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## 'Can't tolerate': What Tejashwi Yadav said on brother Tej Pratap's expulsion from RJD

**The Sikh Times**  
**Sanjay Kumar**

Patna, May 25: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday reacted to the expulsion of



his elder brother, Tej Pratap Yadav, from the party for 'irresponsible behaviour' and said the party "cannot tolerate such things". Tej Pratap Yadav was expelled from the party for six years by RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav for his "irresponsible behaviour". The RJD supremo also snapped all family ties with his elder son. The expulsion comes a day after Tej Pratap Yadav shared a photograph with a woman on social media, referring to her as his 'part-

ner' of nearly 12 years. The post was soon deleted and Tej Pratap Yadav claimed that his Facebook account was hacked and that his photos were edited wrongfully. "We cannot tolerate such things, we are working and are dedicated to the people of Bihar. If it's about my big brother, political life and personal life are different. He has the right to make his personal decisions. He is an adult and free to make decisions," Tejashwi Yadav told reporters on the expulsion of his elder brother from the party. "Our party's chief has made it clear, and ever since he has said so, it is his feelings. We didn't question such things... What he is doing in his personal life, nobody asks before doing anything. I have come to know about it via the media only," he added. Lalu Yadav wrote on microblogging platform X that the "activities, public conduct and irresponsible behaviour of the eldest son are not in accordance with our family values ??and traditions." "Ignoring moral values ??in

## CMs from NDA-ruled states pass resolution hailing Operation Sindoor

**The Sikh Times**  
**Simmi Kaur Babbar**

New Delhi, May 25: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday praised the success of Operation Sindoor, pointing out that it was a reaffirmation of the achievements the country has made in the defence sector. While addressing chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ruled states, he said the Union government's decision to carry out caste enumeration is a step towards bringing the marginalised and those on the margins of development into the mainstream said people aware of the details. A resolution hailing the valour of the armed forces during Operation Sindoor, India's military strike against terror camps in Pakistan; and government's iteration of a new national narrative that the country will respond to any terrorist attack decisively was passed at the meeting. A second resolution lauding the caste census that was announced by the Union government earlier this month was also passed.

Haryana chief minister Nayab Saini proposed a resolution on caste enumeration. BJP president JP Nadda said the ruling NDA does not believe in

Sindoor. Maharashtra deputy CM and Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde seconded the resolution that hailed the armed forces and the "decisive, courageous, and nation-first leadership of Narendra Modi". The document commended the "exemplary bravery, strategic military precision, and unwavering dedication to the nation demonstrated by the defense forces during Operation Sindoor and the strong and unequivocal message delivered to cross-border terrorists." The NDA government's commitment to India's sovereignty and national security, historic reforms under PM Modi for defense forces — including One Rank One Pension, indigenisation, infrastructure development along the borders, and modernisation also found mention in the resolution. "There was endorsement of a new national narrative- India will respond to any terrorist attack decisively — and strictly on India's terms," said a person aware of the details. Seconding the resolution Shinde said, "Operation Sindoor is not just a military operation; it is a symbol of India's national resolve.



caste politics, but caste enumeration will help those left behind in different fields to develop. According to people aware of the details, Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal Sharma moved the resolution, congratulating the unprecedented success of Operation

## Sleeping police sub-inspector dies as ACP office roof collapses

Ghaziabad, May 25: In a shocking incident, a police sub-inspector died on Saturday after the roof of the ACP office in Ghaziabad's Ankur Vihar collapsed following heavy rain in Delhi and its surrounding areas. The deceased was identified as sub-inspector Virendra Mishra. He was a reader of ACP Ankur Vihar and had slept in the office on Saturday night. Ajay Kumar Singh, the ACP of Ankur Vihar, said the police came to know about the incident in the morning. "During heavy rainfall and gusty winds, the roof of the office collapsed, and the debris fell on the SI who was sleeping on a bed. We came to know early morning about the roof collapse, but the SI had passed away by then," he told HT. The police have sent the body for a post-mortem and have ordered a probe. Delhi and the national capital region cities were on Saturday night battered by rain and thunderstorms, which disrupted flight operations, uprooted trees and electricity poles, and triggered waterlogging in several areas. The sudden change in weather led to a sharp drop in mercury, with the city recording a minimum temperature of 19.8 degrees Celsius, 6.9 degrees below the normal. The India Meteorological Department said the city's primary weather station at Safdarjung recorded winds gusting up to 82 kmph and 81.2 mm of rain in six hours — between 11.30 pm and 5.30 am.

## Pakistan on notice, any future misadventure will lead to its destruction: J&K L-G

**The Sikh Times**  
**Navdeep Singh Sahni**

Jammu, May 25: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said Pakistan has been put on notice and if it resorts to any misadventure in future, the Indian armed forces will make sure to destroy the "terrorist state". Assuring people that there will be no discrimination between terrorists and their supporters, Sinha said "their actions will be met with similar punishments". Addressing the All J-K Jat Sabha here, the lieutenant governor (L-G) highlighted the valour of the armed forces and reaffirmed the government's resolve to completely rid Jammu and Kashmir of terrorism. "Pakistan is on notice. If it resorts to any misadventure in future, our armed forces will make sure to destroy this terrorist state. I assure the people that there will be no discrimination between armed terrorists and their supporters and sympathis-

ers. Their actions will be met with similar punishments," Sinha said. He also appealed to the Jat community and all sections of society to strengthen their resolve and



unite in the fight against the divisive forces threatening peace and social fabric in the country. "In these challenging times, your responsibility to uphold national unity is more crucial than ever," Sinha said. Stating that the Jat community has a rich legacy of

valour, courage and sacrifice, the L-G said, "A significant population of the Jat community resides near our borders, making them the country's first line of defence. I am proud that your devotion to the motherland has deepened the spirit of nationalism in the society." Sinha also paid homage to the victims of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack and those killed in Pakistani shelling between May 7 and 10, after India launched Operation Sindoor to hit terror camps across the border. "The Government of India is committed to proper rehabilitation of the affected families," he said. "We must celebrate our diversity and foster unity to defeat the adversary's nefarious designs. Our brave armed forces scripted a new saga of valour with Operation Sindoor. "It is now our sacred task to transform the vision of a united and Viksit Bharat into reality and pay a fitting tribute to our brave-hearts who cherished the dream of a powerful nation," Sinha said.

## Special session of Parliament will send message of unity in India's fight against Pak-sponsored terrorism: Pilot

**The Sikh Times**  
**Tejinder Kaur Babbar**

New Delhi, May 25: Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Sunday said the opposition has been demanding that the government convene a special session of Parliament and added this would send a message of unity to entire world in India's fight against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. The support that the government has got from the country and the opposition on what should be the response post the Pahalgam terror attack is unprecedented and unconditional, Pilot said. The Congress leader said that a unified voice would be raised against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism if a special session of Parliament is convened which will send a message of India's unity against terrorism to the world. "We had demanded a special session of Parliament so that one voice goes out in entire world that entire India is united for country's sovereignty and

integrity... and in this fight to weed out Pakistan-sponsored terror," he told a news conference here along with Rohtak MP Deepender Singh Hooda and other Congress leaders from Haryana. Pilot said the multi-party delegation, currently visiting different nations as part of the Centre's global diplomatic outreach to draw attention to India's fight against cross-border terrorism, especially in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, would have got even more weight to keep their views had the Parliament session been convened before they were sent. Pilot, a former deputy chief minister of Rajasthan, was addressing the media here on the sidelines of 'Jai Hind Sabha', which the Congress is organizing across India to salute the supreme valour and success of the armed forces. These meetings will see the involvement of army veterans, party lead-

ers and the general public, Congress general secretary in-charge organisation K C Venugopal had recently said in a post on



X. Referring to the Operation Sindoor, Pilot said the Congress extended full support to the government after the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were killed to give a befitting response to the perpetrators of the cowardly incident.

"While we are all proud of our armed forces, it saddens me when some senior BJP leaders in responsible positions like Madhya Pradesh Minister Vijay Shah and Rajya Sabha MP from Haryana Ram Chander Jangra are using indecent language with regard to our brave army officers and people killed in Pahalgam attack and their families," he added. Pilot asked whether the BJP will take any action against such leaders and remove them from their posts. Jangra on Saturday stoked a row by saying that the tourists who came under terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam should have put up a fight and the women, who lost their husbands, should have acted like 'veerangna' (warrior women). He claimed that the number of casualties would have been low had the tourists undergone Agniveer training and the ladies "lacked" the spirit of warrior women.

## PM Modi has shown visionary leadership by taking historic decision of nationwide caste census: Nayab Singh Saini

**The Sikh Times**  
**Sourabh Sharma**

Chandigarh, May 25 - Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi has shown visionary leadership by taking the historic decision of conducting a nationwide caste census. This decision is an unprecedented step towards social justice which will pave the way to provide rights and opportunities to the most deprived and neglected sections of society. The Chief Minister said this in the meeting of Chief Ministers and Deputy Chief Ministers of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) chaired by Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi in New Delhi today. In this meeting, a resolution was passed praising the valour of the armed forces in Operation Sindoor and the courageous leadership of the Prime Minister. Along with Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Sh. Amit Shah,

Defence Minister Sh. Rajnath Singh and BJP National President Sh. Jagat Prakash Nadda also attended this one-day conference. The Chief Minister said the mantra of the government 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas' has been vivid-



ly manifested in this decision. The caste census will help in understanding the

socio-economic condition of the deprived communities, which will lead to targeted policies for their education, employment and overall progress. This effort reflects the unwavering commitment to bring the light of development to every corner of society. He said the caste census will accurately assess the real condition of various communities, making the schemes more effective. This is part of the vision of the government, which focuses on providing equal opportunity and respect to every Indian. This step of the government will raise the standard of living of the most vulnerable sections of society, which is another example of people-centric governance. The Chief Minister said the Prime Minister showed his generosity and foresight by accepting this long-standing demand. This move proves that the government respects the views of all and is

capable of taking big decisions in national interest and this leadership will bring more glory to India on the global platform. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said the Congress only did politics on the issue of caste census for a long time. By repeatedly postponing the issue and using it as a political weapon, the party not only stopped the progress towards social justice but also promoted division in society on caste basis. He said this hindered the deprived communities from getting their fair share and benefits of government schemes. He said the government has repeatedly proved its sensitivity towards the poor and deprived with revolutionary schemes like Ujjwala Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, PM Awas Yojana and Jan Dhan Yojana. Now, the decision of caste census will further strengthen these efforts, so that every section can take advantage of the welfare governance of the government. The Chief Minister said this decision of the government for the underprivileged will be written in golden letters in the history of India.

## Pakistan will pay increasingly higher price for backing terror: Shashi Tharoor

**The Sikh Times**  
**Naresh Malhotra**

New Delhi, May 25: New Delhi: India has demonstrated that Pakistan will have to pay an increasingly higher price for backing terror attacks against the country because Islamabad has failed to display any seriousness about tackling terrorism, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, the leader of an all-party delegation visiting the US, said on Sunday. Tharoor also highlighted India's attempts in the past to work with Pakistan to tackle terrorism, such as in the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks and the 2016 Pathankot attack. Pakistan is a "revisionist power" that is willing to use



terror to gain control of Indian territory and the Pahalgam attack of April 22 was aimed at undermining normalisation in Jammu and Kashmir and provoking a backlash in the rest of India since the terrorists targeted only Hindus, Tharoor said during an interaction with think tanks and the media at the Indian consulate in New York. The delegation led by Tharoor is one of seven teams of parliamentarians, political leaders and former diplomats that the Indian government has sent to different parts of the world to inform key partners of New Delhi's new approach to combating cross-border terrorism and to explain the rationale behind Operation Sindoor, launched on May 7 to target terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan. "No one sitting in Pakistan is going to be allowed to believe that they can just walk across the border and kill our citizens with impunity. There will be a price to pay and that price has been going up systematically," Tharoor said. He noted that India responded to the Uri attack of 2016 with surgical strikes across the Line of Control (LoC) and the Pulwama suicide bombing of 2019 with an air strike on a terrorist camp across the international border. "Now, we have not just crossed the LoC, we have also crossed the international border. We have hit Pakistan in their heartland and we've done so only to send a message about terror. We remain absolutely clear that we are not interested in warfare with Pakistan," he said.

## By-polls to 2 Guj seats on Jun 19 as AAP, Cong seek to challenge BJP dominance

New Delhi, May 25: By-elections to Gujarat's Visavadar and Kadi assembly seats will be held on June 19 and the results will be announced four days later, the Election Commission of India (ECI) said on Sunday, setting the stage for a three-way contest between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Opposition Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). A gazette notification for the by-elections will be issued on Monday. The scrutiny of nominations will take place on June 3. The candidates can withdraw their names until June 5. AAP lawmaker Bhupendra Bhayani's resignation and defection to the BJP necessitated the by-poll to the Visavadar seat in the Junagadh district. The defection reduced AAP's strength in the assembly to four, making Visavadar critical to the party's foothold in the region. The Mehsana district's Kadi (Scheduled Caste) seat fell vacant following lawmaker Karshanbhai Solanki's death in February. The AAP has named former state chief Gopal Italia as its candidate from Visavadar, banking on his advocacy for farmers and anti-corruption activism to regain the seat it won in the 2022 assembly polls. The BJP has historically dominated Visavadar, particularly during former chief minister Keshubhai Patel's tenure. It is yet to field a candidate. The BJP is expected to capitalise on Bhayani's defection to wrest the seat.



## NEWS BOX

## Man arrested for assaulting 8-year-old daughter in Kannur

**KANNUR.** A Prapoyil resident has been arrested for brutally assaulting his eight-year-old daughter at Cherupuzha in Kannur. The accused is Jose, 39. The arrest was made following a distressing video, wherein he was seen assaulting his daughter, using abusive language and threatening her with a knife. The clip, reportedly sent to the child's mother, surfaced on social media on Friday night, sparking public outrage.

In response, a police team led by Sub-Inspector Rupa visited Jose's residence on Friday. Initially, no case was registered as the girl claimed the video was a prank staged to persuade her estranged mother to return home.

However, mounting public pressure forced the police to consider the case. The video was allegedly recorded by the girl's 10-year-old brother, with the assault reportedly carried out due to her proximity towards the mother, who has been living away from the house for some time now. The police expressed doubts over the girl's statement, suspecting that he may have coerced them into claiming that the incident was a prank. "The children consistently maintained that it was a prank when we recorded their statements."

However, the language used and the nature of the act are extremely serious. The girl was beaten and threatened with a knife. On Friday, we had no formal complaint, which is why no arrest was made. We launched an investigation after the mother filed a complaint on Saturday," said Rupa.

Both the children have since been moved to a shelter home under the care of the Women and Child Development Department. Jose was produced before a court and remanded to judicial custody on Saturday. Meanwhile, Women and Child Development Minister Veena George has directed the department director to take appropriate action in the incident.

## Sewage treatment plant plan on playground near lake angers Chennai's Koladi residents

**CHENNAI.** Nearly a hundred residents of Koladi in Thiruverkadu Municipality were detained on Saturday for protesting against fencing a playground near Koladi lake, where the government plans to set up a sewage treatment plant (STP).

Residents have been opposing the STP for fear of water contamination in the nearby waterbodies, including the Koladi lake, and also for fear of losing the playground which has been used by locals and national-level athletes for several decades. The detained residents were released later in the day.

According to sources, the government plans to lay underground drainage (UGD) systems in the municipalities of Poonamallee, Mangadu and Thiruverkadu at a cost of Rs 972.73 crore. As part of the project, a sewage treatment plant has been proposed on around 8 acres of the 13-acre playground near the Koladi lake. This facility is being set up to treat wastewater from Thiruverkadu, Mangadu and Kundrathur municipalities.

While residents have welcomed the UGD plan, they have opposed the site chosen for the STP owing to its proximity to water resources and public infrastructure.

Residents point out that a government school located just 40 metres from the proposed site prepares meals for hundreds of schoolchildren in Thiruverkadu Municipality under the CM's Breakfast Scheme. In the event of drinking water resources being affected due to leakage, it might lead to serious health and environmental risks, they said.

## Quest for vision in darkness: Dr Ilango's journey from silence to world records

**CHENNAI.** At first glance, Dr Inspiring Ilango's world is quiet, and filled with shadows. But spend a moment in his presence, and it becomes clear that this man sees much more than what meets your eye. Born in a world that offers limited resources to the blind, Dr Ilango was ready to turn these resources into weapons.

Born blind due to a consanguineous marriage in 1972, in Chennai, Ilango, now 52, is not just surviving without sight—he's soaring with purpose. From an early age, he lent his distinctive voice to advertisements, documentaries, and short films, gaining admiration in India and abroad. He also hosted a 42-episode musical talk show on television in 2012 and remains a sought-after guest on media platforms, where he discusses emotion management, language, and life skills.

Ilango completed his M Phil in English Language Teaching at the University of Madras in 1995, emerging among the top scholars in his batch. He also holds a Master's degree in English from Loyola College, Chennai, where he graduated with distinction and was awarded a gold medal for his excellence in public speaking and oral communication.

His journey has since gone far beyond academia. On May 12, 2019, Universal Tamil University, Pondicherry, honoured him with an honorary doctorate for his exceptional accomplishments. Ilango then made global headlines, becoming the first visually impaired person to set world records in both scuba diving and paragliding—proving that courage, not sight, defines one's vision.

## Chidambaram Dikshitar call Brahmotsavam protest contempt of court



**CUDDALORE.** The Podhu Dikshitar of the Chidambaram Nataraja Temple have stated that the proposed immolation protest announced by Deiviga Peravai founder Gemini M N Radhakrishnan, demanding the conduct of Brahmotsavam for the Thillai Govindaraja Perumal Temple, amounts to contempt of court and is illegal.

Radhakrishnan had announced that he would stage an immolation protest on May 28 seeking permission to conduct the Brahmotsavam festival at the Govindaraja Perumal Temple, which is situated within the premises of the Chidambaram Nataraja Temple.

In response, the secretary of the Nataraja Temple's general Dikshitar's committee, T Sivasundara Dikshitar, submitted a complaint to Chidambaram Deputy Superintendent of Police T Augustin Joshua Lamech.

The complaint stated, "For the past three years, an individual named Radhakrishnan has continuously made false complaints and public allegations that tarnish the reputation of the general Dikshitar. He has interfered with the administration of the Dikshitar and the peaceful darshan of devotees. He has also filed unnecessary legal cases and made misleading public statements, opposing traditional pooja

and darshan practices." The complaint added that several cases related to the Brahmotsavam of Sri Govindaraja Perumal Temple, including those filed by M N Radhakrishnan and T R Ramesh, are currently pending before a special bench of the Madras High Court. "As these cases are still pending, the announcement by Radhakrishnan regarding the immolation protest is unlawful," it stated.

"By announcing an immolation protest in a manner that incites religious hatred and division among Saivite and Vaishnavite devotees who otherwise peacefully worship together at the Nataraja Temple, Radhakrishnan is creating communal unrest," the complaint stated.

