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## More important to find out reasons for aircraft losses: CDS Gen Chauhan

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

Singapore, May 31: Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan on Saturday acknowledged losses of air-



craft in recent hostilities with Pakistan but dismissed as "absolutely incorrect" Islamabad's claim of downing six Indian jets. Chauhan, in an interview to Bloomberg TV, asserted it is more important to find out why the aircraft were lost so that the Indian military could improve tactics and hit back again. "I think what is important is not the jet being downed but why they were being downed," he said.

Gen Chauhan was asked whether India lost combat jets during the four-day military clashes with Pakistan earlier this month. "The good part is that we were able to understand the tactical mistakes which we made; remedied, rectified and then implemented it again after two days. We flew all our jets again targeting at long range," he said. "Absolutely incorrect," Gen Chauhan said when asked about Pakistan's claim of shooting down six Indian jets during Operation Sindoor. Previously, Indian Air Force's Director General of Air Operations, Air Marshall AK Bharti, acknowledged that "losses are a part of combat" and said all IAF pilots returned home safely. Air Marshall Bharti made the remarks at a media briefing on May 11 when asked about India's aircraft losses during Operation Sindoor. Gen Chauhan is in Singapore to participate in the Shangri-La Dialogue.

## Govt misled nation, must hold special Parl session: Kharge

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

New Delhi, May 31: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday accused the government of misleading the nation on the India-Pakistan conflict and demanded holding a special session of Parliament immediately, following Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan's acknowledgement of aircraft loss in the hostilities. Gen Chouhan, however, dismissed as "absolutely incorrect" Islamabad's claim of downing six Indian jets. In a post on X, Kharge said his party demands a comprehensive review of India's defence preparedness by an independent expert committee, on the lines of the survey done by the Kargil Review Committee. "In the wake of the remarks made by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in Singapore in an interview, there are some very important questions that need to be asked. These can only be done if a special session of the Parliament is immediately convened," he said. "The Modi Government has misled the nation. The fog of war is now clearing." The

Congress chief said the IAF pilots risked their lives fighting the enemy, and "suffered some losses but our pilots were safe". He was referring to Gen



Chauhan's interview in which the CDS said that "we made, remedy it, rectify it, and then implement it again after two days and flew all our jets again, targeting at long range". The Congress president said his party salutes their resolute courage and

bravery. However, a comprehensive strategic review is the need of the hour, he asserted. "The Congress party demands a Comprehensive Review of our Defence Preparedness by an independent expert committee, on the lines of the Kargil Review Committee," he said. Citing Donald Trump's statements, Kharge said the US president has again repeated his claim about "brokering a ceasefire". "This is a direct affront to the Shimla Agreement. Instead of clarifying Mr Trump's repeated assertions, and the affidavit filed by the US Secretary of Commerce in the United States Court of International Trade, PM Modi is on an election blitz, taking personal credit for the valour of our Armed Forces, hiding behind their bravery and dodging the contours of the agreed ceasefire, which the Foreign Secretary announced on May 10, after Trump's tweet," Kharge noted in his post. "Is India and Pakistan now again hyphenated? What are the conditions of the ceasefire agreement? The 140 crore patriotic Indians deserve to know this," the Congress chief asserted.

## Donald J. Trump-A Defining Force in 21st Century Global Politics

**The Sikh Times**  
**Special Correspondent**

New Delhi: Donald John Trump, the 45th President of the United States, remains one of the most polarizing and influential figures in modern American and global politics. A businessman-turned-politician, Trump entered the political arena with bold rhetoric, disruptive policies, and an unapologetic brand of nationalism. His presidency, from January 2017 to January 2021, redefined U.S. domestic governance and foreign policy priorities. As the world closely watches the evolving American political landscape, Trump's political legacy continues to shape not only the Republican Party but also America's relationships with key global powers. This article explores Donald Trump's political journey and the impact of his foreign policy on the world stage. Trump's Entry into Politics: An Unlikely Challenger Donald Trump was best known for his real estate empire and television presence when he declared his candidacy for president in June 2015. Running on a platform of "Make America

Great Again," he tapped into widespread dissatisfaction with Washington politics. Despite widespread skepticism, Trump defeated seasoned politicians in the Republican primaries and went on to secure a stunning victory over Hillary Clinton in the 2016 general election. His win signaled a seismic shift in American politics, fueled by economic populism, anti-immigration sentiment, and distrust of global trade deals. Key Domestic Achievements and Controversies During his four-year term, Trump's administration enacted significant domestic policies, including: Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (2017): A major corporate tax reduction to boost investment and economic growth. Judicial Appointments: He appointed three Supreme Court Justices,

reshaping the judiciary for decades. Immigration Restrictions: His controversial "Muslim ban" and southern border

public opinion sharply.

