for the 100 on Saturday, but Bednarek will be on the starting line along with reigning world champion Oblique Seville of Jamaica.

pull off a save and Egypt won 4-2 on spot kicks to set up a last-16 meeting with Argentina after the game finished at 1-1. "You have to talk to the coaches about that," Beach told Australian media of the goalkeeping switch. "I found out at the same time you guys did. "Obviously there was a plan that was put in place, and it wasn't for us to know about. "The coaches made a decision, and as far as it goes, Matty and I are here to do the job of whatever works best for the team and brings the best outcome for our team." Ryan was similarly in the dark, saying: "No, no, I wasn't told before the match." Former Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich said he was "astounded" by the move, while another goalkeeping icon Mark Schwarzer added: "I personally believe that the goalkeeper who's playing should stay in there." Ex-Socceroo Robbie Slater called it a failure by the coaching staff. "Beach was in terrific form and now we will never know if that form translates to a saved goal in the penalty shootout," he said in a column for The Australian newspaper. "Again, this is on the coaching staff and as far as I am concerned this is another fail." Slater was similarly outraged by defender Lucas Herrington being asked to take one of the penalties. The 18-year-old hit the bar. "With Australia in a penalty shootout for World Cup survival surely someone in the Socceroos brains trust should have said 'do we really want to hang this on an 18-year-old?'" Popovic defended the gambles and said he was proud of the team.



Cape Verde coach proud of historic World Cup run after pushing Argentina to limit

**Cape Verde coach Bubista said he was immensely proud of his players after the tournament debutants pushed defending champions Argentina to the brink before suffering a 3-2 extra-time defeat in a gripping FIFA World Cup Round of 32 clash on July 4.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Cape Verde coach Bubista said his side had "shown the world our identity" after the island nation's historic FIFA World Cup campaign ended with a spirited 3-2 extra-time defeat to defending champions Argentina in the Round of 32 on July 3. Argentina vs Cabo Verde, FIFA World Cup 2026: Highlights Playing in their first World Cup and ranked

67th in the world, Cape Verde emerged as one of the tournament's biggest success stories. They held former champions Spain and Uruguay in the group stage before taking Argentina the full 120 minutes in a contest few expected to be so closely fought. Despite the heartbreak of elimination, Bubista said pride outweighed disappointment. "We're sad, of course, because we're leaving the competition and because we got so close, so close.

"Even though they are sad, the players were hugging each other, they were crying. This is part of growing. This helps us grow, and also shows that the team has a soul." The former defender said matching the reigning world champions for long periods was proof of his team's belief and character. "I feel pride in my players and what they did. They did it with dignity and courage," he said. "I think Argentina showed why they are world champions. I think I can say our team showed how willing they were to play this match." "I don't think any other team



could have scored two goals against Argentina and taken the match into extra time. I think that shows the character of our team and how skilled our team is. They did it with bravery and never did we lose our identity." For

Bubista, the campaign was about more than results. It was a chance for Cape Verde, a nation of just over half a million people, to introduce itself to the football world. "More so than just playing, this was about showing the world our identity," he said. "Ours was a team that throughout the entire tournament, for as long as we were here, wanted to play and wanted to play against the best teams in the world." "We played fairly and we stayed on a level playing field with our opponents. I think everyone should thank the players for their tournament, because they showed what our small country is about." Cape Verde leave the tournament without a place in the quarter-finals but with a place in history. Their fearless performances, capped by an extraordinary display against Argentina, ensured the World Cup debutants earned respect far beyond the result.

'No Objection To Film's Title':

# Shraddha Kapoor's

## Eetha Wins Vithabai Narayangaonkar's Daughter's Approval

The conversation surrounding Shraddha Kapoor's upcoming film Eetha has intensified following the release of its teaser. While audiences praised Shraddha's striking transformation into iconic Lavani performer Vithabai Narayangaonkar, the film's title quickly sparked controversy. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) questioned why the biopic was titled Eetha instead of using Vithabai's name, with some reports claiming that the late artiste's family also had reservations. However, Vithabai's eldest daughter has now broken her silence, revealing the family's actual stance on the issue.