Sivasundara Dikshitar said, "Therefore, based on the Supreme Court's guidelines, I request immediate registration of an FIR against Radhakrishnan and protection for the Nataraja Temple, general Dikshitar, and devotees."

"I also request that appropriate security arrangements be made for devotees visiting the temple peacefully on May 28. Further, I request action be taken against Radhakrishnan under respective sections for continuously issuing inflammatory statements that disturb public peace," he added. He also urged the sub-collector to take note of the planned immolation protest and issue orders to prohibit it in the interest of public order.

## Boulder truck hits stalled garbage truck on Kodigehalli flyover; driver dies, two injured

**BENGALURU.** In a freak accident involving a 16-wheel truck transporting boulders, a garbage truck and a cab on the International Airport Road in the early hours of Saturday, the driver of the garbage truck died while two others sustained injuries.

The deceased was identified as Faizan Ahmed (25), a native of Bihar. The injured are identified as Margob Reja (23), the garbage truck cleaner and Harish, the driver of the truck transporting the boulders.

The incident happened on the Kodigehalli flyover on the International Airport Road near Brigade Magnum around 1.40 am. All the three vehicles were coming towards the city from the airport side. The driver of the garbage truck had parked the vehicle on the right side of the flyover due to mechanical failure. He along with the cleaner were repairing the truck, when the driver of the boulder-laden truck who was reportedly overspeeding hit the garbage truck from behind. After he swerved the truck to the left, he hit the car that was going on the left side. The truck came to a halt after hitting the side wall of the flyover.

## Bomb calls prove hoax in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam

**The search operation lasted over five hours with bomb detection squads and sniffer dogs scouring the entire area. After the extensive search, no explosives were found, confirming that the threat was a hoax.**

**VIJAYAWADA/VISAKHAPATNAM.** A series of bomb threats in Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam on Saturday triggered widespread panic, prompting immediate response from local authorities.

The threats, which later turned out to be hoaxes, put both cities on high alert, with bomb disposal teams and sniffer dog squads conducting extensive search operations at public places, including shopping malls, railway stations, and bus stands.

According to the police, the Vijayawada city control room received a phone call from an unknown person around 6 am, claiming that a bomb had been planted on the premises of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) office located at Besant Road.

Upon receiving the phone call, the police immediately informed the bomb disposal team and sniffer dog squad, which rushed to the spot, and launched an extensive search operation at the LIC building and the nearby premises. The police made the shops on Besant Road shut to avoid any



untoward incident. Suspecting that explosives might be planted in thickly populated areas, the police deployed additional force for a thorough search of the surrounding areas.

The search operation lasted over five hours with bomb detection squads and sniffer dogs scouring the entire area. After the extensive search, no explosives were found, confirming that the threat

was a hoax.

Spl teams set up to trace callers, security beefed up. During the searches, some trains were briefly halted, and passengers were subjected to detailed screening as part of precautionary measures.

The police said, "All 10 platforms were inspected thoroughly by bomb disposal teams while the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) were involved in checking the passengers." According to sources, the Vijayawada city police were able to trace the location of the caller to Maharashtra, although the identity of the caller has not been obtained yet.

The police confirmed that special teams were formed to locate the accused caller who made the hoax bomb threat, and an investigation is underway to determine the motive behind the threatening call. In response to the incident, the Vijayawada city police tightened security at the railway station and other public places, increasing police presence and intensifying surveillance.

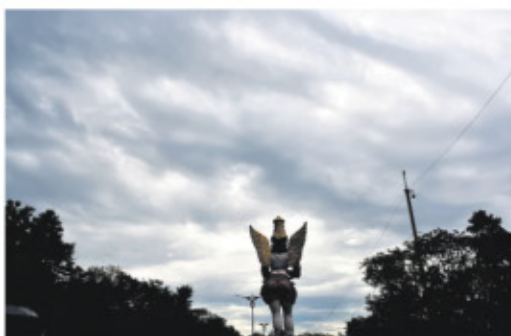
## Southwest monsoon likely to hit Andhra Pradesh in two to three days

*In addition, thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are expected at isolated places across NCAP, SCAP, and Rayalaseema. Gusty winds reaching speeds of 40-50 kmph are likely to occur in these regions.*

**VIJAYAWADA.** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has announced that conditions are favourable for the onset of the Southwest monsoon into parts of Andhra Pradesh over the next two to three days.

The monsoon has officially set in over Kerala on May 24, which is eight days prior of its onset date of June 1. This marks the earliest monsoon onset over Kerala since 2009, when it arrived on May 23. The current Northern Limit of the Monsoon (NLM) passes through coordinates, including Karwar, Shimoga, Dharmapuri, Chennai, and extends through eastern and northeastern regions such as Saiha and parts of Arunachal Pradesh.

The IMD has noted the presence of southwesterly and southerly winds in the lower tropospheric levels over AP and the Union Territory of Yanam. Under these prevailing conditions, heavy rainfall is likely



at isolated locations across North Coastal Andhra Pradesh (NCAP), Yanam, and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh (SCAP) on Sunday.

In addition, thunderstorms

accompanied by lightning are expected at isolated places across NCAP, SCAP, and Rayalaseema. Gusty winds reaching speeds of 40-50 kmph are likely to occur in these regions. These conditions are forecast to persist until May 28. The IMD further noted that from May 20 onwards, isolated heavy rainfall has been recorded in NCAP and Yanam.

Despite the active monsoon conditions, no change in maximum daytime temperatures is expected across AP and Yanam during the next seven days. Also, a fresh low-pressure area is likely to develop over the west-central and adjoining north Bay of Bengal around May 27, according to the IMD.

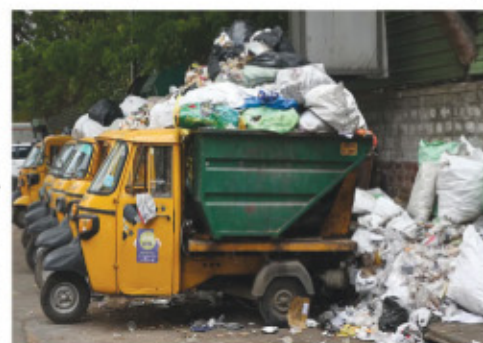
## BNP demands BBMP withdraw unfair solid waste fee amid double billing complaints in Bengaluru

**BENGALURU.** Bengaluru Navanirman Party has claimed that over 2,800 people across the city have expressed solidarity with them in objecting to BBMP in its campaign titled #IWontPay, against the new solid waste management user fee on citizens who neither generate the waste nor receive BBMP's services.

"This is exploitation. How can BBMP collect a fee without even knowing who should pay and who shouldn't? said Srikanth Narasimhan, founder of BNP. He said the 'bulk-waste generator' exemption was introduced around April 20, 2025, after backlash from citizens. By this time, thousands of residents who live in apartments classified as bulk-waste generators, had already paid the SWM fee. Many have made double payment, one to private vendors, and another to BBMP for doing nothing. Smaller apartment complexes (under 100 units) that use empanelled vendors are neither

recognized as bulk generators nor given clarity, which again leads to double billing. Vacant plot owners have also been charged SWM fee despite producing no waste.

"How can BBMP justify billing people for a service it doesn't provide? There's no accountability,



no communication, not even basic logic," said Poongothai Paramasivan, Governing Council member of BNP.

She added that without an elected BBMP Council, the government is unilaterally imposing new charges like parking fees and garbage user fees.

## Bengaluru's flood woes expose governance gaps amid monsoon; urgent need for planned growth, accountability

**Karnataka.** Picture this. Earlier this week, on Tuesday afternoon, most top Congress leaders in Karnataka, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, were sharing the dais with their central leaders at a massive convention in Hosapete – around 320 km from Bengaluru – to mark the Congress government completing two years in office. They eloquently spoke about the government's achievements. The mood was celebratory.

Around the same time, people in many parts of the state capital were struggling to deal with incessant rain pouring misery on them. Their houses were flooded, and streets turned into streams with boats pressed into service. There was a sense of frustration and helplessness.

The deluge yet again exposed a governance deficit and unplanned and unregulated



growth of the city that powers the state's economy and is home to IT giants, research and development institutes of national repute, and a thriving start-up ecosystem.

Unfortunately, flooding of residential areas and roads and then deploying inflated boats into service has become a new normal. It takes the victims of a deluge several days or weeks to come to terms with the devastation.

Like in the past, politicians indulged in blame game and spoke about how bad the situation was in other big cities in the country as if that was a solace to reduce the suffering and an excuse for the authorities not doing what they ought to have done before the rain started. Anger among the people was palpable. The CM, DyCM, and legislators who visited some rain-hit areas to get a first-hand impression of the situation faced public ire.

That visit and the public anger seem to have pushed the administrative machinery into action. After a meeting of top officers from various departments, directions were issued to prevent flooding, clear lake encroachments, and fill 647 potholes – actual numbers may be much higher – in seven days.

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# How Haryana plans to cut groundwater deficit by 50%

**Gurgaon.** Haryana govt on Tuesday announced its latest Integrated Water Resources Action Plan, under which it aims to save around 6 billion litres of water, just over half of the state's projected deficit of 12 billion litres by 2027. The plan sets targets for 16 govt departments, which will be responsible for saving water over two fiscal years — 2025-26 and 2026-27. Each department has been given a target of the amount of water it needs to save. Of this, over 90% of the target is to be reached by the agriculture and irrigation department, officials told TOI. Key interventions will include rainwater harvesting, reuse of treated water by industries and crackdown on borewells illegally extracting groundwater. Keshni Anand Arora, chairperson of Haryana Water Resources Authority (HWRA), said the plan was the govt's "most comprehensive approach to water management", but he acknowledged that "significant challenges remain". HWRA carried out the study and mapped interventions as well. To overcome the challenges, "We have been taking several steps for Gurgaon and Panipat like districts. For

example, we have told them to carry out rooftop rainwater harvesting and ensure zero liquid discharge. Industries have been directed to use only treated water. Our teams have been carrying out several surveys and have issued closure notices to more than 80 borewells recently in Gurgaon and Faridabad that were found to be operating without permission. We are also fitting the tubewells with telemeters so that we know the consumption of groundwater," she told TOI. "The plan mandates 42 interventions that are focused on improving groundwater recharge, farming practices, water harvesting, and wastewater management.

The initiative will also help build the capacity of local communities to manage water more efficiently. To track the progress of these activities and determine their impact, monitoring protocols based on aquifers, borewells and rivers could be used to compare the outcomes with the current situation," said Dr Manish Kumar, research scientist leading the adaptation & risk analysis group at Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP). The Haryana government's

Integrated Water Resources Action Plan (IWRAP) for 2025–2027 is a bold initiative, but experts have identified several key challenges that could hinder its successful implementation, for instance Haryana currently lacks a robust, real-time water monitoring infrastructure. Implementing and maintaining such systems across the state is resource-intensive. Excessive and often illegal extraction of groundwater, especially through unregulated borewells, continues to be a major issue. Enforcement of regulations remains weak in many areas. "Enforcement is difficult due to widespread non-compliance, lack of local oversight, and political or social resistance. Ensuring seamless coordination between 16 departments and accountability, and timely reporting across departments is complex and prone to bureaucratic delays," said Pradeep Rawat, water policy expert. Haryana must conserve water.

According to the Central Groundwater Authority, 60% of the state's area was in the 'red' category for excess groundwater exploitation. Data collected every year also shows that the state extracts more

groundwater than it replenishes. Haryana is water stressed as over 1,900 villages are classified as severely groundwater-stressed, with water tables deeper than 30 meters. Another 1,093 villages are moderately stressed (depth between 20–30 meters). Excessive groundwater extraction, especially for agriculture, has led to aquifer depletion. Water-intensive crops like paddy are widely grown, especially in areas with poor groundwater recharge. Inefficient irrigation practices further worsen the situation.

Urban settlements are the main guzzlers.

Gurgaon's water demand for domestic uses, at 369.7 million cubic metres (MCM) in 2022–2024, is the highest among all 22 districts of the state. This is more than double the demand of Faridabad, which ranks second at 150 MCM, according to Haryana Water Resources Authority (HWRA). At the other end of this spectrum are districts such as Charkhi Dadri, where most settlements are predominantly rural. The district's water need for domestic use is 21.4 MCM, just about 5% of Gurgaon's demand. Water demand for industrial use is equally skewed.

## Cyclist dies in hit & run near Panchgaon Chowk

**Gurgaon.** A 30-year-old cyclist was killed after being hit by a rashly driven truck near Panchgaon Chowk on Thursday evening. The victim, Kanhia Kumar, hailed from Uttar Pradesh and was living in rented accommodation in Panchgaon with his friend Dilip Kumar, who is also the complainant in the case. Both worked at a private company in the vicinity.

According to the FIR, the incident took place around 8:30 pm on Thursday when the two were returning home from work on separate bicycles. As they neared Panchgaon Chowk, a speeding canter bearing registration number DD01 S 9251 allegedly hit Kanhia head-on. "Kanhia was flung onto the road and sustained multiple injuries, including a severe head injury," Dilip told the police. "We rushed him to a private hospital in Manesar in an ambulance, but due to the critical nature of his condition, he was referred to the civil hospital in Sector 44. Unfortunately, he succumbed to his injuries during treatment." Based on Dilip's complaint, police have registered a case under Sections 106 (causing death by negligence) and 281 (rash driving or riding on a public way) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the unknown driver.

## Five land in police net after three encounters in Noida, Ghaziabad

**Noida.** Five criminals were arrested following three separate gunfights in the city and Ghaziabad. The accused were involved in theft, snatching, etc.

In the first case, during a routine patrol near Dadri, police signalled three men on a motorcycle to stop, but they attempted to flee and opened fire at the officials.

Sudhir Kumar, additional deputy commissioner of police, Greater Noida, said that in retaliatory fire, Karan (21) from Bisrahi was injured, while his associates, Harsh (21) from Dadri and Piyush Bansal (19) from Jarcha, were arrested in a subsequent combing operation.

Police recovered a pistol, live cartridges, two illegal knives, a stolen mobile phone, and an unregistered Splendor motorcycle from the accused. The injured accused was sent to the hospital and police are probing their possible criminal history. In the second incident, police arrested a man following an encounter on Saturday, during routine checks on the road near DAV. Police spotted two men on a motorcycle approaching from Wazirabad Road. When signalled to stop, they attempted to flee but lost control of the bike. They then opened fire at the officials, prompting them to return fire, which left one suspect injured. Atul Kumar Singh, assistant commissioner of police, Shalimar Garden, said the accused, Talib alias Tikki (25) was found in possession of an illegal pistol, ammunition, a stolen gold chain, and a motorcycle. His accomplice, Monu, managed to escape. During interrogation, Talib confessed to stealing the gold chain in Shalimar Garden earlier this month and revealed he was attempting to sell it. Police records show five existing criminal cases against Talib across NCR. Also on Saturday, police arrested an accused in a separate encounter during routine checks near DPS cut, Ghaziabad. Police spotted two men on a motorcycle who attempted to flee upon seeing them. Poonam Mishra, assistant commissioner of police, Nandgram, Sihani Gate, said while attempting to flee, they ran into another checkpoint at the MRF Nagar Nigam intersection, where their bike slipped and they opened fire at the officials. In a retaliatory firing, Rizwan (34) from Bulandshahr was injured. He was found carrying an illegal pistol, ammunition, a stolen motorcycle, a mobile.

## Fluent in photosynthesis, stumped by 'prakash sanshleshan': In Noida, Hindi to English to Hindi puzzles students

**Noida.** Reshma, a Class IV student at a govt school in Ghaziabad, has a thorough understanding of 'photosynthesis' but she was stumped by a question on 'prakash sanshleshan' during her EVS exam last year. It was only when her teacher explained that the term means photosynthesis did Reshma stop panicking and get back to answering the question. In 2018, around 94 govt primary schools in Ghaziabad and Noida switched to English-medium instruction to boost enrolment. But the transition hasn't been smooth. It isn't uncommon for Hindi question papers to be given to these schools, where students like Reshma blank out on unfamiliar terms. Teachers told TOI that the staff has had to translate or rewrite questions on the classroom board to explain the terminologies. They then leave it to students to answer questions in Hindi or English — either of the languages that the kid is comfortable using. "In subjects like maths, science and EVS, precise terminology is critical. The terms in English and Hindi are entirely different. Every year, we receive English-medium textbooks, but during exams, some subjects are presented with Hindi-language papers. How will students understand? Teachers often have to translate or rewrite the questions. Sometimes, we even create entire question papers in English. This process is confusing and time-consuming for everyone," said a teacher at Govt Composite School-Raipur in Noida. This mismatch, officials say, is because of changes in policy. Two years after 15,000 schools across UP shifted to English-medium instruction, the central govt unveiled the National Education Policy (NEP), which places greater emphasis on the use of "mother tongue in education", a teacher said. Ravindra Singh, principal of Babbal Garhi Primary School in Ghaziabad, said that after the 2018 switch, teachers were hired specifically on their English language skills. The first year, 2018-19, saw the introduction of especially curated English-language textbooks across all subjects. Initially, both students and staff were enthusiastic, and enrolment numbers increased significantly. But after the pandemic, availability of English study materials became inconsistent. Then, with implementation of NEP, teaching again shifted predominantly to Hindi," Singh said.

## As state finalises its terms, will Aravalis be defined by height

**Gurgaon:** Tasked by Supreme Court to define what constitutes Aravalis, Haryana govt is close to finalising its criteria and one of the proposals under discussion as a central component of this is to have a relative height benchmark of 100 metres from the surrounding geographical base, according to sources involved in the process. The exercise, whose purpose is to give Aravalis a uniform definition across the four states that the ancient ranges run across, began last year. On May 9, 2024, Supreme directed the Union environment ministry (MoEF) and the govt of Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat to come up with a uniform definition during proceedings in an illegal mining case. The court ordered this when amicus curiae K Parmeshwar, in response to SC's instructions to the states to not renew leases or issue new ones for stone or sand quarrying in the hills without its permission, said the issue was complicated due to lack of consensus over what constituted Aravalis.

Recently, chief secretary Anurag Rastgi convened a high-level meeting with officials from various departments, including forests, to finalise the state's approach to Aravali identification. According to sources present at the meeting, the state could submit its guidelines as early as this month. The sources said discussions, though in the closing stages, are ongoing and a decision on the final criteria is yet to be taken. States will submit their final criteria to a technical sub-committee formed by MoEF that is chaired by the director-general of Forest Survey of India (FSI) and includes representatives of Geological Survey of India (GSI) and Survey of India (SoI). According to the minutes of a meeting held on Apr 28 this year by state officials, Haryana agreed to follow "the definition and area of Aravalli hills and ranges by taking the benchmark fixed by FSI for Rajasthan". FSI recommended a comprehensive methodology based on multiple parameters — terrain slope (greater than 3 degrees).