**Trump's Foreign Policy Doctrine:**

**"America First"** Unlike his predecessors, Trump championed an "America First" foreign policy, which prioritized U.S. sovereignty and economic interests over multilateral diplomacy. Below are some defining features:

- Withdrawal from Global Agreements:** Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord, the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA), and UNESCO, arguing they were unfair to American interests.
- Trade Wars and Tariffs:** He imposed tariffs on Chinese goods, triggering a U.S.-China trade war aimed at reducing the U.S. trade deficit and countering China's technological rise.
- Middle East Diplomacy:** Trump's administration brokered Abraham Accords, normalizing relations between Israel and several Arab nations.

Contd....page-3



## Sindoor has become symbol of valour: PM Modi

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

Bhopal, May 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said 'sindoor' has become a symbol of valour following India's response to the Pahalgam terror attack, and warned Pakistan that bullets will be answered with cannon balls. He also described Operation Sindoor as the biggest and most successful anti-terror operation in the country's history. "Sindoor has now become a symbol of valour in the country...If you fire bullets, then rest assured that they will be answered with cannon balls," Modi said at the Lokmata Devi Ahilyabai Mahila Sashaktikaran Maha Sammelan here on the occasion of the legendary queen's 300th birth anniversary. "India is a country of culture and traditions, and sindoor is a symbol of women power in our tradition. Hanuman ji, who is immersed in Ram Bhakti, also sports sindoor. We offer sindoor in Shakti Puja. This sindoor has

become a symbol of bravery," he said. Earlier this month, Indian armed forces carried out missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, including the Jaish-e-Mohammad stronghold of Bahawalpur and Lashkar-e-Taiba's base Muridke. The military strikes were carried out under Operation Sindoor two weeks after the massacre of 26 civilians in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. Sindoor or the vermilion mark symbolises the marital status of Hindu women, and its use as the operation's name resonated powerfully in light of the April 22 Pahalgam massacre. In the brutal attack, terrorists targeted and killed men - including newlyweds - after verifying their religious identity. "In Pahalgam, terrorists not only shed the blood of Indians, but also attacked our culture. They tried to divide our society and the biggest thing is that the terrorists have challenged the women

power of India," Modi said. "This challenge has become the death knell for the terrorists and their handlers. Operation Sindoor is the biggest and most success-



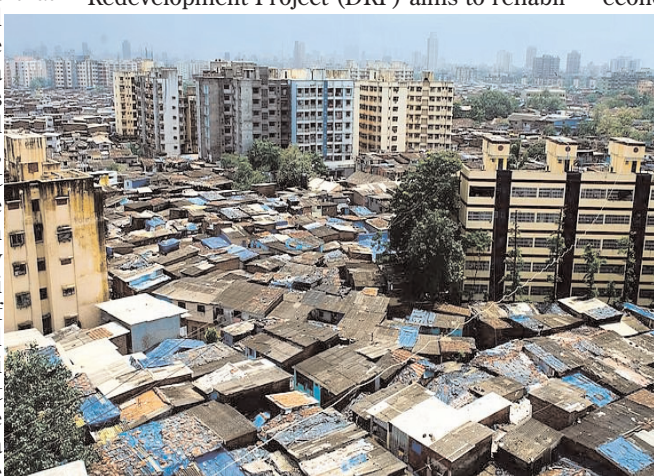
ful operation in the history of India against terrorists. While the Pakistan army could not even imagine, our army destroyed the terrorist hideouts," he added. "This time, 75 women have

become members of Parliament. Our effort is to increase this number. This is the spirit behind the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam. Women reservation in Parliament and state assemblies has been achieved now, which had remained pending for a long time," he said. Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, also known as the Women's Reservation Bill, is a landmark legislation that aims to reserve one-third of the total seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies. "This means that the BJP government is empowering our sisters and daughters at every level and in every field," he said. The prime minister also said the world is witnessing the capability of India's daughters in national defence today. "Even for this, the government took many steps in the last decade. From school to the battlefield, the country today has unprecedented faith in the bravery of its daughters," he said.