Mangala Bansode Karavadikar has spoken out amid the ongoing debate over the title of Shraddha Kapoor's upcoming film, Eetha. Her clarification comes after reports suggested that Vithabai Narayangaonkar's sons, Kailash and Rajesh Narayangaonkar, and her grandson, Mohit Narayangaonkar, were dissatisfied with the decision to name the biopic Eetha. The 75-year-old Tamasha artiste, who is Vithabai's eldest daughter and a recipient of the President's Award, dismissed the speculation, stating that the family has no issues with the title. According to her, Eetha was an affectionate name by which audiences in villages fondly addressed her mother during her performances.

She reportedly told the Times of India, "We have no objection to the film's title. I have spoken with Mohit and have requested him to not give out any further statements on the same. The title is appropriate because in those days, people from the villages where my mother performed would often call her Eetha." She added that she had also shared this detail with director Laxman Utekar when he consulted her during the film's development.

Mangala further shared, "I have been performing on stage since I was seven years old and have heard people address my mother by that name. We are happy that through this film people will come to know about my mother and how dedicated she was to her craft."

The row over the film's title erupted after a report stated that the Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP) Film and Cultural Department had objected to the use of Eetha. According to the party, a biopic based on the life of legendary Lavani artiste Vithabai Narayangaonkar should carry her name instead.

Meanwhile, the film, also starring Randeep Hooda and Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, is all set to hit theatres on August 28.



# Raveena Tandon

## Says Bollywood No Longer Writes Women As 'Full-Fledged Comedic Dynamos'



There's something about the comedies of the '90s that fans still can't get enough of. The hilarious one-liners, over-the-top situations and unforgettable characters continue to entertain audiences even today. But according to one actor who lived through that era, one important ingredient has slowly disappeared over the years.

After making a comeback to the comedy genre with Welcome to the Jungle, Raveena Tandon has spoken about how the role of women in Bollywood comedies has changed. While the film has been criticised for not giving many of its female actors enough screen time, Raveena believes the issue goes beyond just one movie.

Speaking to PTL, the actor said legendary star Sridevi set the benchmark for female-led comedy in Hindi cinema. Remembering her performances, Raveena said, "What she did in Mr India, the whole Hawa Hawai sequence, Charlie Chaplin act and Chaal Baaz was sheer genius. She proved that a mainstream, gorgeous heroine could twist her face, be utterly goofy, do slapstick, and still look absolutely mesmerising."

Raveena also praised Juhi Chawla's comic timing and said actresses like

Geeta Bali and Madhubala brought a unique "witty spark" to the screen. However, she feels things are very different now.

Talking about the changing landscape of comedy films, Raveena said, "The space has changed, and frankly, we've lost some of that organic playground we had in the '90s. Today, comedy films have become highly structured and heavily plot-driven, or they are huge ensembles. In the process, the heroine comic tracks have shrunk."

The actor added that today's actresses have the talent to pull off comedy but often don't get the opportunity because of the way female characters are written.

"Today's girls are incredibly sharp, polished, and have fantastic timing, but the scripts often confine them to being glamorous catalyst characters rather than full-fledged comedic dynamos. We need writers to intentionally create flawed, chaotic, and downright hilarious female protagonists without worrying about making them look perfect or politically correct all the time," she told PTL.

Raveena is currently seen in Welcome to the Jungle, the third film in the Welcome franchise. The series began with Welcome in 2007, starring Akshay Kumar, followed by Welcome Back in 2015 with John Abraham. Both films also featured Anil Kapoor and Nana Patekar and were directed by Anees Bazmee.



## Aamir Khan-Gauri Spratt's Kids To Attend Their Wedding; Why Shahid Kapoor Refused To Shoot Cocktail 2 In Delhi



Aamir Khan and Gauri Spratt are set to marry on July 5, but the couple is keeping the celebrations far from the spotlight. Instead of a star-studded gathering, the actor has planned an intimate wedding ceremony at his Bandra home, with only family members and close friends expected to be present. The couple will reportedly register their marriage at Aamir's residence in Mumbai before holding a small ceremony during the first half of the day. One of the most personal aspects of the ceremony will be the involvement of their children. Aamir Khan's children, actor Junaid Khan, entrepreneur Ira Khan and son Azad, will all take part in the celebrations.