## RPF of NFR Continues Strict Vigil towards Illegal Cross-Border Infiltration Apprehended 06 Bangladeshi Migrants & Indian Agents

**Sourabh Sharma**

Maligaon, May 25: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has continued its vigilant and coordinated action against the infiltration of illegal foreign nationals through the railway network. In alignment with its commitment towards national security and public safety, RPF/NFR has successfully apprehended multiple Bangladeshi nationals and their Indian accomplices during the month of April & May 2025. These actions are part of an intensified efforts to prevent the misuse of railway routes by illegal migrants and human traffickers. Between 1st May & 16th May 2025, RPF/NFR apprehended a total of 6 Bangladeshi nationals along with 6 Indian

agents in separate operations. The most significant action occurred on 16th May,



when RPF/Agartala, along with SIB/Badarpur and BSF/AHTU, apprehended 2 Bangladeshi nationals (1 male and 1 female) along with 4 Indian agents

at Agartala railway station. Additionally, on various dates, arrests were made at Radhikapur and Agartala railway stations, where 4 Bangladeshi nationals and 2 Indian handlers were taken into custody. All apprehended persons were handed over to respective GRP outpost for legal action under relevant Railway Act provisions. During the month of April 2025, RPF/NFR apprehended 32 illegal Bangladeshi migrants along with 01 Indian agent in separate operations conducted at Agartala, Bhanga, Dharmanagar and Karimganj railway stations. All individuals were handed over to the respective GRP outpost for further legal action. The RPF of NFR remains committed to safeguarding railway premises from being used as transit points for illegal activities. The force is working in close coordination with state police and central agencies like the BSF to prevent cross-border infiltration and trafficking through the railway network. Such operations will continue to be intensified in vulnerable regions to maintain national security and passenger safety.

## 7 in hospital after 'mystery odour' from Basai factory

**Gurgaon.** Seven persons, including three children, gasped for breath in Basai and had to be rushed to hospital after a mysterious odour — possibly caused by a gas leak — from a nearby auto parts factory turned their evening into a nightmare of nausea and fear.

The incident, which occurred late on Friday evening, sent shockwaves through the area when residents began experiencing severe symptoms, such as eye irritation, vomiting, and acute stomach pain. The victims — Sarita, Geeta, Khushi, Annu, Pooja, and children Srishti, Drishti, and Devansh — were taken to the Sector-10 Civil Hospital as their conditions deteriorated. The alleged gas leak triggered immediate protests from local residents, who kept the factory gates locked until cops intervened. "Around 8pm, chemicals were being used in the

company as usual. But this time, people started vomiting severely and feeling dizzy," said Mahesh, a resident. He emphasised the ongoing threat posed by factories operating in residential areas, where toxic gases and chemicals are routinely used and produced.

The incident prompted swift action from authorities, with a senior civil hospital doctor alerting police about the possibility of more patients requiring treatment.

However, residents questioned the response from officials. Sanjeev Bansal, president of the Sai Industries Association, suggested an alternative narrative, pointing to a long-standing dispute between the complainant and the factory owner. "An impartial investigation should be conducted in this matter," he insisted, hinting at possible ulterior motives

behind the complaints. The regional officer of the state pollution board, Akanksha Tanwar, said a previous complaint about the same factory had yielded no evidence of chemical or gas leakage during investigation. SDM Paramjit appointed an investigator, duty magistrate naib tehsildar Ashish Kumar, who found that the auto parts company primarily manufactures bolts, and no gas was detected during a site inspection. He said authorities would continue to investigate the mysterious circumstances that led to the mass illness, with focus on gathering detailed information about industrial operations in the area. "The incident has raised serious questions about industrial safety standards and the coexistence of factories and residential areas in Gurgaon's rapidly expanding urban landscape," he added.

# Waived fines, illegal extensions: MCG road contracts under scanner 2 yrs on

**Gurgaon.** A Haryana govt audit has revealed how Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon (MCG) bent rules and extended unwarranted benefits to a Bhiwani-based construction firm, compromising public infrastructure worth Rs 9.4 crore in Sushant Lok-2 and 3. The audit, conducted by the state's principal accountant general, raised questions on the decision-making process of MCG's engineering department and its handling of public funds. The investigation uncovered multiple violations — unjustified project extensions, waived penalties worth Rs 94 lakh, irregular payments of Rs 2.1 crore, and procurement of materials from unauthorised sources.

In June 2023, M/s Chirag Construction Company secured two contracts to build roads — a Rs 5.9-crore project in Sushant Lok-3 and a Rs 3.5-crore project in Sushant Lok-2, both with six-month completion timelines. The contractor's repeated requests for extensions, citing monsoon and GRAP restrictions, were granted till Dec 2024, despite failing to meet earlier deadlines. For instance, the Sushant Lok-3 project was allowed three extensions from its actual deadline of Dec 2023 — the first one till April 30, 2024, the second till Nov 14 that year and their till Dec. The other project also secured similar extensions. While



granting extensions was not illegal on its own, the audit report, accessed by TOI, revealed that the former chief engineer overstepped his authority by taking the decisions himself — a power reserved for the commissioner. Adding to these irregularities, the contractor flouted tender specifications by procuring bitumen from private companies instead of govt refineries.

Despite these violations, MCG proceeded with a payment of Rs 2.1 crore to the firm in Oct 2024 for the construction of the road in Sushant Lok-2. The audit termed this payment "irregular" and the extensions "unjustified".

The report also criticised the handling of penalties that were levied on the company for failing to meet the

deadlines. In Sushant Lok-3, a Rs 58.5-lakh penalty imposed in Nov 2023 and recovered in July 2024 was later cancelled by the former chief engineer, accepting the contractor's claims of financial constraints and personal issues. Similarly, for Sushant Lok-2, the contractor's claims about insufficient time were entertained, despite the audit noting that the evaluation of timeframe should have been done before participating in the tender process. The audit also found that a Rs 35.4 lakh penalty levied in Nov 2023 for delayed execution in Sushant Lok-2 wasn't deducted from the first running bill of Rs 2.1 crore paid to the contractor. "The audit observed that the corporation extended undue favour to the agency by

waiving the penalty amount on unjustified grounds," the report stated. According to the report, further violations included the absence of a mandatory on-site laboratory for quality testing.

The audit, examining works from 2023-24, was conducted between Jan 30 and Feb 4 this year. Rajesh Kumar, a supervisor from the firm, defended the delays, citing late payments from MCG. "How can we work when our payments are not released on time," he sought to know. The firm's owner, Sanjay Kumar, however, accepted having received full payments from the corporation and claimed to have completed both projects by Jan this year. Residents, however, painted a different picture. The RWA of Sushant Lok-2 and 3 had in April this year filed a complaint on the CM's Window, alleging poor construction quality. "A laboratory analysis we got done on our own revealed that 9 out of 10 specimens failed quality standards," said Pawan Yadav, the RWA president, who called for an investigation and action against both the contractor and MCG officials for "wasteful expenditure of public funds". Asked about the allegations, MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said, "I'll look into the matter and take suitable action as per the law."



## NEWS BOX

## Russia intercepts 100 Ukrainian drones in overnight attack

**world** Russia said it faced a Ukrainian drone attack early on Sunday and intercepted or destroyed around 100 of the unmanned Ukrainian weapons including some aimed at Moscow. The Defence Ministry reported its air defence units intercepted or destroyed 95 Ukrainian drones over a four-hour period. That included two near Moscow but most were over Russia's central and southern regions.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin later said on the Telegram messaging app that the number of drones destroyed or intercepted near the capital had risen to 11. The activity prompted the closure of Moscow's three airports for a time.

Regional officials reported air defence units downed drones in the central city of Tula and the city of Tver northwest of Moscow.

## Trump delivers rally-style speech at West Point, touts military rebuild

**world.** US President Donald Trump delivered the commencement address at West Point, using the country's prestigious military academy to both honour the graduating class of 2025 and deliver a highly political speech. Speaking to 1,002 cadets at Michie Stadium, Trump congratulated them on joining "the greatest and most powerful army the world has ever known," attributing that strength to his own leadership.

"I rebuilt the military," Trump said. "And we rebuilt it like nobody has ever rebuilt it before in my first term." Wearing a red "Make America Great Again" hat, he praised the US as the "hottest country in the world" and promoted his "America First" approach, stressing that the armed forces should focus solely on defeating enemies and defending the flag—not social initiatives.

"We're getting rid of distractions," he said. "The job of the US armed forces is not to host drag shows or transform foreign cultures." Trump said the cadets were graduating at a "defining moment" in Army history, criticising past administrations for "nation-building crusades" and imposing "divisive" ideologies like critical race theory and transgender inclusion. He claimed a "great mandate" from voters in the 2024 election gave him the authority to reshape the military and government. Amid applause, Trump praised individual cadets, including Chris Verdugo for completing a gruelling 18.5-mile march and Army quarterback Bryson Daily, whom he used to argue against transgender women in women's sports. He also acknowledged the nationally ranked men's lacrosse team and pardoned several cadets facing disciplinary action. Mixing humour and nostalgia, Trump referenced yachts, "trophy wives," and his late friend William Levitt. His advice to the graduates included taking risks, rejecting conformity, and having faith in America. "This is a time of incredible change," he said. "We don't need yes men. We need patriots with guts, vision, and backbone."

## Man dies after boat explosion on river in New York, cops yet to reveal identity

**world.** A 59-year-old man died Saturday morning following an explosion aboard a boat docked on the Hudson River, The Associated Press reported, citing authorities. The incident occurred around 10.30 am while the man was performing work that involved flames or sparks, the US Coast Guard reported on social media. Another worker at the city-owned Hunts Point facility was injured in the blast and taken to the hospital, FDNY Deputy Assistant Chief David Simms said. A third worker refused medical attention. Emergency responders arrived after receiving a 911 call and found the man unconscious in the water. He was pronounced dead at the scene, New York City police confirmed. The man's identity has not been released, and the cause of the explosion remains under investigation. The explosion caused raw sewage to spread across the boat's deck, prompting decontamination procedures for firefighters and other first responders, FDNY Deputy Chief Kevin Simms said.

## Kamala Harris Cursed Out CNN's Anderson Cooper After Biden Debate Grilling: Book

**world.** Former US Vice President Kamala Harris reportedly used an expletive to describe CNN anchor Anderson Cooper after a tense interview following former President Joe Biden's widely criticised debate performance against Donald Trump in 2024, a new book claims. In *Original Sin*, authored by CNN's Jake Tapper and political journalist Alex Thompson, Harris is quoted as calling Cooper a "mother\*\*\*\*\*" in private conversations with colleagues after he questioned her about Biden's cognitive health during a CNN appearance.

"This mother\*\*\*\*\* doesn't treat me like the damn vice president of the United States," Harris reportedly said after the interview, according to the book. "I thought we were better than that."

The interview aired after Biden's debate performance sparked concern within the Democratic Party, with critics highlighting his halting delivery and visible confusion during the 90-minute exchange with Trump. Cooper had referenced growing panic among Democrats and asked whether Biden should consider stepping aside. Harris defended the president, saying he had a "slow start" but finished "strong," and emphasised his three-and-a-half years of work in office over a single debate. However, the book notes she was visibly angry after the interview and took Cooper's questions personally.

## Russia and Ukraine swap 307 soldiers each hours after massive strike on Kyiv

## Russia and Ukraine each swapped 307 of their soldiers as part of an extended prisoner swap, just hours after Moscow launched missile strikes on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv.

**Moscow/Chernihiv.** Russia and Ukraine each exchanged 307 of their service personnel on Saturday, the second day of an extended prisoner swap set to be the largest in the three-year war.

US President Donald Trump has suggested the swap could herald a new phase in stop-start efforts to negotiate a peace deal between Moscow and Kyiv. There should be 1,000 prisoners released on each side

over three days. Saturday's swap was announced by Russia's defence ministry, and separately by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a post on social media platform Telegram. "Tomorrow we expect more," Zelenskyy wrote. "Our goal is to return each and every one of us from Russian captivity."

Reuters Television footage showed freed Ukrainian servicemen at a rendezvous point inside Ukraine coming off buses draped in blue and yellow national flags as waiting family members chanted "Welcome!" Serviceman Dmytro Havrylenko held his son, and his mother, in a very long embrace. "I am shocked to be honest," he said. "These were 17 difficult months, very difficult. But everything is fine." Women held up photos of missing servicemen and gathered around returnees to ask about their whereabouts.

One woman, identifying herself as Yana, said no one had any news of her husband missing since Ukrainian forces launched



an incursion into Russia's Kursk region last year. "Maybe the boys will recognise his photo and share some information," she said. "We're here for the second day. Maybe today." Footage released by Zelenskyy's office showed one released serviceman in tears and being consoled by a woman in military uniform. People assigned to greet the soldiers handed them cellphones, so they could call relatives. "I can't believe I'm home," one man said. A short video released by the Russian Defence Ministry showed Russian service

personnel disembarking from buses and posing with the Russian flag, as well as the flags of the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire.

The first part of the exchange took place on Friday when Russia and Ukraine each released 390 prisoners, including 120 civilians, and said they would free more in the coming days. On Friday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Russia would be ready to hand Ukraine a draft document outlining conditions for a long-term peace agreement once the current prisoner exchange was completed.

Saturday's release took place a few hours after the Ukrainian capital was rocked by an overnight Russian bombardment using long-range drones and ballistic missiles, in which 15 people were injured. The prisoner exchange was agreed at short-lived talks in Istanbul on May 16 between Russian and Ukrainian delegations, who had come together at the urging of Trump.

## Back to spending 24/7 at work: Elon Musk after global X outage

**world.** Following consecutive global outages on his social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Elon Musk has announced a return to his intensive work schedule, committing to spending nearly all his time across his companies. The tech billionaire announced that he would be sleeping in conference rooms, server rooms, and factory floors to personally oversee critical developments at X, Tesla, and SpaceX. "Back to spending 24/7 at work and sleeping in conference/server/factory rooms," Musk posted on X. "I must be super focused on X/xAI and Tesla (plus Starship launch next week), as we have critical technologies rolling out," he added. His statement came in the wake of a major outage on May 24, that left X users worldwide unable to use the platform. Outage tracking service



Downdetector recorded over 2,200 reports by 6:20 pm IST. Musk acknowledged the disruption, admitting that "major operational improvements" are urgently needed. "The failover redundancy should have worked, but did not," he said, highlighting deeper infrastructure

issues. Adding to X's recent challenges, reports surfaced of a fire at one of the platform's data centers in Oregon, possibly linked to battery systems. The incident required an extended emergency response and may have contributed to the service instability.

**Musk To Exit Politics?**

The Tesla chief also announced that he will reduce his political involvement.

After spending nearly USD 300 million backing Donald Trump's campaign and leading the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Musk faced mounting protests which resulted in reduced Tesla sales, particularly in the US and Europe. In response to investor pressure, he earlier said he would cut his time with government duties to one or two days per week. However, he now appears to be stepping away from politics entirely.

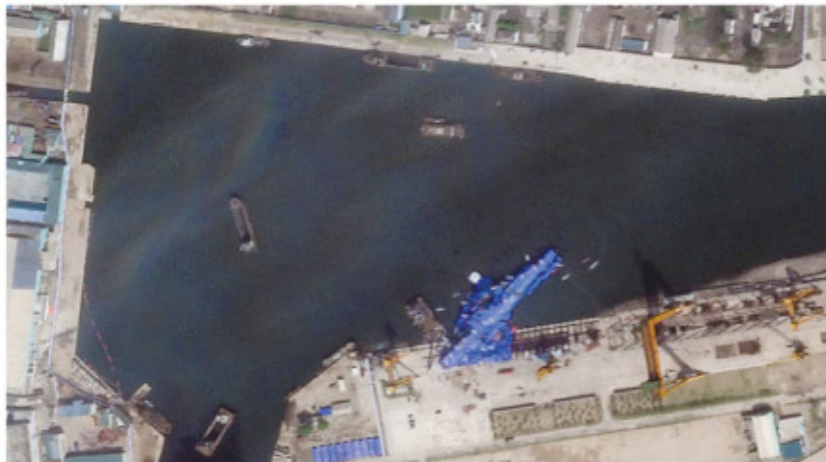
## Hamas faces financial crisis amid ongoing conflict with Israel: Report

**world.** The London-based newspaper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat has reported that Hamas is facing a severe and unprecedented financial crisis as the ongoing war with Israel continues to erode both its leadership and operational capabilities. Citing unnamed sources within the organization, the report revealed that the group is struggling to pay salaries to its members and operatives. Hamas has only been able to distribute 900 shekels, nearly USD 240 USD, over the past four months which sparked anger and dissatisfaction among its ranks. Al-Sharq Al-Awsat reported citing sources. The economic collapse is said to be the worst in the group's history, leaving many operatives unpaid and raising questions about its ability to maintain internal cohesion. The report also highlights the impact of the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) ongoing targeted operations against Hamas leadership. The systematic elimination of key figures has reportedly created a leadership vacuum within the group's so-called governing structure, further



weakening its control and coordination abilities. Meanwhile, in the Gaza Strip, tensions remain high as the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. On Saturday, Gaza's civil defence agency reported that an Israeli airstrike in Khan Yunis killed nine children from the same family. The victims were the children of two married doctors. The Israeli military responded that it had targeted "several suspects" near its troops and is reviewing the incident. Israel has intensified its military operations in Gaza in recent days, prompting renewed international criticism and calls for increased humanitarian aid. While Israel partially eased its total blockade on March 2, aid groups have warned that the flow of essential supplies remains insufficient for the population's needs. As both the humanitarian and political crises deepen, the future of stability in Gaza remains uncertain.

## North Korea Detains 3 Officials Over Accident During Warship Launch



**Seoul.** North Korea has detained shipyard officials responsible for a recent major accident during the launch of a new warship, state media said on Sunday. The failed launch that crippled the 5,000-tonne warship was witnessed by leader Kim Jong Un who said the accident damaged the country's dignity and vowed to punish those found responsible. The mishap likely occurred in front of a large crowd at the northeastern port of Chongjin,

increasing the public humiliation for Kim who tried to show off military might, experts say.

As the investigation into the case intensified, law enforcement authorities arrested the chief engineer of the Chongjin Shipyard among others, state KCNA news agency reported on Sunday. Satellite imagery shows the warship, covered in blue tarps, lying on its side, with the stern swung out into the harbor, but the bow remaining on

## The failed launch that crippled the 5,000-tonne warship was witnessed by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un who said the accident damaged the country's dignity.

the side slipway, according to the US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Kim has ordered the ship restored before a ruling party meeting in June. KCNA said the rehabilitation plan was pushing ahead.

Against US military buildup in the region, North Korea's armed forces "will thoroughly contain and control all sorts of military threats from the enemy countries", KCNA said in a separate dispatch citing the policy chief at the defence ministry.

## The Prince Of Monaco, His Finances, And The Man Who Held The Keys To It All

## Claude Palmero was the trusted financial steward of Monaco's royal family for over 20 years, managing everything from investment portfolios to private expenses for Prince Albert II and his sisters.