## Maharashtra Government approves Dharavi project

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

Mumbai, May 31: In a development that will give a push to the much-discussed Dharavi Redevelopment Project, the Maharashtra Government has cleared a master plan to re-develop slums in Asia's large slum. The master plan - which will lay a "strong emphasis on the sensitive, all-inclusive eco-friendly re-development of Dharavi that will preserve the unique identity of the sprawling 620 acre slum structure - was approved at a review meeting held at the state-run Sahyadri guest house on Wednesday. The Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who chaired the review meeting, said that the Dharavi redevelopment would happen "without the slum cluster losing its soul". The Gautam Adani-owned Navbharat Mega Developers Private Ltd (NMDPL) and the state-run Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) are executing the mega-project through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) set between the Maharashtra Government and the Adani group. Of the total 620 acres in Dharavi, 296



acres have been ear-marked for development. Apart from the massive transformation it plans to bring about in the vast slum, the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) aims to rehabilitate 7 lakh dwellers. In a statement put out "X" after the master plan for the DRP was approved, Fadnavis said, "Dharavi is not just a locality. It represents a powerful micro-economy built on skilled labour, artisans, micro-

enterprises and underprivileged communities." "Dharavi is a transformative economic zone capable of reshaping the nation's urban and economic landscape. The redevelopment must include every Dharavikar. No one should be left behind," the Chief Minister said. "Rehabilitation of local businesses must be done respectfully at their original locations, maintaining their traditional character. Trust-building, coordination and empathy are essential components of the redevelopment process," Fadnavis said. Maintaining that "trust-building, coordination and empathy are the essential components of the redevelopment process, Fadnavis said, "I have issued clear directions to ensure that the voices aspirations of all citizens are integrated in the plan, maintain socio-cultural identity of Dharavi throughout the redevelopment and enable a harmonious balance between the progress and preservation". "This historic project, while protecting the essence of Dharavi, is expected to accelerate with renewed momentum, unlocking new possibilities for the community and the city at large," the Chief Minister said.

## One dead, 8 missing as vehicle falls into Teesta river in Sikkim

**The Sikh Times**  
**Correspondent**

Gangtok, May 31: One person was killed, two injured and eight others missing



when a vehicle carrying 11 tourists plunged into the Teesta River in North Sikkim's Mangan district, police said on Friday. The tourist vehicle plunged more than 1,000 feet into Teesta River near Munsithang along the Lachen-Lachung highway on Thursday night. Two critically injured persons have been rescued and one body recovered, they

said. Eight tourists are still missing, said Superintendent of Police, Mangan, Sonam Detchu Bhutia. Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang in a Facebook post said, "I am deeply saddened by the tragic road accident that occurred on the night of May 29 near Chubumbu, Mangan district, where a tourist vehicle fell into the Teesta River while travelling from Lachen to Lachung. My heartfelt prayers are with the victims and their families during this extremely difficult time." The CM said that rescue operations began immediately under the supervision of SP Mangan, with the dedicated efforts of the police, ITBP, fire and medical teams, and local volunteers. He said that two individuals have been rescued and are receiving medical care. He further said that the search for others is ongoing, with NDRF teams joining the operation. "Our Government is fully committed to extending all possible support to the victims and their families. We are closely monitoring the situation and ensuring that every necessary resource is deployed for the ongoing rescue and relief efforts.

## Colombia withdraws statement offering condolences to Pak: Tharoor

**The Sikh Times**  
**Sanjay Arora**

Bogota, May 31: Colombia has withdrawn a statement offering condolences to Pakistan for the loss of lives following India's military strikes in response to the Pahalgam attack after an Indian parliamentary delegation explained Islamabad's relentless support to cross-border terrorism. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, leading an all-party delegation to the South American country, confirmed Bogota's withdrawal of the controversial statement after meeting Vice Foreign Minister Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio. In the last two days, the nine-member delegation held a series of meetings with Colombia's senior political brass, apprising India's poli-



cy of "zero tolerance for terrorism" and its retaliatory strikes against terror infrastructure on Pakistani soil following the April 22 Pahalgam attack. "Began today with an excellent meeting with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio, and her senior colleagues dealing with the Asia-Pacific," Tharoor said in a social media post. "I expressed India's view of recent events and voiced disappointment at Colombia's statement on 8 May conveying 'heartfelt condolences' to Pakistan," he said. "The Minister assured me that the statement had been withdrawn and that our position was now properly understood and strongly supported," the Congress MP added. At a media briefing on Thursday, Tharoor voiced his deep disappointment over Colombia offering condolences for the loss of lives in Pakistan following India's military actions. However, there was no official word from New Delhi on Colombia's position following India's Operation Sindoor and its withdrawal of the statement. India has sent seven separate delegations to different parts of the globe to apprise the key countries about Pakistan's relentless support to cross-border terrorism and circumstances leading to its launch of Operation Sindoor. In Bogota, the Indian delegation also met Alejandro Toro, the president of the Second Commission of the Chamber of Representatives (equivalent to India's parliamentary committee on foreign affairs) and Jaime Raul Salamanca, president of the Chamber of Representatives (equivalent of Lok Sabha speaker).