Shahid Kapoor, Kriti Sanon, and Rashmika Mandanna starrer Cocktail 2 hit theatres recently. The Homi Adajania-directed film has been enjoying a decent run at the box office despite mixed reviews from critics. The Film may have been extensively shot against the picturesque backdrop of Italy, but the team also shot in Delhi-NCR, and it proved far less glamorous. During one schedule, the cast and crew had to work amid hazardous pollution levels, with the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) soaring beyond 500. Looking back at the experience, line producer Sumit Tyagi recently revealed that Shahid once refused to step outside because of the alarming air quality.

Ramayana is one of the most awaited films of 2026. Ranbir Kapoor's fans are eager to watch his Lord Ram avatar. However, as everyone waits for the Nitesh Tiwari's directorial, a video, allegedly from the film's trailer, has now been leaked online. In the viral clip, Ranbir can be seen fighting a demon. Several X users claim that the leaked video is from the trailer, which was recently shown at the CinemaCon event.

Shreya Kalra's boyfriend, Rishabh Jaiswal, has come to her defence after she revealed that Akanksha Chamola is bisexual. The revelation was made on Netflix's Lock Upp 2, and Rishabh took to social media to explain to fans how the "secret" had already been revealed by Akanksha to the show's makers, and could likely be revealed eventually anyway.

Bobby Deol Has The Sweetest Reaction To Sunny Deol's Batwara 1947 Teaser: 'You're The Best, Bhaiya!'

Sunny Deol's upcoming film Batwara 1947 has already got fans talking after its teaser dropped. But one reaction stood out from the rest. Bobby Deol was quick to shower love on his elder brother, sharing an adorable message that fans of the Deol family are sure to love.

Bobby took to Instagram soon after the teaser was released and couldn't stop praising Sunny and the film. Sharing the teaser, he wrote, "You're the best, Bhaiya! So excited and looking forward to this film. Wishing you and the entire team all the very best. The teaser looks amazing, this movie is definitely going to be awesome!"

Batwara 1947 reunites Sunny Deol with director Rajkumar Santoshi after iconic films like Ghayal, Damini and Ghatak. The movie is also special because it marks Sunny's first collaboration with Aamir Khan Productions.

The film is based on Asghar Wajahat's famous play Jis Lahore Nai Vekhya, O Janyia E Nai. Set during the 1947 Partition, it tells a story of humanity, hope and sacrifice in the middle of one of India's most difficult periods.

Sunny will be seen playing Sikander Mirza, while Preity Zinta returns to the big screen with the film. The cast also includes Shabana Azmi, Ali Fazal, Abhimanyu Singh and Karan Deol in key roles.

The project was first announced as Lahore 1947 before being renamed Batwara 1947. Behind the scenes, Santosh Sivan has handled the cinematography, A.R. Rahman has composed the music and Javed Akhtar has written the lyrics.

The film is all set to release in theatres on August 14, 2026, just ahead of the Independence Day holiday.

Meanwhile, Bobby has a busy lineup of his own. After Bandar, which released in June 2026, he will next be seen in YRF Spy Universe's Alpha. Directed by Shiv Rawail, the action thriller stars Alia Bhatt and Sharvari in the lead. Anil Kapoor plays an important role, while Hrithik Roshan will make a special cameo. The film releases on July 3, 2026. Bobby will also play the main villain in Vijay's Jana Nayagan, directed by H. Vinoth. The film is currently awaiting its theatrical release after footage from the movie leaked online a few months ago.