**world.** He was the man who knew all the secrets - of vaults, villas, and the prince himself. Now, he is the headliner in a scandal unravelling in one of Europe's most secretive and storied royal families. For more than two decades, Claude Palmero was the man behind the scenes handling the finances of Monaco's

royal family. Trusted implicitly by Prince Albert II and his sisters, Palmero managed everything from investment portfolios to private expenses. That trust now lies broken amid allegations of financial mismanagement and serious wrongdoing. The trouble began quietly, as these things often do. In 2023, French authorities, conducting routine checks, noticed irregularities in the accounts linked to the royal family. What seemed like minor discrepancies soon ballooned into a full-scale investigation. Behind the glittering facade of Monaco's wealth, Palmero's financial dealings were coming under intense scrutiny. Prince Albert and his sisters, once confident in Palmero's stewardship, decided to act. They filed criminal complaints accusing their longtime financial manager of breach of trust, theft, forgery, and money laundering. For the prince, this was a personal betrayal.

In private messages later made public and reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, Prince Albert wrote directly to Palmero, "I am now more or less obliged to speak out...



to 'blow the whistle' a little bit to signal the end of recess and try to reassure many people here at home." Documents uncovered show that Palmero had full control over a large portion of the royal family's money. One particularly sensitive case involved a secret transfer of \$15.9 million in 2018 to Nicole Coste, the prince's former lover and mother of his child. According to Palmero's notes, this was done in secret. He wrote that the prince requested complete confidentiality so "this situation would not become known to his wife." The money trail didn't stop there. Over the years, Palmero made several transfers for private expenses, for staff,

residences, and other costs, many from accounts not officially recorded.

Nearly \$800,000 in private expenses slipped through the cracks. A \$795,000 suspicious transaction came to light, which Palmero claimed was reimbursement for years of off-the-book expenses he covered for the Prince's private life. Palmero had been mixing his own investments with the prince's funds. At one point, the combined capital managed by Palmero exceeded \$113 million. When questioned by investigators, Palmero blamed the Prince. "He now pretends that for 22 years he knew nothing about the state or management conditions of his own assets? He is the sovereign of a state! Either he is lying or he should step down," he said. Prince Albert had earlier admitted to being detached from the financial details. In a 2021 interview, he said, "It was great to know what it feels like to earn a paycheck... Not that I don't get paid in Monaco, but I don't really see my paycheck."



## NEWS BOX

## Collector inaugurates Agricultural Machinery and Equipment Maintenance Camp in TN's Tiruvannamalai

**TIRUVANNAMALAI.** Collector K. Tharparaj inaugurated a one-day Agricultural Machinery and Equipment Maintenance Camp organised by the Agricultural Engineering Department at Isanya Maidan in Tiruvannamalai corporation on Friday. Over 50 farmers attended the event.

According to the press release, in line with state-wide instructions to support farmers using modern agricultural machinery, the camp was held in coordination with leading private manufacturers. The initiative aimed to educate farmers on regular maintenance, repair diagnostics, and optimal usage of spare parts and lubricants.

As part of the event, demonstrations and technical sessions were conducted for machinery owners. Key displays included a sugarcane harvester, a coconut harvesting machine, and a mobile repair vehicle from the Agricultural Engineering Department.

Over the past four years, the department has extended machinery subsidies amounting to Rs 21.12 crore, benefiting 1,575 farmers in the district. This includes six sugarcane harvesters distributed at a subsidised cost of Rs 2.65 crore. Additionally, 207 farmers have received electric motors worth Rs 28.61 lakh, while solar-powered pump sets worth Rs 54 lakh have been provided to 30 beneficiaries. Under the department's e-rental initiative, 1,622 farmers have availed agricultural machinery at subsidised rental rates. Fifteen private machinery companies participated in the camp, alongside students from Arvind Agricultural College. The event witnessed the presence of Revenue Divisional Officer Rajkumar, Executive Engineer (Agricultural Engineering) Shanmuganathan, officials from the supervisory engineering division, farmers, and other government representatives.

## Villagers block road in TN's Tirupattur seeking retrieval of encroached land

**TIRUPATTUR.** Over 40 villagers of Alasanthapuram panchayat near Vaniyambadi in Tirupattur district staged a road blockade on Saturday and blocked a government bus, demanding the retrieval of 11 acres of government land that has allegedly been encroached upon by some individuals.

They insisted that the land be used to construct a school playground, a panchayat office building, and a godown - all of which have already been sanctioned and allocated a budget of around Rs 40 lakh. The protest, which blocked the road and disrupted traffic for over two hours, led to heated arguments and mild scuffles between motorists and the villagers. Despite several petitions and a resolution passed by the panchayat to remove the encroachments, no action had been taken, pushing the villagers to resort to protest.

Revenue and police officials rushed to the spot, held talks with the villagers and assured them of immediate action to remove the encroachments. Following this assurance, the protest was called off and the villagers dispersed.

## Collector reviews monsoon preparedness in TN's Cuddalore district

**CUDDALORE.** A review meeting to assess preparedness for the 2025 southwest monsoon was held at the collectorate conference hall under the chairmanship of Collector Sibi Adhithya Senthil Kumar.

The Collector said, "As the Southwest Monsoon is set to begin, Village Administrative Officers must identify low-lying areas prone to water stagnation and issue public advisories. Details of first informants on waterlogging should be recorded. Around 5,000 first responders will be positioned at the revenue village and taluk levels, and 800 at the district level."

He instructed, "Zonal Officers and Tahsildars should jointly identify vulnerable areas and take preventive measures. VAOs, village assistants, assistant agricultural officers, village health nurses, and voluntary organisations must coordinate with village-level committees for flood relief."

The collector added, "In flood-prone areas, people must be relocated to safe shelters and provided with essentials. Relief materials should be kept ready and special care must be given to the elderly and persons with disabilities."

He further said, "Waterbodies must be inspected and embankments strengthened. Sluice gates must be repaired. Equipment such as tree-cutting machines, JCBs, flashlights, water pumps, and bleaching powder should be stocked. Fire and health personnel must raise public awareness. Water tanks must be cleaned and chlorinated. Sewage contamination must be prevented. Disinfectants should be sprayed in stagnant areas."

He said that mock drills must be conducted, VHF communication equipment must be functional and cyclone shelter repairs should be reported to the PWD.

"Community halls, colleges, and marriage halls must be inspected for use as shelters. Crop patterns must be documented. Dangerous buildings must be evacuated. Swimmer and boat operator contacts must be maintained. Bridges and roads must be kept ready with sandbags and barricades. Fallen tree removal teams and contact details of equipment operators must be arranged," he added.

## Karnataka reports 38 Covid cases, mostly in Bengaluru; officials say virus now seasonal with milder symptoms

**Doctors say Covid symptoms range from mild sore throat to high fever, extreme fatigue, dehydration, and gastrointestinal issues like diarrhoea should not be ignored.**

**BENGALURU.** Karnataka has recorded 38 Covid-19 cases so far, 32 of them in Bengaluru, prompting health officials to issue an advisory on Friday. While the numbers mark a slow uptick, doctors say Covid is now part of the regular cycle of viral infections and is likely to behave like seasonal flu, with periodic rises and dips — making panic unnecessary.

Doctors also suggest masking up in crowded places as a sensible preventive step to avoid a larger spread. Covid-19 cases are rising again primarily due to the emergence of new SARS-CoV-2 variants with mutations in the spike protein, which can increase transmissibility and partially evade immune protection. Over time, the immunity developed from vaccines or prior infections wanes, especially without updated booster doses, making individuals more susceptible to reinfection.

Environmental factors, seasonal changes, and increased indoor gatherings also contribute to higher transmission rates. Dr Divya Joshi, Consultant — Infectious Diseases, at Fortis Hospital, said that the rise in cases is due to



increased testing, and it's important to understand that Covid, like many other viruses, follows a seasonal pattern. "Now that the virus has become part of our environment, we can expect its activity to fluctuate, much like influenza or metapneumovirus, with periodic spikes and drops," she said. "The reassuring part is that the symptoms are generally milder than in the early stages of the pandemic. Covid has now begun to behave like a typical seasonal virus, and while monitoring remains important, there is no cause for alarm," Joshi added.

Dr Mohammed Suhail K, Consultant, Internal Medicine, at Ramaiah Medical Hospital, explained that people should be aware that Covid-19 symptoms are not limited to just cough, fever, or sputum production. "Many patients may also experience diarrhea, fatigue, headaches, muscle aches, or soreness, in addition to common symptoms from earlier Covid strains, such as loss of taste and smell."

It's important to recognise that symptoms like nasal congestion, sore throat, diarrhea, chills, and even mild headaches can all be early signs of Covid," he added. Suhail said, "New variants continue to emerge, and while we need not panic, we must remain cautious and prepared. People should also keep track of their immunity levels to ensure adequate protection against evolving variants."

Doctors say that some patients may present with only a mild sore throat, while others may develop more severe symptoms like high fever, extreme fatigue, and dehydration and that gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea or loose stools should also not be ignored.

## Two-wheeler rider dies after hitting fallen electric pole in Kochi

**KOCHI.** A 54-year-old man died after his motorcycle hit a fallen electric pole at Kumbalam in Ernakulam in the early hours of Saturday. The incident sparked protests from local residents, who blamed the police and KSEB officials for the delay in removing the pole that posed a threat to the lives of commuters.

The deceased has been identified as Abdul Gafoor, a resident of Aroor and an Usthad (religious teacher) at a mosque in Kumbalam. According to police, the accident occurred around 4.30 am while Gafoor was on his way to the mosque for morning prayers. A newly installed electric pole, not yet connected to power lines, had collapsed onto the road near St Mary's

School around 3 am during heavy rain. Unaware of the obstruction, Gafoor crashed onto the post and sustained serious injuries. He was rushed to a hospital by police but succumbed to his injuries.

Prior to this accident, another two-wheeler rider, a pujari had also crashed onto the same pole and sustained injuries. He was shifted to a nearby hospital. By morning, officials from KSEB and the Fire and Rescue Services removed the pole from the road. The Panangad police have registered a case and launched an investigation. Gafoor's body was handed over to his relatives after a postmortem examination.

Local residents have expressed anger over what they describe as a negligent and delayed response from authorities. Simi Joby, member of Pravanam ward in Kumbalam panchayat,

criticised the lack of prompt action, and the failure to place warning signs or barricades.

"It took several hours for the authorities to clear the pole from the road, even though the public had alerted them early in the morning. At the very least, some kind of warning should have been placed to alert motorists. In the meantime, two accidents occurred, one of which turned fatal," she said.

Responding to the criticism, Panangad police officials said they attempted to move the concrete pole twice in the early morning hours but were unable to do so as it was too heavy. "We alerted KSEB and Fire and Rescue officials."

Our team tried twice to remove the pole but couldn't, as it was a heavy concrete structure. While our personnel were still at the spot, we received an alert about another urgent incident and had to redirect our personnel," a police officer stated.

Authorities have since moved the pole to one side of the road. KSEB officials attributed the delay to a shortage of staff during the early hours.

## Kannamaly residents demand urgent action against recurring sea surges

**KOCHI.** The residents of coastal areas from Kannamaly to Manassery held a protest on Saturday demanding steps to save the coastal hamlets from sea surge. The residents, including women, stood in knee deep water and raised slogans against the apathy of the district administration.

The residents of Chellanam and Kannamaly had organised a Collectorate march on April 11 demanding to complete the laying of geobags in the coastal sea and to clean the drainage channels before May 15.

"The collector had assured us steps to complete the construction of the bund wall using geotubes before the onset of monsoon. However, the work is yet to commence. There has been serious negligence on the part of the district disaster management authority (DDMA). The government should initiate action against the officials for the apathy which amounts to risking the lives of the coastal populace," said Chellanam Kochi Janakeeya Vedi general convenor V T Sebastian. The protesters demanded immediate steps to start the construction of the tetrapod seawall from Puthenthodu to Manassery immediately. Coastal areas like Manassery, Saudi and Beach Road should be included in the offshore breakwater project.

"The sea will turn rough and tidal waves will start inundating the coastal villages from Tuesday. The situation will be worse for eight days from May 27. Laying geotubes in the coastal sea will help break the tidal waves and to reduce the impact of the sea surge. As there is no seawall to protect us, we will have to move out from our houses during this period," says Metilda Cleetus, a resident of the Saudi area. Following the construction of tetrapod seawall from Chellanam to Puthenthode, the intensity of the sea surge has been diverted to Kannamaly area. With the onset of monsoon, tidal waves start lashing the coastal area forcing residents to shift to relief camps or houses of relatives. "On Friday night also we were woken up as water started entering the houses following heavy winds."

## Thiruvananthapuram railway division brings changes to ease travel woes

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.** Thiruvananthapuram Division of Southern Railway has launched many initiatives to make train services more efficient and travel more comfortable. Major trains have been permanently given extra coaches. During busy seasons like summer and festivals, additional coaches were also added temporarily to popular trains. This has led to more seat availability and shorter waiting lists. All long-distance trains with modern



LHB coaches now have four unreserved general coaches, helping short-distance passengers too.

All Vande Bharat trains running in the division now have more seats. The

Thiruvananthapuram-Kasaragod Vande Bharat got 25% more seats and the number of coaches increased from 16 to 20. The Chennai-Nagercoil Vande Bharat was upgraded to 20 coaches. The Mangalore-Thiruvananthapuram Vande Bharat doubled its coaches from 8 to 16.

Between May 20 and 22, 2025, several daily passenger trains like those running between Kottayam, Kollam, Alappuzha, Nagercoil, and Thiruvananthapuram were upgraded from 12 to 14 coaches to support daily commuters. Between December 2024 and May 2025, 31 train pairs were temporarily given extra coaches for a total of 1,023 trips, helping passengers during peak travel periods.

## CAT stays inquiry notice against IPS officer Alok Kumar in 2019 audio leak case before DG promotion review

CAT Judicial Member BK Srivastava however, noted that the matter should be heard by a division bench which is not available at present.

**BENGALURU.** The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) has stayed a notice issued by the chief secretary to senior IPS officer Alok Kumar, who is the additional director general of police, proposing a departmental inquiry against him into the 2019 telephone audio leak case.

Kumar contended that the departmental inquiry was already dropped as per the reply dated May 6, 2024, given by the state government under the Right to Information Act, and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) too has also filed a 'B' (closure) report in the case which conclusively established that there was no evidence against him into the alleged audio leak.

He alleged that the notice, dated May 9, 2025, was issued under Rule 8(4) of All India Services (Discipline & Appeals) Rules, 1969, just days before his name

was cleared by the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) for promotion to the director general of police post. The notice was after the director general and inspector general of police took his profile on April 23, 2025



to forward it to the Union Public Service Commission to consider him for the post of DG&IGP, he said.

Kumar's counsel submitted before the CAT that a previous departmental inquiry was initiated on the same

charges and finally no action was taken. He also drew attention to the order dated February 13, 2024, where the ACMM, Bengaluru, designated for hearing CBI cases, accepted the closure report.

The notice has been issued because the applicant is due for consideration for promotion with effect from May 21, he argued, pointing out that the notice was issued with a mala fide intention to create an artificial hurdle for his promotion.

CAT Judicial Member BK Srivastava however, noted that the matter should be heard by a division bench which is not available at present. It is to be ordered that the notification will be treated as stayed till June 10,

the next date of hearing. The interim relief will be possible before the division bench on the next date, he said in the order passed recently while issuing notice to all the respondents including the chief secretary.

## Kerala rain: 370 relief camps to be opened in Thiruvananthapuram, Rs 5 lakh emergency fund for taluks

**„Fire and rescue services teams are currently managing numerous calls related to the adverse weather, including reports of uprooted trees, fallen billboards, and damaged roofs.**

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.** In light of the ongoing heavy rain and strong winds disrupting normal life in the district, authorities have announced the opening of 370 relief camps across Thiruvananthapuram as part of their emergency preparedness efforts. Each taluk will be allocated an emergency fund of Rs 5 lakh to tide over the crisis. These measures were decided during a review meeting focused on assessing the district's rain preparedness.

Fire and rescue services teams are currently managing numerous calls related to the adverse weather, including reports of uprooted trees, fallen billboards, and damaged roofs. Fortunately, no casualties have been reported so far, said a fire and rescue services official.

Collector Anu Kumari, who also chairs the district disaster management authority, has issued strict directions for the removal of hazardous trees and branches from both public and private properties. Heads of departments have been instructed to clear dangerous trees from their office grounds and adjacent roads. Local self-government bodies must also act

swiftly to remove overhanging branches within their jurisdictions. If dangerous trees are found on private properties, the respective property owners will receive a notice. If they fail to act, local authorities will remove the trees and



recover the cost from the owner. The order specifies that complete tree removals should only occur after approval from a committee comprising the secretary of the local body, the village officer, and the forest range officer.

The health department has issued a high alert to all districts and hospitals. "Due to changing weather conditions, the risk of waterborne and

infectious diseases has increased. Hospitals likely to be affected by flooding must have backup arrangements and medicine supplies should be ensured," said Health Minister Veena George.

Residents are advised to drink only boiled water and to avoid wading through dirty, stagnant water. Those who must enter floodwaters should wash their hands and feet thoroughly with soap afterwards and take doxycycline, the preventive medicine for leptospirosis (rat fever). "Children should not bathe or play in floodwater," the minister warned.

"Prevent mosquito bites, destroy breeding grounds, and use personal protective gear like gumboots and gloves during cleaning work," said Veena. To reduce the risk of diseases such as diarrhoea, jaundice, and typhoid, people are encouraged to adopt good hygiene practices. "Those infected with jaundice must not cook for others, and their clothes and belongings should not be shared. Only boiled water should be used for drinking, and people should wash their hands with soap before eating and after using the toilet," she added.



A question of grace, timing in the run-up to global outreach

A certain lack of grace has characterised the run-up to the multi-party parliamentary delegations that have fanned out across several corners of the globe, in an attempt to explain why India carried out punitive strikes across Pakistan in response to the massacre at Pahalgam. Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari, Salman Khurshid and Amar Singh broke from their own party, the Congress, to respond to PM Modi's call to join these delegations — their names were not on the Congress list sent to the government. The grand old party had to eat crow. It should have known better. To think that Rahul Gandhi's Congress is the same Congress that Indira Gandhi once ruled over. She and her closest aides embarked upon a diplomatic campaign across several months in 1971, on the eve of the war with Pakistan, to showcase the gathering crisis over East Pakistan-Bangladesh to the world.

Fast-forward to 1994, when PV Narasimha Rao was PM and India was being hauled over the coals at the Human Rights Council in Geneva over Kashmir — so Rao called Atal Bihari Vajpayee and asked him if he would lead a multi-party delegation representing India. That moment in India's parliamentary history will go down as the stuff of political legend — Salman Khurshid, in 1994 a junior external affairs minister, never fails to tell anyone who will listen about how easy it was to work with Vajpayee. We didn't have to persuade each other. We didn't have to argue. We were instinctively on one page and he (Vajpayee) was so wonderful...He had that velvet touch that you need if you are a persuasive leader," Khurshid told The Print website, when Vajpayee passed away in 2018. Now many would not accuse Modi of "having a velvet touch." Certainly, the PM has a far blunter way of communicating his message. Perhaps Modi could have picked up the phone and called Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and said to him, "Bhai, I'm thinking India should tell the world in one voice about what is happening inside Pakistan; how this neighbour to our west is flirting with both fanaticism and terrorism; throw in a few nuclear weapons and look what you get, a dangerous cocktail that makes Kim Jong Un look like he's off to a kitty party."