## NEWS BOX

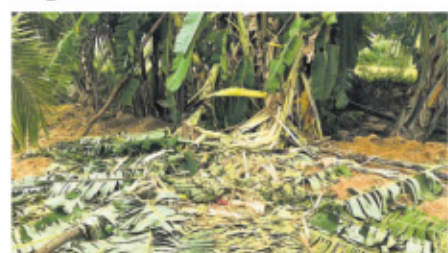
## Rain break for Tamil Nadu for 10 days from today

**CHENNAI.** After intensive wet spell, which brought unprecedented rain especially in Nilgiris and western ghats, there will be a break in southwest monsoon at least for 10 days starting June 1.

The weather system over Bay of Bengal has weakened and lost steam reducing the rainfall. The 7-day forecast issued by regional met centre said heavy rain is likely over Nilgiris, Theni, Tenkasi, Kanniyakumari, ghat areas of Coimbatore and ghat areas of Tirunelveli districts on Saturday. In the last 24 hours ending 8.30 am on Friday, Chinnakal in Coimbatore received the highest rainfall of 13 cm followed by Nalumukku, Oothu in Tirunelveli and Valparai recording 12 cm each.

Till 7.30 pm on Friday, Tiruttani received 23 mm rain. However, Chennai received moderate rain with Nungambakkam station recording 25 mm and Meenambakkam 19.5 mm.

## Lone elephant creates panic in Andhra Pradesh's Pileru region



**TIRUPATI.** A lone elephant, strayed into Jandla village in Pileru mandal of Annamayya district, triggered panic among residents on Friday. As per the forest officials, the jumbo is believed to have wandered from the Seshachalam forest range in Yerravaripalem mandal. It reportedly moved from Ganugachintha in Rompicherla mandal, before entering Jandla.

Later, the elephant passed through Gudarevupalle and crossed the Madanapalle-Tirupati road near the GV Srinath Reddy stone crushing unit, eventually reaching Erraguntlapalle Panchayat.

Pileru Sub-Inspector Lokesh and Forest Section Officer (FSO) Sabiha Sultana, along with their teams, rushed to the affected areas after receiving alerts from residents of Jandla and Gudarevupalle. FSO Sabiha Sultana said, "We are tracking the elephant's movements through footprints. Once its route is confirmed, we will take necessary steps to control the situation, especially at night."

People have been warned not to enter fields or orchards alone. The elephant caused minimal damage - a single banana tree near Avulayagaripalli. No significant crop loss was recorded, much to the villagers' relief. The incident has revived fears among locals, who recall a fatal elephant attack near Bandarlapalli in the same mandal in the past.

## Telangana-JUDA raises concern over integration of MBBS, BAMS courses

**HYDERABAD.** Telangana Junior Doctors Association (T-JUDA) has expressed concerns over the central government's initiative to introduce a new integrated medical course combining MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) and BAMS (Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery) at the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Pondicherry.

The integrated course, which was announced by the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare and AYUSH (Independent Charge), Prataprao Jadhav on January 29, aims to integrate Allopathy and Ayurveda in medical education. The formulation of the integrated syllabus is underway.

The T-JUDA members called the move regressive and unscientific and termed it as 'Mixopathy'. The association president J Isaac Newton said that this decision would undermine patients' rights by stripping them of their freedom to choose their preferred system of care and would increase the risk of producing inadequately trained, hybrid qualified quacks, who will lack expertise in either discipline.

The doctors stated that similar attempts to blend modern medicine with traditional medicine had failed in countries like China and that India should not follow the flawed model, as the country already has its own robust healthcare framework.

The members further added that there is no scientific rationale or benefit for public health and that the decision would impair both modern medicine and Ayurveda.

The association urged for immediate withdrawal of the proposal and to maintain the autonomy of each discipline. They also stressed that the government must engage transparently with the medical fraternity as well as the public before implementing any major transformative change in the healthcare system.