## NEWS BOX

## When 'man' didn't mean humanity: How language excluded women for centuries

World.(Agency)

Earlier this year, the director general of assessments of Canada's Integrated Threat Assessment Centre testified before the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women. He explained that the anti-feminist movement is becoming increasingly relevant to national security. He argued that in certain contexts, "anti-feminist ideology can function as an enabling factor along pathways to violent extremism." Similarly, the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women reports that misogynistic views are becoming embedded in key institutions, including governments and political bodies, and are now shaping debates over education policy. These ideas are "aimed at dismantling or blocking progressive change for women's equality and human rights," according to the organization. As a historian working in Canada whose research covers sexuality and gender in medieval Europe, with a specific focus on masculinity and male sexuality, I can say that none of this is new in western society. The power of sexist language, in fact, rests on a question medieval scholars debated centuries ago: did the terms "man" and "mankind" include women, or men alone? Gendered creation story

Linguistic debates about the creation of humans emerged from the two very different versions of creation contained in the Book of Genesis.

## Pakistan Deputy PM Ishaq Dar's Relative Arrested In Gangrape Of Foreign Women

Lahore. (Agency)

A relative of a senior Pakistani politician was among four suspects arrested for the alleged gangrape of two foreigners here, police said on Friday.

The suspects, identified as Muhammad Raza Dar, Hassan Raza, Sikandar Khan and Sajid Ali, were sent to five-day police remand by a Lahore court on Friday.

Raza Dar, identified as the prime suspect, is linked to senior politician Ishaq Dar, Pakistan's deputy prime minister and foreign minister. "Since it is a very sensitive matter as a close relative of Deputy PM Ishaq Dar is involved in this high-profile case, police are investigating it from all aspects," a police officer said.

The foreign nationals, one from the Netherlands and the other from Venezuela, were allegedly kidnapped and gangraped by five men in Lahore on June 29. The police rescued the women after receiving a call from Spain from one of the victims' fathers. Lahore police on Thursday registered a case against five suspects and arrested four of them under sections 365A (kidnapping) and 375A (gang rape) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

The fifth accused is on the run and raids are underway to arrest him, police said. The women told police that they met Raza Dar in Singapore in October 2025, and he invited them to visit Pakistan. A second police official told PTI that the women and Raza Dar were partners in a cryptocurrency venture. Raza Dar arranged business visas for their Pakistan visit, and they arrived in Lahore on June 29. One of the women told police that upon arrival in Lahore, Raza Dar and the other suspects kidnapped them and took them to a house where they allegedly gangraped them and demanded ransom for their release.

## Massive wildfire menaces Portugal, devours thousands of hectares

world.(Agency)

A massive wildfire raging in northern Portugal has scorched an estimated 10,000 hectares of forest, prompting the government to seek international assistance as extreme heat and dry conditions fuel multiple blazes across the country. The fire, which broke out on Wednesday night in the municipality of Vouzela in the district of Viseu, has left at least 9 people injured, with 2 in serious condition. According to



Portugal's national civil protection authority, three firefighters suffered minor injuries, while one civilian sustained serious burns. Around 1,000 firefighters, supported by some 300 vehicles and eight planes or helicopters, have been deployed to battle the blaze. Four other smaller outbreaks are also being fought by at least 100 firefighters each. Prime Minister Luis Montenegro said Portugal had activated the European Civil Protection Mechanism and bilateral agreements with Spain and Morocco to bring in reinforcements. "Not because our capacities are already exhausted but because in the current situation, our entire territory is exposed to a very high risk," AFP quoted Montenegro saying. Due to very hot and dry weather, with temperatures expected to reach 44 degrees Celsius in some areas, Portugal's meteorological agency has placed 12 of the country's 18 mainland districts on red alert, with the highest warning level set to remain in place through Saturday and Sunday in around 10 regions. Meanwhile, neighbouring Spain is also battling a rapidly spreading wildfire near the Costa Brava. The blaze has burned 1,280 hectares (3,160 acres), forcing the evacuation of around 150 people, including about 70 children from a holiday camp. More than 200 firefighters, backed by aerial resources, are battling the flames, while over 200 troops from the army's emergencies unit have been deployed.

## France records 29% surge in deaths during record June heatwave

France recorded its hottest June since 1947, with temperatures topping 40°C across more than 40% of the country during the June 17-30 heatwave, Meteo-France said.