Unfortunately, such a call, demonstrating the ability to dissolve both ego and political differences in the national interest, is simply not in the realm of possibility these days. A lack of grace defines the political arena. It's clear that neither side respects the other. Modi believes Rahul is an entitled dynast with little ground-connect, who refuses to learn and even worse, cannot be punished by his own party although he loses election after election; Rahul believes Modi is the destroyer-in-chief of institutions. Both have left little opportunity to insult each other in the public space. And when they aren't sparring, their closest aides bring up the rear. The taunts, the jibes, the obvious contempt in which the two top leaders of the country hold each other — it's not a pleasant sight to behold.

It's no one's case that politics is a picnic and turning the other cheek should be its leitmotif. But both Indira Gandhi and PVNR understood that foreign policy is an overarching rainbow which is able to absorb the varying shades of greyness in our lives. Even if the Congress perceived PM Modi's direct invites to its key MPs as political point-scoring, it could have swallowed its spit and told the PM that the Congress would be part of an Indian — not BJP's — outreach to the world. Thing about Rahul is that he picks up some very interesting causes, for example the caste census, in order to drive the point home. The PM was forced to take this demand on board, realising the nature of politics in the Hindi heartland — elections are due in Bihar later this year. Rahul should get full credit for not letting go and forcing Modi to acknowledge the need for such an exercise.

Deity system masks caste, feudal system in Himachal

While grand festivals like Shivratri in Mandi, Dasehra in Kullu and other local events symbolise cultural participation, their structure remains undemocratic.

Incidents of the past few years highlight a shift in the social and cultural milieu of Himachal Pradesh. A state that once evolved through the determination of its political leadership and the momentum of progressive social and cultural movements is witnessing a resurgence of decadent feudal values. Alongside, a rise in right-wing revivalism is reshaping the state's socio-political landscape. Evaluating this trend in the current context, particularly in light of the missed opportunities for a cultural and intellectual renaissance, is essential. The incident from Roopi village in the tribal district of Kinnaur exemplifies caste ostracisation. Two young Dalit men employed in a local hydropower project were influenced by union activities promoting liberty, equality and freedom. When they applied for leave — sacrificing a month's salary — it wasn't for leisure, but to fulfil a centuries-old caste duty: to carry village drums (nagaras) on their backs as part of a religious procession involving the local deity. In Himachal, such rituals are common. Yet, the role assigned to Dalits is degrading. During the rest stops, Dalits are not allowed proper shelter and often made to sleep in fields or cowsheds. The two workers proposed a fairer system: either the drum-carrying duty be shared by all castes or they be compensated in the form of daily wages. The response was severe. They were ostracised by the entire village, and even their families refused to support them. Returning home became impossible. A complaint filed at the police station brought no relief. Eventually, they approached the Himachal Pradesh High Court, which ordered the state to protect their rights, which too was not implemented. It was only after the two publicly apologised for their "mistake" that they were allowed to reintegrate into the community. Beneath the veneer of HP's high human development indicators lies a disturbing reality: caste discrimination continues, often masked by the deity system. Despite being second to Punjab in terms of Dalit population ratio and to Kerala in human development indicators, HP has failed to undergo a true social renaissance. The state emerged from two mergers — first after Independence with around 30 princely states and then in 1971, with the inclusion of Kangra and Una.

The deity system is most widespread in the older regions of Shimla, Kullu, Mandi and Solan. While grand festivals like Shivratri in Mandi, Dasehra in Kullu and other local events symbolise cultural participation, their structure remains undemocratic. In many cases, Dalits are still relegated to roles that mirror feudal servitude, albeit wrapped in the spectacle of cultural



celebration. These festivals continue to glorify feudal structures. The Mandi Shivratri festival is associated with its former ruling family and Kullu Dasehra cannot begin without the symbolic presence of the Kullu king. Other deities in Kotkhai, Kumarsain and Bushahr are embodiments of former feudal lords, whose worship maintains social hierarchies.

The deity system reinforces a social order governed by 'Devniti' — a local form of governance influenced by traditional caste hierarchies. The power structure typically involves three castes: the gur (oracle), kaisth (clerk), and bhandari (storekeeper). These roles continue to perpetuate customs of caste-based exclusion and divine authority.

To establish responsible governance under the princely rulers and to end feudal oppression, Dr YS Parmar led the Prajamandal movement. But the trouble with Himachal's search for renaissance is like trying to collect water without a container. It did implement land reforms. Dalits received land through surplus

redistribution and the Nau Taur scheme, which opened up new land for cultivation, and also through the Land Reform and Tenancy Act of 1972. They could have led to a broader cultural shift toward equality, but no such parallel cultural movement took root. Since the 1990s, not only have caste and feudal values seen a revival, even the earlier economic gains for marginalised communities have started to erode. Despite the Panchayati Raj system, where 50 per cent governance roles are reserved for women and many positions held by Dalits, the democratisation of cultural institutions remains elusive. Democratising social values demands cultural transformation. Festivals must be reimagined to include all sections as equal participants. Take a cue from Kerala, where Dalit priests now serve in temples. The reassertion of caste and feudal values reflects the fragility of social reforms when they are not accompanied by cultural awakening. HP must return to the ideals advocated by Dr Parmar — a land of equal dignity for all its people.

Indicators suggest room for rate cut despite RBI caution

Our society, which allows the turpitude to divide communities by turning its face from it, needs to look at it in the eye and stare it down with a steely resolve

The RBI sounded the bugle on rising core inflation just when headline inflation was showing signs of a durable decline. In April, the consumer price index fell to a 69-month low of 3.16 percent. Given it's the sixth consecutive monthly decline, the central bank seemed just one step away from declaring victory over inflation. But instead, it cautioned in its latest monthly bulletin about rising core inflation, thanks to highly elevated gold prices. As it is, core inflation rose to a 18-month high of 4.21 percent in April; if the price spike continues, it will spark fears about a return of the inflationary beast. And as the RBI noted, globally, the progress on the last mile of disinflation seems to have stalled. That said, headline inflation is the anchor for the central bank's monetary policy committee and a lower print allows enough headroom to proceed with rate cuts. Analysts expect back-to-back rate cuts in June and August, besides lowering the inflation outlook to 4 percent for 2025-26. If it happens, it will



be the first time in at least three years that annual inflation will comply with the RBI's 4 percent target. Meanwhile, the central bank also warned that global growth remains fragile and continues to face significant challenges including trade tensions, increased policy uncertainty, and subdued consumer

sentiment. This comes at a time when India's fourth quarter growth in 2024-25 seems to have slowed and is expected to print at about 6.5 percent as against a robust 8.4 percent in Q4, 2023-24. However, the RBI maintained that the Indian economy will stay resilient despite external headwinds. Citing high-frequency indicators, it reasoned that both industrial and services sectors maintained steady momentum through April. Wholesale vehicle sales, an indicator of demand, declined by 13.3 percent due to a high base effect. While the domestic indicators offer some room for recovery, much depends on how the talks on trade and terror will progress in the coming weeks. As for the trade deal with the US, preliminary discussions suggest the likelihood of a favourable agreement. It's the terror tension at the border that needs a close watch. The government must resolve it at the earliest, as such uncertainty is detrimental to the country's growth prospects.

Mahabodhi Temple sacrilege has hit India's soft power

Buddhists have been demanding the repeal of the Mahabodhi Temple Management Act, 1949 and its stipulated administration of the precincts by a mix of Buddhists and non-Buddhists

THE recent occasion of Buddha Purnima — the holiest day in the Buddhist calendar, celebrating the birth, awakening and display of passing away of the Buddha — was marked formally in New Delhi by the Government of India in numerous ways. Ministerial visits to the Buddha Relics at the National Museum took place on the day itself, followed a few days later by an event at the imposing Dr Ambedkar International Centre, with broad ministerial presence as well as a wide swathe of diplomatic representation from numerous Buddhist countries. The event included a viewing of a movie made by the International Buddhist Confederation on the Buddha Relics sent by India to travel across four cities of Vietnam, with up to 18 lakh Vietnamese having made the effort to pay their respects in person, despite a last-city stop yet remaining. The footage showed visibly moved Vietnamese paying homage to this temporary, yet extremely holy site, for, in the Buddha's own words, out of compassion, after his passing, anyone viewing the Buddha's Relics should consider it akin to being in his actual living presence. The recent successful efforts by the Government of India to stall the private auction by Sotheby's, at the very last minute, of the Piprahwa relics of the Buddha (excavated in 1898 at Piprahwa Stupa in Uttar Pradesh, India) was laudatory. To prevent the auction, the Indian government argued that their sacred heritage and religious value to the over 500 million Buddhists across the world put them beyond the reach of simple commodification and sale, and to think otherwise — even if their discoverer William Claxton Peppe was permitted at the time to retain a fraction of the find — was beyond the pale of the widespread ongoing decolonisation project. All of the above are very much in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's far-reaching vision of Buddhism as a soft power tool, on display and indeed foregrounded at the G-20 Summit in 2023 hosted by India and visibly so in many national and international forums and events. Given that India's most real and serious adversary today, China, has approximately 200



million people self-identifying as Buddhists, such a strategy has more advantages than can be mentioned here. An obvious one is the economic and political power of Buddhist pilgrims, who — given the Buddha's entire life being inexorably intertwined with various sites in India, many lying unexcavated to date — must visit the land at least once in their lifetimes. Wealthy Buddhist-majority countries, too, have undertaken aesthetic and efficient work to build and maintain various holy sites associated with the Buddha's life. For example, the minimalist, elegant Rajagriha, Nalanda, associated with the Buddha's teaching of The Second Wheel of Dharma on the sacred doctrine of emptiness and the recitation of The Heart Sutra to innumerable beings is of immense merit. It, therefore, came as a shock recently to view the footage circulating widely in social media of Hindu rituals being forcibly performed on Buddha Purnima in the innermost sanctum sanctorum of the world's Buddhist community — ie, the innermost precinct of the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhi Gaya, Bihar. It is the site of

the Buddha's own awakening, and it is the site where all the Buddhas to come are prophesised to awaken. That this is the site associated with the awakening of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni is contested by no group, of no religion. What then justifies — on the domestic, but equally and more importantly international stage — such an act of grave sacrilege, reportedly attended by the Bihar Governor and with the Bihar Police on duty to contain communal clashes, wherein Buddhist monastics even faced violence? In recent months, large-scale demonstrations and fasts by Indian Buddhists (both Himalayan and Navayana), fast spreading to the global community, have been held.

They have been demanding the repeal of the Mahabodhi Temple Management Act of 1949 and its stipulated administration of the precincts by a mix of Buddhists and non-Buddhists. This is the latest chapter in a decades-long demand, originating with Sinhalese reformist monk Anagarika Dharmapala's historical quest in this direction, which took the form of legal action and the

posthumous achievement of at least wresting the complete control of the temple from Hindu Brahmins. While the issue of the management of the temple remains unsettled, India needs to think of what it is projecting on the global stage as regards Buddhism and soft power in this unfortunate and violent latest incident, no doubt viewed countless times across the globe. Given the complete lack of contestation of the Mahabodhi Temple being the most sacred site for Buddhists of any persuasion and denomination across the world, of the past, present and future, it behoves this government to assert the sanctity of the one area where India truly and already is the 'Vishwa Guru', over prioritising internal discord and communal disharmony. This is also an opportunity forerent religions — whilst honouring and respecting the site's chief historical righteous custodians as belonging to one faith. Of the countless examples, let me cite the Golden Temple, Amritsar — of the Sikh community, and managed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandhak Commr India to display another of its unique qualities — the harmonious worship of one religious site by people of diffitee, but also a place where over 60 per cent of the daily pilgrims are non-Sikhs. It's also where khatri Punjabis and Tibetan Buddhists go in faith, because they see their own version of divinity in Guru Nanak (or Lama Nanak, as the latter call him). In conclusion, at this truly unstable moment in global politics and a new multipolar order, when alliances and loyalties change day by day if not hour by hour, India can do with every tool in its foreign policy kit. Buddhism is a key soft power lever, as recognised by PM Modi himself, affording immediate and long-term stable power to India on its vulnerable Himalayan borders and with its immediate neighbours in Asia and beyond. The government should, therefore, act decisively to put out the unnecessary communal fires that disrupt this image on the international stage, such as this most unfortunate display at the Mahabodhi Temple, Bihar, for it is an own soft power goal that India can ill afford.



# Tips to crack your job Interview

**The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question.**

Here are a few tips on how you can sail through your first job interview. The foremost issue all organizations face is that candidates do not match up to the needs of the job. Many job aspirants look at their careers from a myopic view of brands and fancy designations coupled with fat salaries. The first five years of one's professional life are formative, which is why this period should be utilized to gather profound professional experience. This is not the time to hunt for a cozy post.

The most important task before preparing for a job interview is to start with a self-assessment of whether you suit the position and organization in question. Visualise yourself as a part of the organization: How confident do you feel about being there? Is the work in line with your interest and natural abilities? The inner call, backed up by research, is crucial before you choose to go for the interview. There is a job for everyone; they just need to home in on the right place. - A lot of engineers may actually do well in creative positions than technical roles. If technical expertise is your area of interest and prowess, go for it. Evaluate which subject or activity you are best at. It shows your interest and natural inclination. If the inner call says, 'choose an alternative career,' please do so. Do not succumb to social pressure. It is better to succeed than to 'ape' and remain mediocre. - The interviewer has been entrusted with the task of hiring the best in a competitive environment. It is thus your responsibility to convince him/her of your capabilities. Data and facts always help, so converge on tangible information rather than abstract points.



However, the statistics must be focused on competencies. - Provide information on your strengths with evidence of its practical application in real life. - Talk about your extracurricular activities and the difficult choices you made in life; it shows leadership attributes and job-fit skill sets. - Talk about facts that show you make

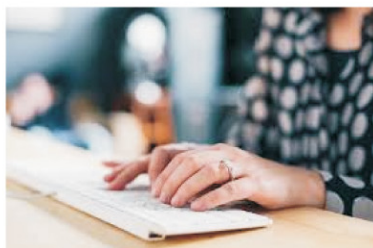
your choices and are not led by others alone. Highlight team activities you have undertaken - it shows your ability to collaborate. - Elaborate on situations that make you feel proud - it shows confidence and self-motivation. - Discuss instances when you have helped others - it is a sign of empathy. Finally, in a positive way, share instances of personal challenges that

fits in the grand picture of your career, the interviewer is most likely to choose you because it creates certainty. This is rare because many engineering graduates are disillusioned and openly talk about being explorers. Be clear where you wish to go. Employers would not like to waste time, money and effort on individuals who are continually

brought you where you are today - it exhibits strength of character. - Speak about your career vision. When you know how the job exploring. If that is the case, go for career advice or seek other professional help before interviews. In the case of engineers, interviewers' expectations are going to be specific. They look for thought leadership, precision in all you do, the ability to comprehend a problem and create solutions, an innovative mindset and critical thinking. As an engineer, your ability to lead a team will carry tremendous weight. Above all, one must "look and feel" like an engineer and not a casual person from nowhere. Lastly, understand that rejection has nothing to do with you personally. It is about an understanding that your abilities do not suit the job. So, gear up for the next opening.

## Recruitment as a Career option after 40

Looking for a career post 40? Maybe you can turn to recruitment. You have been working for about 15-18 years. You have seen your role grow and expand and you have matured as an individual, but on the work front, there is a lot of operational maintenance and opportunities for growth may be getting limited both laterally and upwards. Even if you move to another company, after the initial months of being onboarded and throwing yourself into work, you may realise that there is nothing new being added to your experience. You are in a limbo as to where your career is heading. What can you do that will keep you engaged intellectually, put to best use your network and knowledge and at the same time, give you back your zest for risk taking and FINANCIAL rewards? **Does this sound familiar?** If yes, have you considered professional executive recruit



- As a candidate, how was your experience of working with recruiters? - Lastly, how many times did you meet work with a recruitment partner who came from a similar background and understood you and your need thoroughly and were able to meaningfully contribute to the discussions? The truth is that there is a dearth of professional executive recruitment service providers in a vast MARKET like India. And more than ever, with the war for talent brewing in many industries, this is the right time to get into the recruitment business and start mentoring the careers of people who

lack direction. You may ask, "I don't have a recruitment HR background, how will I recruit?" So, we will let you in a little secret recruitment begins as a science. It's highly methodical you learn it by the book and over a period of time, you hone it into a fine art. And here is another open secret anybody can recruit. Not convinced yet? Here are two great reasons why recruitment becomes a choice of vocation in your 40s: **Your experience:** By the time you are 40, you have gained enough experience in the MARKET - this gives you an edge over many recruiters who recruit with no industrial knowledge. You know the industry by its length and breadth, understand what talents and skills are required to fill a role, know how the remuneration cycle works within that industry and the kind of talent that is available in the market. **Your network:** During your tenure with a particular industry, you've probably met all the movers and shakers within your industry and that again gives you the edge over your competitors. Aside from the connections you already have, you're decades ahead of the competition in terms of interpersonal skills. There is also movement of employers preferring to work with niche recruiters. Niche recruiters are specialists they don't cater to all sectors; they cater to the industry market that they are familiar with and confident about; and this is what makes them successful. They know the needs of their clients and understand talent in their sector and hence are able to understand the best talent for their clients.



ment as a business opportunity? To help you understand why this could be a meaningful proposition for you, think back to your corporate life and ask yourself: - How did you find people talent for your team? - What were your expectations from your recruitment partners and how well were they met? - Have you ever wished you could recruit your team members yourself, but couldn't due to paucity of time?



## Here's how to influence People at work

**Being authoritative is not the only way in which you can exercise power within a team or an organization. Here are a few simple tips to help you influence those around you in the workplace without coming across as too bossy.**

Take a situation where you have just been promoted and are now in charge of leading and motivating others. You want to drive new initiatives and will need others to agree and cooperate with you. How will you inspire action? If you think formal authority alone is enough to be persuasive, think again. To quote Kate Blanchard, co-author of One Minute Manager, "In the past, a leader was a boss. Today's leaders must be partners with their people. They can no longer lead solely based on positional power." The authority that stems from your position as manager is just one of the many sources of power that you can rely on to get things done. Your knowledge, network, reputation, character and personal charm are other sources you can and should tap into in order to accomplish your mission. Here are some strategies to activate your other power bases that will allow you to make a difference in your organization: - GAIN CENTRALITY AND

ENHANCE YOUR CREDIBILITY "Knowledge is power" ~ Francis Bacon It can hardly be debated that people who lack formal power can exert very little influence on others. Your recent promotion might have brought you more formal power than you had before, but it may not be enough to fulfill your high-level ambitions. If you aspire to gain access to important organizational resources or visibility with top-level executives, you must enhance your credibility and gain centrality in the organization. To achieve this, ask yourself if you have something unique to offer to your organization that will make you indispensable. Perhaps you enjoy an enviable reputation for being honest or dependable; how about your knowledge and expertise? Knowledge indeed is power. If people perceive you as someone knowledgeable, hard-working or trustworthy, they are more likely to be influenced by you. - DEVELOP NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" ~ Old



African proverb When you become a manager, you don't just get formal authority but also new duties and responsibilities. You must learn to manage not only your team, but also the context within which it operates. Oftentimes, you will have far less time and autonomy than you might have imagined. This is why you need to rely on the cooperation of other people to get things done swiftly. These individuals could be people

within the organization (such as your peers, supervisors or direct reports) as well as people outside the organization (such as customers, vendors, and competitors). You cannot demand commitment from people; you have to earn it. One way to do this is by building networks and alliances to accomplish your goals. Create opportunities to spend time with your supervisor, peers or customers. You can do this at office as well as in less formal settings such as over lunch. Be open to being an active participant in your organization. Getting involved in community projects or other special organizational initiatives will allow you to get to know people from other divisions. - DEVELOP AND EMPLOY ELOQUENCE Studies have shown that people who are more expressive generally have a greater ability to lead and influence others. Why? Because they are more aware of their ideas, emotions and reactions; they, therefore, have a tendency to reach a greater audience than less expressive people. So, the final recommendation would be to develop your communication skills and eloquence. It will allow you to inspire and motivate people. However, remember, that if you don't walk your talk, an 'inspiration gap' will surface which will eventually cause you to lose credibility. In conclusion, it pays to remember that power is not about having absolute control, exploiting people in selfish ways or manipulating others. The proper attitude to have towards power is to see it as a tool to influence people in an ethical way to achieve desired organizational outcomes. Staying true to your core values and beliefs and engaging others when exercising power will allow you to use it in a more authentic and responsible manner.



# India's Astronauts Vs Pakistan's Terrorists: A Tale of Two National Visions

**While India trains astronauts to explore the cosmos, state-sponsored terror operates undeterred in Pakistan, Dr VK Saraswat, former DRDO chief said.**

New Delhi. As India prepares to send an astronaut into space, the contrast with its western neighbour could not be more stark. While India trains scientists and astronauts to explore the cosmos, state-sponsored terror continues to operate undeterred in Pakistan, Dr VK Saraswat, former Director General of the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and current member of NITI Aayog told.

"It's a glaring example of the psychology of our adversary. While India has always focused on training its people for peaceful exploration of space, Pakistan has, unfortunately, chosen a path of fostering terrorism," Dr Saraswat said. His remarks come a month after a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam left 26 civilians dead. India then began Operation Sindoor on May 7 with air strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. "Our space program is globally recognised for achieving excellence at the lowest cost," Dr Saraswat emphasised. "It's a



testament to India's commitment to peaceful progress and technological innovation." India's space journey began with Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma's historic flight to space in 1984 and advanced to remarkable missions like Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan. India is also planning its own space station and deep space missions, all aimed at advancing scientific knowledge and benefiting humanity. Next month, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is scheduled to travel to the International Space

Station, marking another proud moment for India's space ambitions. Further, Indian Space Research Organisation's Gaganyaan mission aims to send Indian astronauts into low Earth orbit aboard an indigenous spacecraft.

Contrasting with the advancements with the situation across the border, Dr Saraswat said Pakistan should leverage technology to better people's lives. "Terrorism is an anathema to social structure. It should be detested and removed. Instead of creating chaos, Pakistan should focus on science and technology for the betterment of its people," he said. With the motive of the betterment of people, Dr Saraswat suggested that India is open to collaboration with its neighbour in the space sector. "If Pakistan wants to work with us, we can even consider a joint space program. We're willing to share technologies that can uplift their population," he said. As India prepares to launch its next astronaut, its message and vision is clear - peace, progress, and prosperity through science.

## LoP claims water crisis, seeks meeting with CM Rekha Gupta

NEW DELHI. Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Delhi Assembly, Atishi, on Saturday wrote to Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, raising serious concerns over the acute water shortage across the national capital. In her letter, Atishi criticised the BJP-led Delhi government for its inaction and negligence, emphasising that the capital is on the brink of a humanitarian crisis, and urged the BJP government to urgently fulfil its basic responsibilities towards the people.

She appealed to CM Rekha Gupta to uphold democratic traditions and immediately convene a meeting with AAP MLAs to formulate a solution to the deepening water crisis. In the letter, Delhi Assembly LoP Atishi wrote: "I am writing this letter to you regarding the severe water crisis currently gripping the national capital, Delhi. It is only the month of May—summer's true intensity is yet to arrive—but the people of Delhi are already tormented by an acute shortage of water." She further noted, "People across the city are distressed due to the lack of water. Women standing in queues in front of water tankers, children waiting with buckets and pitchers, families buying large bottles of drinking water from markets—these scenes are fast becoming the new identity of Delhi. Is this the vision of Delhi you had promised its citizens?"

Atishi added, "It is extremely unfortunate that despite having a four-engine BJP government—at the Centre, in the office of the LG, in the MCD, and now also in the CM's chair—the people of Delhi have been left struggling for even basic necessities like water."

On Saturday, residents of the Tank Road area in Karol Bagh, one of Delhi's busiest commercial hubs, took to the streets in large numbers to protest the acute water shortage they've been facing for the past two months. Demonstrators blocked the road and staged a 'Matka Phod' protest, symbolically breaking earthen pots to express their frustration over the lack of water. The protest led to traffic congestion on both sides of the road. Meanwhile, two days ago, the National Green Tribunal pulled up the DJB for supplying non-potable water to residents of Janakpuri. Households in the area were allegedly supplied sewage-mixed drinking water.

## Property agent arrested for posing as government official, extorting 76-year-old woman

NEW DELHI. A 42-year-old property agent was arrested for posing as a government official and extorting a septuagenarian woman in South Delhi's Defence Colony area, police said on Saturday. The accused, Tausif Raja, is a graduate and worked as a property agent in the Shaheen Bagh area. A 76-year-old woman, a resident of Defence Colony, reported on Tuesday about an incident involving the extortion of Rs 1.75 lakh by an unknown person.

In her complaint, she stated that on May 9, a person claiming to be an official from the Horticulture and MCD departments visited her residence. He alleged that the drains on her property were not clean and threatened that a challan of Rs 50,000 would be issued and their electricity meter would be disconnected. He then demanded Rs 25,000 as a bribe to settle the matter, a senior police officer said.

When she refused to pay the bribe, the individual threatened to sabotage the marriage of her son. Out of fear, she handed over Rs 25,000 to the accused. On May 13, the same person returned and again threatened to disconnect the electricity meter and disrupt her son's marriage. This time, he demanded an amount of Rs 50 lakh. Out of fear, her husband complied with his instructions and delivered Rs 1.5 lakh in cash at the Modi Mill flyover, as directed by the accused, the officer said.

Despite receiving the money, the accused continued to threaten the complainant's family and insisted on being paid the remaining amount. During the investigation, police analysed footage from over 100 CCTV cameras and examined the call detail records of the accused. Eventually, the accused was identified. A raid was conducted in Okhla, and he was arrested, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Ankit Chauhan said. One motorcycle, two mobile phones, and Rs 28,500 in cash were recovered from his possession, police added.

## Four of family killed after being run over by car while crossing road in Madurai



New Delhi. Four members of a family, including a one-year-old boy, were killed in a hit-and-run incident at Kunjampatti near Usilampatti in the district on Saturday. The victims were part of a group of seven people from Kanjampatti village who were returning home after visiting a temple in Usilampatti.

As the family got down at a bus stop and tried to cross the road, a speeding car struck them, killing Pandiselvi, Jothika, Lakshmi and the infant instantly.

Three others sustained critical injuries and were rushed to Usilampatti Government Hospital with the help of local commuters who witnessed the incident. The injured are currently undergoing treatment.

After the accident, Usilampatti Police recovered the bodies and sent them for post-mortem examination. Authorities have launched a manhunt for the car driver, who fled the scene and remains absconding. An investigation is currently underway.

## Drug bust near North Campus of DU, med representative among five nabbed



NEW DELHI. Five people, including a medical representative of a company, have been arrested for allegedly being involved in supplying drugs without any bill or prescription in North Campus of Delhi University, police said on Saturday.

The accused have been identified as Manish Bhatle (26), Devender (57), Nikhil (28), Ankit Gupta (40), and Kapil (28). A total of 2,360 capsules of Tramadol and 135 bottles of Codeine-based cough syrup have been recovered.

Acting on a tip-off regarding Bhatle, who was allegedly involved in the supply of Codeine-based syrup and Tramadol capsules, a trap was laid and Bhatle was nabbed from near University Road with two plastic sacks, with one containing 10 boxes of 2,360 capsules (Dicyclomine HCl, Tramadol HCl, and

Acetaminophen) and another 120 bottles of 100 ml codeine-based syrup, DCP (Crime Branch) Apoorva Gupta said. The drug inspector said the recovered items without carrying bills or prescription were illegal as per the NDPS Act, the DCP said.

Bhatle revealed that he procured the contraband from his uncle Devender, owner of a medical shop in Malkaganj, and the same was to be supplied as per his directions. Later, Devender was nabbed. He disclosed that he procured Tramadol from Nikhil, a mediator in the illegal drug supply chain. After arrest, Nikhil told cops that he had procured the Tramadol tablets from Ankit. Ankit was rounded up during a raid at his godown at GT Karnal Road Industrial Area on May 14. He said he had supplied Tramadol to Nikhil without any bill or prescription. Fifteen bottles of codeine syrup were recovered from his godown, the DCP said.

## Over 200 flights hit, roads waterlogged as heavy rain lashes Delhi-NCR

New Delhi. Heavy rain accompanied by gusty winds and thunderstorms lashed Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) early Sunday, bringing the city to a standstill. The downpour caused significant traffic disruptions, waterlogging, and flight delays. A police officer died after the roof of the Assistant Commissioner's office collapsed during the torrential rain. More than 200 flights were affected due to a strong storm and heavy downpour at Indira Gandhi International Airport. Around 49 flights were diverted between 11:30 pm on Saturday to 4:00 am on Sunday, the airport authority said on Sunday.

As per the latest data from IMD, the highest wind speed was reported at Safdarjung (Airport) at 82 km/h last night at around 2 am, followed by 76 km/h at Pragati Maidan. The lowest wind speed was reported at 37 km/h at Delhi University (North Delhi).



The latest advisory by the Delhi Airport said that flight operations are still affected due to disruptions last night. The airport urged passengers to keep checking their flight's status and stay in touch with their respective airlines for the latest updates.

As per the latest data, rainfall measurements recorded across various parts of Delhi until early morning include: Safdarjung: 81 mm, Palam: 68 mm, Pusa: 71 mm

## Two Teens Charred To Death In Fire At E-Rickshaw Charging Station In Delhi

New Delhi. Two teenagers were charred to death, while four sustained burn injuries in a blaze that broke out at an e-rickshaw charging and parking station in Ram Nagar area of Delhi's Shahdara on Sunday morning, officials said.

Brijesh, 19, and Maniram, 18, both natives of Tikamgarh district in Madhya Pradesh, perished in the fire, police said. The two were asleep when the fire broke out and got trapped inside.

Their charred bodies were recovered from the debris after the fire was brought under control, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Prashant Gautam in a statement said.

The fire broke out around 6.40 am in a tin shed structure, which functioned as a godown-cum-parking and charging station for e-rickshaws, as well as a storage house for sugarcane juice machines, the statement said.



The structure measures around 300 to 400 square yards and is located near Ram Mandir on Moti Ram Road in Shahdara's Ram Nagar area.

The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) said they received a call at 6.40 am and promptly dispatched five fire tenders to the site.

"The fire was significant and had engulfed most of the shed when our teams arrived. We managed to control the fire by 8.30 am. During the operation, we recovered two charred bodies from the site," DFS chief Atul Garg said.

The four burned were rushed to Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital for treatment.

They were identified as Harishankar, 19, a resident of Bhawai in Tikamgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rinku, 18, Mukesh, 22, and Vipin, 19, all three from Maharajganj in Raebareilly district of Uttar Pradesh. Harishankar sustained 45 per cent burns, Rinku 30 per cent, while Mukesh and Vipin suffered around seven per cent each. All six sold sugarcane juice on e-rickshaws and used to live in the shed, police said.

According to a preliminary inquiry, the fire is suspected to have sparked from an electrical short circuit while charging.

Officials said a detailed inspection will be conducted to examine the fire safety compliance of the premises. Police have apprehended the person, Vinod Rathore, who is in charge of the premises, and had rented the godown.

## Judge shifted as record keeper booked

### Refuting bribery for bail charge, ahlmad tells HC the ACB case part of a larger conspiracy

NEW DELHI. The Delhi High Court has transferred a Special Judge (PC Act) from the Rouse Avenue Court to Rohini (North-West Delhi) after the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) registered a case against his ahlmad (record keeper), Mukesh Kumar, over allegations of bribery in bail matters.

On May 16, the ACB booked Kumar under Sections 7 and 13 of the Prevention of Corruption Act and relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), alleging that he had demanded and received bribes from accused persons to facilitate their release on bail. However, Kumar has strongly refuted the allegations and claimed he has been falsely implicated by ACB officers as part of a

larger conspiracy aimed at targeting the judge. He has accused ACB Joint Commissioner Madhur Verma and Assistant Commissioner of Police Jarnail Singh of attempting to settle personal scores with the judge for passing unfavourable orders against the agency.

In a petition filed before the Delhi High Court, Kumar alleged that the case is "a grave attack on judicial independence" and called the FIR "a false and malicious FIR registered against the petitioner with the sole objective of arm-twisting the judiciary and using the petitioner as a tool to threaten the judge, and to compel the petitioner to help the vengeful officers of Anti-Corruption Branch to take retaliatory action against the judge because of their discomfort with judicial orders being passed against them."

The petition also alleged that after the judge flagged several loopholes in ACB investigations, court staff began facing threats of false cases. Kumar, under pressure, had even requested a transfer from the special judge's courtroom.

He further sought a departmental enquiry against Joint Commissioner Verma and



ACP Singh, accusing them of "underhand dealings, corruption, blackmailing, criminal intimidation, abuse of office, misuse of state machinery, forgery, and fabrication of documents, abduction intimidation of witnesses, and destruction of official record."

The petition, seeking either the quashing of the FIR or transfer of the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), was listed before Justice Amit Sharma on May 20. The single-judge bench directed the State to file a status report or response by May 29.

Kumar also told a trial court that the FIR was registered shortly after the Special Judge, with whom he was posted, issued a show-cause notice to Joint Commissioner Verma asking why a contempt reference

should not be initiated against him before the High Court. Notably, before the FIR was registered, the ACB had approached the Law Secretary of the Delhi government in January seeking permission to initiate a probe against the judge.

The agency also submitted what it claimed was incriminating material against both the judge and Kumar to the HC on the administrative side. In February, the Delhi High Court responded that the agency was free to investigate the complaints but declined to permit any action against the judge at that stage, citing lack of sufficient material. "Accordingly, presently there is no requirement to grant permission qua the said Judicial Officer. However, the investigating agency is at liberty to carry on with the investigation with respect to the complaints received by them," the High Court stated in its reply. Kumar's anticipatory bail plea was dismissed by the trial court on May 22, although the court directed the ACB to adhere to Section 41 and 41A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (corresponding to Sections 35(1)(2) and 35(3)(6) of the BNS) before effecting any arrest.





10 signs that you're being

# Bullied at Work

**S**igns you are being bullied at your workplace and what you could do about it

While bullying is usually perpetrated by someone in a position of power and authority, peers and even subordinates are also known to engage in bullying. A bully (read: weak soul) is actually an insecure, paranoid, control freak. Their aim is to belittle and ultimately diminish their prey through persistent hostile and unnecessarily rude behaviour. Can you spot such a type at work? Here are 10 signs that you're being bullied at the office:

**See obvious biasness**

Others in your work group are receiving preferential treatment top projects, travel perks and free time. Meanwhile, you find that most of your requests along the same lines are denied without reasonable explanation.

**Your progress goes unseen**

Say you've been given a directive with certain objectives, an ultimate goal and a deadline. You work hard and with focus only to find out, that suddenly there's a change in direction on the project. Your progress is not celebrated or applied to the

new project, but not even taken into account.

**All your decisions are questioned**

So you are constantly bombarded by excessive micro-managing? You don't feel like your intuition or decisions are being trusted, and you can't explain why. Your boss and others hover over you much more than telling you what to do (and what not to do). You get the sense that you are wrongly perceived as incompetent and your decision-making capability is greatly reduced as a result.

**You are socially alienated**

All of a sudden, you're excluded from

meetings you once attended. Your colleagues tend to discuss work prior to your arrival and you are left with absolutely no clue what to do. Besides, you are not marked on important mails. Co-workers tend to avoid you and keep interaction to a minimum. You may also find that you're no longer invited to post work drinks with your teammates.

**You often feel targeted**

Often, when you make a comment, suggestion or disagree with someone's opinion, you're responded to with a plethora of responses by others. It doesn't matter whether you're right -the gang mentality is



Feedback is always provided in the form of criticism and delivered in a way to make you feel awful about yourself. There's no effort to provide guidance.

**Presented unreasonable obstacles**

So does the boss man purposely throw roadblocks in front of you to prevent you from successfully completing a project? Now, this is a major act of bullying.

**How to deal?**

Once you've come to the realisation that you're a victim of bullying -at work, or life- it's important to know what kind of re course you have. Here are possible actions that you could take.

- Speak to a trusted authority in the organisation: A good start may be human resources. They should be able to help you under stand, if you're actually being bullied. If it's determined that a bullying situation exists, they can also provide guidance on how to deal with it. Alternatively, you may feel more comfortable speaking with a higher authority senior colleague.

- Know your rights: If you feel that you're not being heard within your company, you might seek external counsel.

- Find another job: This should be a last resort. But sometimes it's not worth the fight -emotion ally and financially. Respect your self.

Look for new employment with a company possessing a strong culture of integrity. Such companies have zero tolerance policies.

determined to prove you wrong.

Your health is failing  
Mentally, you're drained and your energy is zapped. You're sleeping more and getting out of bed is a real task for you. Exercising and socialising with your folks is a chore. Bullying can lead to depression, anxiety, panic attacks and mood swings. There are physical symptoms such as increased blood pressure, rapid heart beat, and loss of appetite (or excessive eating).

**Have experienced verbal spat**

You're subjected to negative, abusive language -reprimanded often in front of the entire office. Verbal abuse can also be more subtle than loud insults. You may find that you are being joked around with in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable and small, and that too can be verbal bullying.

**Your work is publicly diminished**

Your dedication to your job is not acknowledged by your boss or they give credit to others (for your hard work) in a public setting such as a meeting.