PARIS.(Agency)

France endured a rise of nearly 30 percent in the number of deaths recorded during the week starting June 22, as a record-breaking heatwave linked to climate change gripped much of Europe, health authorities said Friday. The number of deaths increased by around 62 percent in the Paris region over the same period, Public Health France said. Scientists have said human-caused climate

change was "unequivocally" responsible for the intensity of the heatwave that battered Europe in late June. France recorded its hottest June since records began in 1947, weather service Meteo-France said, with the heatwave from June 17 to 30 seeing temperatures spike above 40C across more than 40 percent of the country. Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu's government faces a no-confidence vote in parliament, possibly on Monday, over its alleged poor preparedness for the extreme heat, which forced schools to close and trains to be cancelled. With at least one in three homes poorly insulated or ill-equipped for heatwaves, French residents without blinds scrambled to cover their windows with survival blankets or chalk-based paint to cool their sizzling interiors. Health authorities said there had been at least "an increase of 29.1 percent, corresponding to 2,025 additional deaths" during the week starting June 22, when temperatures peaked, compared with the previous week. Public

Health France noted "a clear rise" in deaths among 45 to 64-year-olds. But "people aged



65 and over account for the largest share of deaths," it added. Deaths at home. Deaths at home nearly doubled within a single week, it added. Lecornu has said more people died in their homes during the latest heatwave than in previous episodes. Health officials said young people were also among the victims. During that last week of June, four young children died across France in parked cars that overheated. Some politicians say France has failed to implement measures to

address rising temperatures. Around 15,000 people died in France during a severe heatwave in 2003, with many elderly people dying in nursing homes. The June heatwave is considered more intense, but authorities say its consequences have been less severe. "It will probably not be comparable," Health Minister Stephanie Rist said on Friday. Nicolas Revel, director general of the Paris public hospital system, has said he expects the death toll from the June heatwave to be lower than that of 2003, but "probably" higher than an episode last year that claimed 5,700 lives. The Greens have claimed the June heatwave might have caused 10,000 deaths in France, prompting a strong rebuttal from Lecornu. Last month's heatwave caused thousands of excess deaths in Europe, according to estimates in France, Spain and Belgium. Belgium recorded 39 percent more fatalities than normal between June 18 and 29, with 1,222 excess deaths during the period, health authorities there said Friday.

## Gave Iran a week off because we're nice: Trump's swipe amid Ali Khamenei funeral

World.(Agency)

As Iran began a teary-eyed farewell for its former Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who perished at the beginning of the Middle East conflict on February 28, US President Donald Trump on Friday took a swipe at Tehran, saying America allowed Iran a week for the funeral because Washington is "nice". Speaking at a large gathering at Mount Rushmore ahead of the July 4 festivities, Trump referred to the recent conflict with Iran and reiterated his administration's military action against the Islamic Republic. "We knocked the hell out of Iran. They're dying to settle. They want to settle so badly.

We gave them a week off for a funeral because we're nice," Trump said while addressing the crowd, who erupted in a thunderous cheer and cheeky laughter as the President quipped. Trump was at Mount Rushmore, the granite mountain in South Dakota where the heads of four American presidents are carved, as part of celebrations marking the 250th anniversary of the United States. Trump's remarks came as Iran began a week-long state funeral for

Khamenei, who was killed on February 28 during the opening phase of the US-Israel conflict. The longtime Iranian



leader died in a joint US-Israeli airstrike along with several members of his family, including his daughter, son-in-law, infant granddaughter and daughter-in-law. Although Islamic tradition generally calls for burial within 24 hours, Iranian authorities postponed the funeral because of the war and heightened security concerns. The ceremonies were scheduled only after an interim truce was reached last month. ALI KHAMENEI'S DELAYED FUNERAL

The funeral began in Tehran on Friday

with thousands of mourners gathering at the Grand Mosalla, where Khamenei's coffin was placed in state. The ceremony drew senior Iranian political and military leaders, many of whom were visibly emotional while paying their respects.