**Face unnecessary criticism**

It seems that in the eyes of your boss, you are ineffective and unprofessional.

## 5 ways to break the ice at work

Making friends at work is good for you. Use these tips to start right when you join a new place or someone new joins you

According to years of research by the Gallup Organisation in Minneapolis, having an office friend results in the employee being seven times more likely to remain engaged in their job. It doesn't even have to be a best friend - Gallup found that even people who had a good friend at their workplace were more likely to be satisfied, increasing their productivity levels. Here are some ways to make sure you give yourself a chance to be a part of that world.

**FIND THE MEETING POINT**

Every office has a gathering point, where people hang out and chat, like at the coffee vending machine or water cooler. Figure out when the colleagues you'd like to break ice with hang out there, and make an effort to get there around the same time so that it gives you a chance to speak to them. Says IT professional Srilatha Bala, "I have two good friends at work because of those well-spent 4 pm coffee breaks, even though I am not fond of the drink."

**OFFER A SNACK**

The way to your colleague's heart is through his or her stomach. Akshit Paramasivam, HR manager at an IT firm in Chennai, says, "I paid



attention to my colleagues' dietary preferences - Jain, diabetic, etc, and offered them snacks I knew they'd like. It helped build camaraderie."

**BE POSITIVE**

No one likes to be around someone who is always serious, irritable or in a blue funk. Make sure you stay cheerful and communicate pleasantly with your colleagues whenever you can. Compliment them if they are looking nice, or if they have done a job well. But be genuine about it.

**AVOID GOSSIP**

You would not want to make friends with those interested simply in gossip and politics. Ashi Malik, career counsellor says, "Keep your interactions and conversations clean, and you'll attract the right kind of friends. Focus on saying something nice about the workspace, and spreading goodwill." Hannah Thangadurai\*, a freelance proofreader, says, "I lost out on some really good friends and made a bad impression at my last workplace because I hung out with the wrong crowd. I'll be more careful the next time."

**STEP OUT FOR A MEAL**  
"Suggesting new restaurants in the vicinity to try at lunch always works wonders," Malik says. Choose a restaurant that you know will be appealing, and take suggestions from your co-workers into consideration. Make your outing pleasant, use it well to get to know your colleagues, and give them the chance to get to know you as well. Work buddies we love These TV friendships trump romances any day  
The Mindy Kaling Show: We love the humorous banter and loyal friendships that Mindy has with each of her co-workers.  
The Office: This is human eccentricity and office politics at its harmless best.  
Parks And Recreation: Leslie Knope and Ann Perkins are each other's biggest cheerleaders - it's adorable.  
Grey's Anatomy: Meredith Grey's

close relationship with her co-residents/competitors is inspiring. If you're an introvert... If you're too shy to initiate conversation, start an email thread or Whatsapp group to break the ice. It'll make talking to people easier. Attend work events and outings,



which give you a chance to observe people outside the office and gauge who you are comfortable with. Conquer your fear of rejection. Be prepared for the fact that some will like you, some won't, and some may not be polite about it either.



# ONGC makes promising oil, gas discoveries in Mumbai offshore basin

New Delhi. State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has made promising offshore oil and gas discoveries in the Mumbai Offshore basin that could help augment production in the near future. The discoveries have been made in blocks awarded under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) regime, the state-owned firm said in its fourth-quarter earnings statement.

The discoveries, which have been named Suryamani and Vajramani, were made in OALP-VI block MB-OSHP-2020/2 and OALP-III block MB-OSHP-2018/1, both in the offshore Mumbai basin.

Exploratory well MBS202HAA-1 on Block MB-OSHP-2020/2 flowed 2,235 barrels per day of oil and 45,181 million cubic metres a day of gas during testing done in the January-March quarter. This is the first discovery in Basal Clastics in OALP Block MB-OSHP-2020/2. The success in well MBS202HAA-1 was notified as New Prospect Discovery and rechristened as 'Suryamani'," ONGC said. Subsequently, during the current quarter, a second zone was tested on the same well, which flowed 413 barrels per day of oil and 15,132 cubic metres a day of gas.

"This hydrocarbon success in Mukta Formation was encountered for the first time in OALP Block MB-OSHP-2020/2 and was notified as New Pool Discovery of Suryamani prospect."

Exploratory well MBS181HNA-1 in OALP-III Block MB-OSHP-2018/1 Mumbai flowed 2,122 barrels of oil per day and 83,120 cubic metres of gas a day during testing. "This discovery is an independent fault bounded nosal feature and lies in the western part of the block MB-OSHP-2018/1. The success in well MBS181HNA-1 was notified as New Prospect Discovery named as 'Vajramani'," ONGC said. Mumbai offshore is home to India's biggest oil and gas fields. Mumbai High, located 160 km off the west coast of India in the Arabian Sea, is the nation's largest and most prolific offshore oil and gas field. The field produces about 1,34,000 barrels per day (bpd), accounting for 35 per cent of India's domestic oil production. The field also produces around 10 million standard cubic metres per day (mmscmd) of gas, representing about 18 per cent of the country's gas output.

## Karur Vysya Bank expects 2% more credit growth than industry in Fy26

New Delhi. Private sector Karur Vysya Bank expects its credit growth to be more than 2 per cent over the industry's overall growth during the current financial year, a top official said. The Tamil Nadu-based bank has lined up plans to open 28 new branches before the first half of the current financial year, particularly in Southern and Western parts of the country, the Bank's Managing Director and CEO, Ramesh Babu, said.

The financial landscape is witnessing a dramatic transformation globally as well as in India, driven by technological innovations, changing consumer preferences and the emergence of alternative business models, he said. The Reserve Bank of India is expected to adopt a more accommodative monetary policy stance. This could involve further rate cuts to stimulate domestic demand and support economic growth. The sudden escalation at the border has also added more uncertainties for the coming year," Babu told analysts recently, during the Q4 FY2025 Earnings Conference Call.

"Considering the above, the outlook for the Financial Year 2025-26 remains cautiously optimistic; we need to navigate margin pressures too and monitor asset quality closely. We expect our credit growth to be more than 2 per cent over the industry growth," he said.

## Tata Motors seeks to regain 50% market share in electric PV segment

New Delhi. Tata Motors, the leader in the domestic electric passenger vehicle segment, is seeking to regain its market share of 50 per cent in the mid-to-long term through expansion and renewal of its product portfolio, according to a top company official.

With the domestic electric passenger vehicle market fragmenting into four distinct segments on the basis of price points, the company will be entering the above Rs 20 lakh category with its upcoming Harrier.ev and Sierra.ev, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicle and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Managing Director Shailesh Chandra told PTI here in an interview. The company is working to make the total cost of ownership (TCO) of its EVs in the fleet segment comparable to that of CNG vehicles to regain volumes, he added. We have the aspiration of sustaining our market share beyond 50 per cent in the mid to long term... We would aspire to be at a 50 per cent market share by having a very wide product portfolio and products which are aligned to the expectation of the customers," Chandra said, adding that by mid-term, he meant 18-24 months and beyond. He was responding to a query on how Tata Motors is looking to maintain its leadership position in the electric PV segment in the wake of intensifying competition. Acknowledging that in the short term, the company will face challenges, he said the decline in the company's market was "pretty much on the cards" as many players have come with multiple products with around 20 models in the market, including luxury cars.

The passenger EV market is now segmented into four parts -- Rs 8-12 lakh; Rs 12 to 20 lakh; above Rs 20 lakh and the fleet segment, he noted. Chandra said the company's market share is about 40-41 per cent at present, down from about 55 per cent last fiscal, mainly on account of a drop in fleet sales and intense competition in the Rs 12 to 20 lakh segment.

# NTPC's Q4 Net Profit Surges 22.6% Sequentially To Rs 5,778 Crore

Compared to the previous quarter, the profit soared by an even higher 255 per cent from Rs 65.61 crore in December 2024 (Q3), according to its stock exchange filing.

New Delhi. Power major NTPC Ltd on Saturday reported a 22.6 per cent sequential surge in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,778 crore in Q4 FY25. The revenue stood at Rs 43,903.7 crore, up 6 per cent from Rs 41,368 crore in the third quarter (Q3). NTPC, which operates under the Ministry of Power, is India's largest power generation company. The



company also informed that the Board has approved a final dividend of Rs 3.35 per share for its investors. This is in addition to the two interim dividends of Rs 2.5 per share each paid in November and February. On year-on-year basis, the

green on Friday. Earlier this week, NTPC Green Energy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the state-run power giant NTPC, announced that its consolidated net profit nearly tripled in Q4 FY25, rising by 188 per cent to Rs 233.21 crore compared to Rs 80.95 crore in the same quarter last fiscal (Q4 FY24). Compared to the previous quarter, the profit soared by an even higher 255 per cent from Rs 65.61 crore in December 2024 (Q3), according to its stock exchange filing. The company's consolidated revenue from operations also showed strong growth. It increased by 22.4 per cent year-on-year (YoY) from Rs 508.14 crore in the March 2024 quarter to Rs 622.27 crore in the quarter under review (Q4 FY25). NTPC Green Energy is a company focused on renewable energy projects, pursuing growth through both organic development and acquisitions. As of March 2025, the government held an 89.01 per cent stake in the firm.

# India Overtakes Japan To Become 4th Largest Economy At USD 4 Trillion: NITI Aayog CEO

New Delhi. NITI Aayog Chief Executive Officer (CEO) B.V.R. Subrahmanyam stated that India has overtaken Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy, citing data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Speaking at a press conference during the 10th NITI Aayog Governing Council Meeting on 'Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat 2047', he announced that India's economy has reached the USD 4 trillion mark.

"We are the fourth-largest economy as I speak. This is IMF data, not mine. India today is larger than Japan. Only the United States, China, and Germany are ahead of us. If we continue with the current plans and strategies, we are likely to become the third-largest economy in another 2 to 3 years," he said. According to the IMF's April edition of the World Economic Outlook report, India's

nominal GDP for fiscal year 2026 is projected to reach around USD 4,187.017 billion, slightly ahead of Japan's estimated GDP of USD 4,186.431 billion. Until 2024, India



was ranked as the world's fifth-largest economy. The IMF projects that India will remain the fastest-growing major economy over the next two years, with GDP growth expected at 6.2 percent in 2025 and 6.3 percent in 2026, outpacing global and regional peers.

# How to ensure purity of gold when buying Never forget to check these

Kolkata. Indians buy gold throughout the year. be it social occasions or religious ceremonies, a touch of gold always adds that extra zing in most households. However, whenever one buys gold, the nagging apprehension is whether the gold one is buying is pure, or at least, as pure as claimed. There are a few ways in which a lay person can check the quality of gold one is about to buy. Unfortunately, there is no dearth of unscrupulous goldsmiths or gold retailers who are always seeking opportunities to pass off inferior quality gold as higher quality. To ensure that such evil designs are defeated, it is essential to know how one can be sure about the purity of the metal one is buying with his/her hard-earned money.

**Proper BIS hallmark**  
In order to introduce some discipline into the unregulated sector of gold, the Centre had introduced BIS hallmarking scheme for gold jewelry in 2000. Hallmarking for gold jewelry was made mandatory from June 23, 2021 in 256 districts and then from April 4, 2022 an additional 32 were added. The third phase began from September 8, 2023. The BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) hallmark is a reliable certification for gold that tells the buyer that the metal conforms to the purity standard being claimed. The hallmark states details like purity in karats and the identification of the jeweler.

**The HUID number**  
Significantly, every item of hallmarked gold jewelry bears a HUID number which is unique. HUID stands for Hallmark Unique Identification (HUID) number. This number is supposed to signal authenticity and anyone can get this number verified at the BIS Care App. It will highlight the purity, registration, and hallmarking center details of the piece of jewellery purchased. The BIS Care App can be downloaded from the app store of any smartphone. The buyer can enter the HUID in this app and verify the quality of the gold he/she is about to buy. It will also reveal the details about the jeweler and hallmarking center.

**Magnet test**  
Gold retailer say that one can also try out a magnet test — touching a piece of gold jewellery with a magnet. Genuine gold will not attract a magnet. Another point is that the customer should always ask for a bill from the seller. It should mention the weight, karat of the gold and hallmark certification of the jewellery.

# Daily SIP in mutual funds: Know the pros and cons; what can it tackle better

Kolkata. SIP, or Systematic Investment Plan, has turned into a favourite mode of investment for the investing masses of India. Who doesn't like the concept of relatively smaller but regular investment amounts generating a significant corpus over a period of several years — returns which can beat inflation by a considerable margin. But any systematic investment calls for investment after regular predetermined intervals. But the moot point is, what should be periodicity of investments — monthly, weekly, or daily? Purely from the convenience of investment point of view, the monthly SIP has almost assumed a default mode. Whenever SIPs are discussed, an investment adviser assumes that an investor will go for a monthly investment.

**Why daily SIP at all?**  
The concept of monthly SIP is so deep-



rooted in the consciousness of an investor that one can easily ask, what will daily SIP achieve? The point to emphasise here is that monthly SIPs are widely followed since these are aligned with our income, which is once a month for most persons. On the other hand, daily SIPs are certainly smaller in amount but can be quite an irritation since it needs the investor to preserve a certain amount of money in the bank account everyday. However, the cost averaging is dependent on the number of price points one touches, and from that angle, this should be the best mode of SIP. In the case of daily SIPs, investments are made every day and the compounding effect may be magnified over time. This should also lead to higher returns — the more frequent the returns from investment, the higher the power of compounding. The same argument should imply that daily SIPs can tackle volatility more efficiently. Monthly investments score on three counts — convenience, discipline and ease of tracking. Since salary earners are paid once a month, investments once a month can be easily aligned to the cash flow.

# Stock Market Forecast: What could drive Sensex, Nifty this week Experts' views

**Stocks markets concluded the last week on a subdued note, as investors grappled with global uncertainties.**

New Delhi. Movement in the equity market this week will be guided by a host of macroeconomic data announcements, global trends and trading activity of foreign investors, analysts said. Stocks markets concluded the last week on a subdued note, as investors grappled with global uncertainties. "The market's muted performance was driven by a combination of global and domestic factors. On the global front, rising US bond yields and concerns over the United States' mounting debt burden triggered foreign portfolio outflows, putting pressure on emerging markets, including India," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In the week ahead, the release of India's industrial and manufacturing production

data for April, scheduled for May 28, along with the Q1 GDP growth figures, will offer insights into the economic recovery trajectory. Updates on the progress of monsoon will also be closely monitored, he said. On the global front, developments in the US bond market, the release of FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) minutes, and progress in the India-US trade negotiations will continue to influence market sentiment, Mishra said. Moreover, the scheduled monthly expiry of May derivatives contracts and the final leg of the Q4 earnings season with results from key companies like Bajaj Auto, Aurobindo Pharma and IRCTC will remain in focus," Mishra added. Last week, the BSE benchmark dropped 609.51 points or 0.74 per cent and the NSE Nifty declined 166.65 points or 0.66 per cent. "Looking ahead, markets are expected to remain firm, with participation likely from the broader market segments as macro and earnings tailwinds continue to provide support. Investors will also be closely watching



key data releases this week, including quarterly GDP figures for both India and the US," Siddhartha Khemka, Head — Research, Wealth Management, Motilal

transfer of Rs 2.7 lakh crore to the government and its implications for fiscal policy, Mishra said. "Given the continued uncertainty surrounding the US economy, foreign investment flows, and trade negotiations, Indian markets may see a phase of consolidation in the near term," Gaurav Garg, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said. The market has been volatile throughout the last week amid concerns over US fiscal health due to rising debt, an expert said. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "Investor attention is further revolving around US-India trade talks and strong domestic macroeconomic indicators. However, recent FII outflows, driven by rising US bond yields amid concerns over mounting US debt, may weigh on the market sentiment." Optimism around a potentially record-high dividend from the RBI is boosting hopes for fiscal consolidation, reflected in falling Indian bond yields, Nair added.





NEWS BOX

Karun Nair not looking to change his game after much-awaited India return

New Delhi. Karun Nair said he will stick to the same things that have worked for him in the past few years after making his much-awaited return to the Indian team for the England tour. Karun, who played his last Test in 2017, was part of the squad announced on Saturday, May 24, for the five-match series against England starting on June 20. This ended a 3,000-day wait for the 33-year-old, who was happy and proud to be returning to the Indian team. Speaking after DC's win over PBKS, Karun said that he found out about his selection like everyone else, was waiting for the call, and got a lot of messages from his loved ones. Grateful to get back, happy and proud and fortunate. I found out, like all of you found out. I was eagerly awaiting the call, and got a lot of messages from close ones," said Karun.

Karun said that he will be looking to keep going about with the same process upon his return to the Indian team. "Yes, of course! I have been batting well in the past 12-16 months. It is about keeping the same process. It is about going out there and doing the same things that have worked for me. It is about not changing



my game," said Karun. "Truly deserved the win against PBKS" Karun played a vital knock of 44 in DC's win over PBKS and said that Delhi deserved the win on the night. The DC batter admitted that the team hadn't been playing well in the past few games but they brought it to the field on Saturday. "Amazing. We truly deserve this one. Yes, we haven't played great cricket in the past few games. But tonight we brought it to the field. We showed that we are having a good time. It was only a bad few games," said Karun. Speaking about his batting, Karun said the confidence was high for him coming into the tournament and felt he was playing too many shots in the previous games. He said the DC coaches told him to take his time in the middle and then go for the big shots. "Of course! I have been hitting the ball really well. I came into the tournament with a lot of runs. Confidence was always high.

IPL 2025: Josh Hazlewood returns to India in big boost for RCB before playoffs

New Delhi Josh Hazlewood has rejoined the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) for the remainder of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 season. Earlier in the month, there had been uncertainty surrounding the Australian pacer's return after the tournament was temporarily suspended due to air raids between India and Pakistan. Hazlewood has linked up with the RCB squad ahead of their final league-stage match against the Rishabh Pant-led Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) on Tuesday, May 27, at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow. Also Read: IPL playoffs race: MI handed golden chance to finish top 2 as RCB, PBKS lose easy games The 34-year-old fast bowler returns to IPL action after recovering from a shoulder injury. According to reports from ESPNcricinfo, Hazlewood underwent rehabilitation in Brisbane during the mid-season break and has now regained full fitness. His comeback is expected to bolster RCB's bowling lineup. "Good to be back! Hope to get the ball rolling again and start practice tomorrow," Hazlewood said in a video on RCB's official social media



accounts. Hazlewood has arguably been the standout bowler for RCB as he is their leading wicket-taker of the competition. In 10 games, the speedster has taken 18 wickets at an economy rate of 8.44 with a four-wicket haul to his name. Hazlewood had missed RCB's previous match against the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on May 3 at the MA Chidambaram Stadium due to the same shoulder injury. During the break, he travelled to Brisbane for a closely monitored recovery process, as confirmed by RCB's Director of Cricket, Mo Bobat. After serving his duties for RCB, Hazlewood is set to join the Australian team for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against South Africa, which is set to get underway on June 11 at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground. As far as RCB are concerned, they will be looking to bounce back from their 42-run defeat to the Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH).