President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi attended the ceremony. Thousands of mourners dressed in black filled the prayer hall, with supporters chanting slogans, weeping and beating their chests in accordance with Shiite mourning traditions. The week-long procession will take Khamenei's remains through the holy city of Qom before travelling to the Iraqi shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala. He will be buried with full state honours in Mashhad on July 9 near the shrine of Imam Reza. The ceremonies have attracted delegations from several countries, including India, Pakistan, Russia and China, even as Iran continues to navigate the political and security fallout following the death of the country's longest-serving Supreme Leader.

## Over 100 Hindu-Americans Mark US 250th Anniversary, Raise Hinduphobia Concerns

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

More than 130 Hindu Americans from 15 states gathered on Capitol Hill this week for the fifth annual Hindu Advocacy Day, combining celebrations of the United States' 250th anniversary with discussions on religious freedom, civic participation and concerns over what organisers described as a rise in anti-Hindu hate and Hinduphobia. Hosted by the Coalition of Hindus of North America (CoHNA), the event brought together lawmakers, community leaders, students, veterans, researchers and interfaith representatives for a day of dialogue focused on the contributions of Hindu Americans and challenges facing the community. According to the organisers, seven members of Congress and 12 congressional staffers from both Republican and Democratic offices participated in the programme. The advocacy initiative began before



the formal event, with Hindu delegates conducting more than 50 meetings with Senate and House staff while visiting over 120 congressional offices to discuss issues affecting Hindu Americans and strengthen engagement with elected representatives. Speaking at the event, CoHNA President Nikunj Trivedi said the gathering reflected both the diversity of the Hindu American community and its commitment to civic engagement. "It was a powerful day on Capitol Hill. We came together as

Americans, sharing stories, building relationships and singing the national anthem," Trivedi said. He highlighted the varied backgrounds of Hindu Americans, including students, entrepreneurs, healthcare professionals, engineers, veterans and scientists, adding that the anniversary of America's founding offered an opportunity to celebrate shared democratic values while engaging lawmakers. The event featured testimonies from community members spanning multiple generations and professions. Representatives from Armenian and Jewish organisations joined the discussions, alongside a city council member from Maple Grove, Minnesota, underscoring broader interfaith support. A youth panel organised by CoHNA's Youth Action Network (CYAN) highlighted student-led advocacy efforts at Rutgers University.

## 'Fake News': Israel Rejects Report On Plotting To Kill Iranian Negotiators

US is Israel's closest ally, but President Donald Trump has been publicly critical of Israeli PM Netanyahu in recent weeks after Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon threatened peace talks with Iran.

World.(Agency)

Israel has strongly rejected a US media report that claimed US officials feared it could target senior Iranian negotiators during peace talks with Tehran, calling the report "fake news" and "complete fabrication of reality." In a statement posted on X after the report was published, the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied that Israel intended to kill Iranian negotiators involved in ceasefire and peace efforts. What The Report Claimed

According to The New York Times report, current and former US officials believed Israel might have been considering plans to kill two senior Iranian officials while Washington was engaged in negotiations with Tehran. "As usual, The New York Times' latest story about Israel and the Iranian negotiators is fake news," the Prime Minister's Office said. "A complete fabrication of reality." The officials named in the report were Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, both of whom were involved in efforts to negotiate a ceasefire and a broader peace arrangement.

The report said American concerns grew during ceasefire negotiations that began in April. Some US officials reportedly feared



that any attempt to assassinate the Iranian leaders could derail the talks and reignite fighting. According to the report, the US even asked other countries in the region to warn Iran about the possibility that the two officials could be targeted.

US Concerns During Peace Talks

The report said US officials acknowledged

that during the most intense phase of the conflict, Araghchi and Ghalibaf, as senior members of Iran's leadership, could have been viewed as legitimate targets by Israel, which was seeking to topple Iran's hard-line government.

However, once negotiations gained momentum in April, American officials reportedly believed any attack on the two men could jeopardise the diplomatic process and end hopes of a ceasefire.

The war began on February 28 with an Israeli strike that killed Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and several other senior officials. The operation was reportedly based in part on US intelligence. US is Israel's closest ally, but President Donald Trump has been publicly critical of Israeli PM Netanyahu in recent weeks after Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon threatened peace talks with Iran.