Shreyas Iyer's heart, Ricky Ponting's vision: How Punjab Kings cracked the code in IPL 2025

Punjab Kings were once a team lost in chaos and doubt. This season, they've found their groove. With a fresh strategy, strong leadership from Shreyas Iyer and Ricky Ponting, and a squad built on trust and flexibility, PBKS have transformed from perennial underachievers into genuine contenders in IPL 2025.

New Delhi. 16 March 2025. Nearly a month before the start of the Indian Premier League 2025, Shashank Singh said on a podcast that Punjab Kings would finish in the top two of the points table this season. Shubhankar Mishra, the seasoned journalist hosting the show, let out an audible laugh—unable to believe what Shashank had just predicted. Undeterred, Shashank doubled down. Punjab, he insisted, had built a fresh squad under the tutelage of Ricky Ponting and would

definitely race to the top two in 2025. Mishra, still sceptical, warned Shashank that if Punjab didn't even qualify for the playoffs, he'd clip the interview and troll him. Just over two months and ten days later, here we are—with Punjab Kings sitting top of the table after 13 matches, poised to finish in the top two for the first time since 2014. Perennial underachievers, the Punjab Kings last qualified for the IPL playoffs in 2014. Under George Bailey's leadership, they were an exciting outfit, with the likes of Virender Sehwag and Glenn Maxwell lighting up the scoring charts. But after losing the 2014 final to KKR, Punjab slipped into a prolonged slump—cycling through coaches and captains with alarming frequency. By the end of 2024, Punjab had become synonymous with instability and a lack of faith in their homegrown talent. But something changed.

India Today spoke to two of Punjab Kings' coaches to understand what sparked this transformation. Brad Haddin (assistant coach) and James Hopes (bowling coach) shed light on the processes set in motion even before the auction—processes that gave this team an identity and helped them defy expectations to reach the playoffs. They also revealed how the onboarding of Shreyas Iyer and Ricky Ponting completely changed the culture of the franchise. This is the Punjab

Kings story. **FRESH START AT THE AUCTION** Since the introduction of the Impact Player rule in the IPL, the focus has shifted towards



deploying specialists—pure batters or bowlers—over traditional all-rounders. The rule diminished the value of multi-dimensional players (except the elite few), as specialists could now be subbed in and out of the XI. Punjab Kings had the biggest budget in the mega auction of 2024. With Rs 112 crore at their disposal, it was important for them to build a squad that would be free of the past baggage, a squad that could start fresh. In a period where the role of all-rounders is diminishing due to the Impact Player rule, Punjab Kings went against the grain and flooded their squad with all-rounders—nine, to be exact.

Out of those, three were used consistently throughout the tournament: Marcus Stoinis, Marco Jansen, and Azmatullah Omarzai, the highest among all the teams in IPL 2025.

According to James Hopes, the logic was simple: all-rounders gave the team a second chance if things went pear-shaped early in a game. "What we've done is, by having all-rounders, we're always able to strengthen what we do second—and still have something up our sleeve if the first hour goes wrong. That's all we're trying to do. Whatever we do second—bat or bowl—we want a stronger hand," Hopes told India Today. He elaborated on how this approach added depth and flexibility: "With the all-rounders, we can pick all our bowling and still bat till No. 8. Azmatullah comes in at 8, Marco's already in the top eight. Then it's Arshdeep and Chahal. So if we're six down early, we bring in another all-rounder who can bat us out of trouble. If our top six or seven deliver, we just bring in the spinner—Brar—and get 6-8 overs from two of our top 8. That's great."

While the all-rounders gave Punjab flexibility, they weren't the only reason behind the team's new identity. The core of Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh, Shreyas Iyer, Shashank Singh, and Arshdeep Singh has been instrumental in getting them to 17 points from 13 games.

Pretty Zinta questions umpiring standards in IPL after PBKS get robbed of a six vs DC

NEW DELHI. Bollywood actor and Punjab Kings (PBKS) owner Pretty Zinta questioned the umpiring standards in the Indian Premier League 2025 (IPL 2025) after her team got robbed of a certain six during Match 66 of the tournament against Delhi Capitals (DC). During the 15th over in the first innings, bowled by Mohit Sharma, Shashank Singh hit the last ball of the over towards long on. Karun Nair, who was stationed at long on boundary, tried to flick the ball back inside the boundary as it was travelling for a certain six. However, during his brilliant attempt, the DC fielder felt that his leg may have touched the rope while he held the ball in his hands and hence even signaled six. To clear the doubt, the decision was referred to the third umpire Chris Gaffaney, who found no conclusive evidence to signal a six, which meant just a single run was awarded to Punjab. After the game, Pretty Zinta took to her X account to express her disappointment at the decision, saying that with the amount of technology available at the third umpire's



disposal, such mistakes are unacceptable. "In a such a high profile tournament with so much technology at the Third Umpire's disposal such mistakes are unacceptable & simply shouldn't happen. I spoke To Karun after the game & he confirmed it was DEFINITELY a 6 ! I rest my case ! #PBKSvsDC #IPL2025," wrote Zinta on her X account. Despite not getting the decision in their favour, PBKS posted a strong total on the board as they scored 206/8 in their allotted 20 overs. However, it didn't prove to be enough for DC, who chased down the target in 19.3 overs courtesy of a maiden half century from 21-year-old Sameer Rizvi. As a result, Punjab missed the golden opportunity to climb to the top of the points table as they're currently placed second with 17 points from 13 matches. They will now be desperate to win their last game against Mumbai Indians (MI).

Cricket, thank you for giving Karun Nair a second chance

Karun Nair has finally got his second chance in cricket and this time; the game deserves all the praise for the renaissance of the 33-year-old. Karun is all set for a return in the England tour.

NEW DELHI. This was a tweet from Karun Nair on December 10, 2022—a plea from a player slowly slipping away from the cricketing world's memory. This was a man who once etched his name into Indian cricket history by becoming only the second Indian, after the great Virender Sehwag, to score a triple century in Test cricket—a staggering 303\* against England in 2016. Contrary to popular belief, Karun wasn't dropped immediately after that triple hundred. His last Test appearance came in Dharamshala against Australia in 2017.

After that, he simply faded from the spotlight. In the years that followed, the Indian Test team scaled new heights, beating Australia twice in Australia and appearing in two World Test



Championship finals. Karun, meanwhile, managed a few solid knocks in the Ranji Trophy but struggled with consistency. He remained on the fringes of selection, and then came that heartfelt tweet—one that melted the hearts of fans across the country. He also made a bold decision to leave the Karnataka team. A potential move to Kerala, the state of his parents, didn't materialise. Instead, he joined Vidarbha—a team with a proud Ranji Trophy history. This was truly

make or break for the batter. It was the first real chance that cricket had gifted him in years.

The renaissance with Vidarbha Karun Nair was stupendous for Vidarbha in the Ranji Trophy. Courtesy: PTI Karun seized the opportunity with Vidarbha and quickly became their mainstay with the bat. He scored 690 runs in 10 games—a clear sign that the fire still burned bright. Everyone began to take notice again. But there was still the lingering question—was this a one-off, or could he sustain this form? Karun followed it up with an even better campaign, scoring 863 runs in nine matches at an average of 54. That included four hundreds and two fifties. One of those centuries came in the final, against none other than Kerala, helping Vidarbha lift the title. And if you thought his resurgence was limited to red-ball cricket, think again. In the Vijay Hazare Trophy, Karun smashed 779 runs in eight innings, including five centuries. This made him a dark horse for the Champions Trophy squad—a call-up he narrowly missed. But the selectors were watching.

French Open 2025, Day 1 Order of Play: Sabalenka, Paolini set for curtain raiser



New Delhi. Aryna Sabalenka, Qinwen Zheng, Jasmine Paolini and Lorenzo Musetti are some of the top seeds who will be in action on Day 1 of the French Open 2025. World

No.1 Sabalenka has won two Australian Opens and a US Open title, but is yet to win the French Open. The Belarusian will look for a dominating start in her opening match against World No.78 Kamilla Rakhimova at Philippe-Chatrier. Qinwen Zheng will also be in action on Centre Court when she faces Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia in the opening match. Jasmine Paolini, who finished as the runner-up last season and recently won the Italian Open title, will face Yuan Yue of China in the opening round. Diana Shnaider, who recently rose to a career-highest ranking of No.9 following her impressive showing in Rome, will lock horns with Anastasiia Soboljeva at Court Simonne-Mathieu. The likes of Lorenzo Musetti, Ben Shelton, Tommy Paul and Elina Svitolina will also play their opening round matches on Sunday.

GT vs CSK preview: Gujarat's top-two push meets MS Dhoni's possible IPL swansong

IPL 2025, GT vs CSK preview: Gujarat Titans aim to secure a top-two finish against a struggling Chennai Super Kings. MS Dhoni is set to lead CSK for one last time-but will it really be his final IPL game

New Delhi. Chennai Super Kings are anchored firmly at the bottom of the table, certain to finish last for the first time in their Indian Premier League history. They have been at their poorest throughout the season. Yet, the buzz surrounding CSK's matches remains undiminished, with packed stands across India, all thanks to MS Dhoni. Yes, Dhoni is no longer the man who used to effortlessly deposit sixes into the stands. He may not even be the same captain with the 'Midas touch'. Yet, Dhoni, through his sheer presence, continues to draw crowds and

captivate attention. When he arrived in Chennai for the pre-season camp in February wearing a customised T-shirt emblazoned with 'One Last Time' in Morse Code, many believed IPL 2025 would indeed be his final season. However, with things going awry for both the Super Kings and their Thala, it remains uncertain whether Sunday's game in Ahmedabad will be Dhoni's swansong. Incidentally, it is also the venue where CSK clinched their fifth IPL title two years ago—a match many felt should have been Dhoni's farewell to the IPL. Ever since CSK were knocked out of the playoff race this season, the question has relentlessly followed Dhoni and those representing the Super Kings at press conferences. Dhoni himself has addressed it on a couple of occasions. When asked by Danny Morrison at the toss, Dhoni tactfully dodged the question. On another occasion, he was more candid, stating he was in no rush to decide and would wait to see how his body held up over the next ten



months before making any calls about his IPL future. Dhoni's brand value remains untarnished. However, his on-field ability is clearly declining. With the bat, Dhoni has been more of a burden this year—scoring 196 runs in 13 matches at a strike rate of 135, a significant drop from his staggering strike rate of 220 in 2024. Despite undergoing surgery, his troublesome knee has been a persistent concern throughout the season.

Dhoni has rarely overstayed his welcome. Yet, it now seems his presence in the playing XI might be hindering the Super Kings. On numerous occasions this season, Dhoni has struggled to produce the typical late-game bursts that once defined him. Still, the CSK camp firmly believes Dhoni will know best when to call time on his IPL career. It would be a miracle if he returns for IPL 2026 and delivers better performances, especially with the bat. As CSK prepare to close their forgettable season against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad on Sunday, one thing seems almost certain: we may well be witnessing the last of 'Captain' Dhoni. Emotions aside, the contest at the Narendra Modi Stadium holds significant importance for Gujarat Titans, who desperately need a strong comeback after a heavy defeat to Lucknow Super Giants in their previous match.



# Rasha Thadani

## Drops Throwback Pictures From Paris Fashion Week

Rasha Thadani reminisced about her Parisian dream in a throwback picture from her visit to the city of love. In an Instagram post, Rasha shared a new thread of photos of her out and about on the streets of Paris. The actress was captured enjoying her time on the streets as she posed for the camera. Rasha was seen donning a casual yet chic look with a grey T-shirt, blue jeans and Nike sneakers. To bring the whole look together, she added a statement dark olive-colored trench coat and carried a classic Delvaux Brilliant handbag. Rasha opted for a natural look with minimal makeup and messy beach waves in her hair. To finish off her whole look, she added a pair of dark sunglasses.

Sharing the throwback thread, Rasha wrote, "Paris again, s'il vous plait? Throwback." As soon as she shared the photos, fans and other celebrities from the industry flooded her comment section with praise.



fast fashion with luxury while dressing up Raveena Tandon. The actress was seen wearing a black pleated blouse featuring a plunging neckline with scarf attachments from Zara and pairing it up with a maxi skirt featuring a mermaid cut from Falguni Shane Peacock.

On the other hand, complementing her mother's all-black look, Rasha was seen in a cream and black ensemble. She was spotted wearing a black corset and paired it up with a structured cream-colored blazer and matching mini-skirt. To bring her whole look together, the actress wore sheer black stockings and a pair of knee-high leather boots. Both of them were seen carrying a classic Delvaux handbag to the event.

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia commented with heart eyes emojis on Rasha's post, to which she replied, "Misssss u."

Despite the age gap Tamannaah Bhatia and Rasha Thadani have become close friends over the years. Among other celebrities, producer Afeef Nadiadwala Sayed, celebrity stylist Shubhi Kumar, model Tanya Chaudhary, and dancer and actor Geet Kaur Bagga, commented on her post.

Previously, during Paris Fashion Week, Rasha Thadani, along with her mother, Raveena Tandon, went to attend the unveiling of the latest handbag collection of Delvaux, a luxury handbag brand. During the event, the mother-daughter duo were snapped together as they stepped out in stylish ensembles. Celebrity stylist Mohit Rai did an extraordinary job as he blended



# Rubina Dilaik

## Is The Ultimate Glamour Queen And Here's Proof

Rubina Dilaik's debut on Laughter Chefs has gained her fame. Her witty sense of humour, culinary skills, and amusing banter with Rahul Vaidya keep the audience on edge. Other than that, Rubina's paparazzi appearances, which occur frequently outside the sets of the culinary-themed show, are quite appreciated by fans. A new video has surfaced online showcasing Rubina decked up to shoot



for the upcoming episode of Laughter Chefs in a stunning red gown. The video starts with Rubina Dilaik humbly acknowledging the paparazzi, talking with them, and striking poses before heading to her shoot. Rubina joined her hands at them as she approached, leaving everyone in awe with her look. The actress made a

fashion statement by wearing a brilliant red maxi dress with an off-shoulder design.

Rubina Dilaik joined Laughter Chefs in the second season, alongside her Bigg Boss competitor Rahul Vaidya. Apart from Rubina, the concert features superstars such as Rahul Vaidya, Krushna Abhishek, Sudesh Lehri, Ankita Lokhande, Vicky Jain, Abhishek Kumar, Elvish Yadav and Samarth Jurel. Abdu Rozhik and Mannara Chopra appeared on the show but had to depart owing to other personal and professional commitments. They were replaced by Karan Kundra and Nia Sharma, who had competed in season 1. Later, even Aly Goni and Reem Sheikh were brought back on the show.

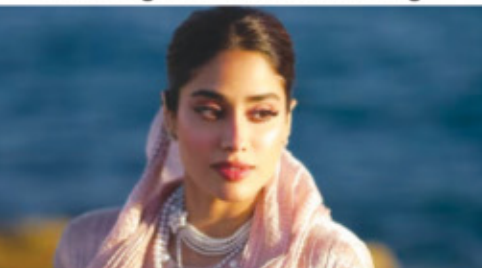
Rubina is also part of the latest fitness reality show, Battleground, which has received the right amount of attention since its premiere.

Aside from Rubina, other celebrities include Asim Riaz, Rajat Dalal and Abhishek Malhan, who lead their own teams. The show, which airs on Amazon miniTV via the MX Player app, includes difficult physical workouts and weekly tasks overseen by mentor Shikhar Dhawan.

Aside from her television and reality show appearances, Rubina made waves with her big-screen debut in Punjabi cinema. The actress starred in the film Chal Bhaji Chaliye. Sunil Thakur directed the film, which stars Mahabir Bhullar, Inder Chahal and Gurpreet Bhangu.



## Janhvi Kapoor Trolled For Remarks About BR Ambedkar's Ideologies: 'Zero Meaning'



Janhvi Kapoor attended the Cannes Film Festival 2025 recently for the premiere of her movie Homebound, featuring Ishaan Khatter and Vishal Jethwa, in the Un Certain Regard section. During a recent interview at Cannes, the actress opened up about her role as Sudha in the film, and revealed that she read about Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar to do justice to her character. She admitted to appreciating 'everything' that BR Ambedkar has contributed to society. However, her comments did not resonate well with the netizens, who heavily criticized her for her perceived lack of knowledge. They trolled her for being vague, and lacking depth in her statements about Ambedkar. Many netizens questioned whether she truly understood Ambedkar's work or was simply pretending to be informed. In a conversation at Cannes with Sucharita Tyagi, Janhvi Kapoor was asked about her character Sudha being an Ambedkarite who believes in his principles. In response, Janhvi said, "She is an Ambedkarite, but there are so many aspects to his politics that I am a great supporter of. So many things that he has advocated for and fought for in society... There's a reason he is celebrated the way he is, and I completely agree with everything that he has done for the society. And so, that belief system, by the time it came around to me playing that character, it felt like my belief system to a large extent. It didn't feel like I'm pretending to believe these things. It felt that I felt as passionately about the point she was making. As she actually was. Especially when she spoke about the need for education, that really resonated with me."

## Netizens Troll Janhvi Kapoor For Her Remarks About Ambedkar's Principles

The video clip of the interview went viral on social media, with netizens slamming her for her vague remarks. While one netizen wrote, "She said a whole lot of nothing," another one commented, "Jhanvi: I like everything Dr Ambedkar has done for the society."

## Zayed Khan Steps Out with Family In Mumbai, Fans Nostalgic Over Main Hoon Na Look



Bollywood actor Zayed Khan, best known for playing the mischievous and stylish Lucky in Main Hoon Na, recently made a rare public appearance with his family in Mumbai. The sight of him posing with his wife and sons outside a restaurant had fans doing a double take—and reminiscing. The family outing saw Zayed dressed in a sleeveless white printed hoodie, paired effortlessly with denim jeans and black sunglasses—oozing cool just like he did two decades ago. His wife looked elegant



in a pristine white co-ord set, while their sons kept things casual in tees and jeans. The entire moment, captured by paparazzi, gave fans major nostalgia.

As soon as the pictures hit social media, fans couldn't stop gushing. "Still rocking that Lucky vibe from Main Hoon Na," one fan commented. Another wrote, "He hasn't aged a day. Zayed Khan forever charming." A third user added, "Such a good looking family! Major throwback feels."

Zayed made his Bollywood debut with Chura Liya Hai Tumne, but it was his role in Farah Khan's 2004 blockbuster Main Hoon Na that turned him into a heartthrob. His bromance with Shah Rukh Khan and his blend of boyish charm and comic timing became a huge hit with audiences.

After a string of films, including Dus and Fight Club, Zayed took a step back from the limelight following the release of Sharafat Gayi Tel Lene in 2015. In 2023, however, he teased a comeback, posting on Instagram, "With your love & support, it's been 20 YEARS for me in the industry. My new movie is just around the corner and I can't wait to share it with you! The next 20 years are gonna be kickass!"