## Call for direct train to Velankanni from Chennai after BG line gets nod

**Previously, the Chennai Egmore-Karaikal/Velankanni Kamban Express, operated until 2022, was discontinued following a decision of the railway board to phase out slip coaches.**

**CHENNAI.** With the commissioner of railway safety approving train operations on the newly converted 23.5-km Peralam-Karaikal broad-gauge (BG) line recently, passengers are calling for a direct train service from Chennai to Velankanni via this route due to shorter distance compared to the current route through Tiruvavur. Previously, the Chennai Egmore-Karaikal/Velankanni Kamban Express, operated until 2022, was discontinued following a decision of the railway board to phase out slip coaches. Slip coaches allowed a section of the train to be split and sent along a different route, while the rest continued along the main line.

Additionally, the train's locomotive had to be reversed at Tiruvavur and Nagapattinam, adding about an hour to the journey for passengers heading to Velankanni. With the new BG line now operational, it's possible to run direct trains from Chennai to Velankanni via Peralam, Karaikal, and Nagore, eliminating the need for a locomotive reversal at the two places. This route could also provide direct train service to Thirunallar, a Hindu pilgrimage town in



Karaikal, from Chennai.

Velankanni, one of the state's major tourist and pilgrimage centres, attracts visitors throughout the year.

Particularly, from April to January, the Shrine Basilica of Our Lady of Health in Velankanni draws lakhs of visitors from Chennai and other parts of TN. Currently, passengers on the Tambaram-Karaikal Express disembark at Nagapattinam around 4 am and get into the Nagapattinam-Velankanni DEMU Express to

reach their destination.

According to officials from the Tiruchy railway division, a proposal has been submitted to the railway board to reroute the existing Tambaram-Karaikal Kamban Express and Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (Mumbai)-Karaikal Express trains via Peralam-Karaikal. "Once the railway board gives its approval, the trains may be rerouted," an official confirmed.

S Johnson Rajkumar, a frequent traveller to Velankanni from Ayanavaram, making a pitch for it said, "The direct train to Velankanni has remained a distant dream. Passengers carrying heavy luggage have to rush from one platform to another to board the DEMU train at Nagapattinam in the early morning hours."

A Giri, former member of the Divisional Rail Users Consultative Committee for Tiruchy, said, "The diversion of the Kamban Express via Peralam to Velankanni will skip the stoppage at Tiruvavur. The daily Mannai Express and the new Pamban Express, both of which pass through Tiruvavur, could meet the local demand.

## Evolve SOP for each agency involved in security of Tirumala shrine: DGP

**Tirupati SP and TTD Incharge Chief Vigilance and Security Officer V Harshavardhan Raju made a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed security audit.**

**TIRUMALA.** A high-level meeting on security audit was held at Annamayya Bhavan in Tirumala on Friday. Director General of Police Harish Kumar Gupta, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Executive Officer J Syamala Rao and several senior officials attended the meeting. It focused on enhancing security in Tirumala and its surroundings, considering the increased threat perception. Tirupati SP and TTD Incharge Chief Vigilance and Security Officer V Harshavardhan Raju made a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed security audit.

The DGP emphasised the need for a robust security framework for Tirumala due to its global prominence. He proposed evolving a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for each



agency involved in Tirumala security, including Andhra Pradesh Special Police, District Armed Reserve, Special Protection Force, Home Guards, Civil Police and TTD Security Wing.

Further, the DGP proposed constitution of a Disaster Management Team to handle emergencies, implementing a multi-layered vehicle scanning system at Alipiri,

collaborating with defence agencies on a sensory play system, acquiring modern security equipment, and strengthening the TTD cybersecurity system.

The TTD EO highlighted the importance of a formal coordination mechanism for security, and the need to strengthen cybersecurity in Tirumala, expressing satisfaction with the security audit review. Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) N

Madhusudhan Reddy, Additional DG (Intelligence) Mahesh Chandra Laddha, IG Srikanth, DIG (Anantapur) Shemushi Bajpai, SP (Internal Security Wing) Arif Hafiz, District Forest Officer Vivek, TTD Additional Executive Officer Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, and senior officials from various security agencies attended the meeting.

## Overcrowding at temple cattle shed leads to more calf deaths in Telangana

**RAJANNA-SIRCILLA.** Four days after the death of an ox and a calf at Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple cattle shed in Tippapur, Vemulawada temple town, eight calves reportedly died due to ill health early on Friday. The carcasses of the cattle were transported in a tractor and buried on the outskirts of town. According to sources, around 1,150 cattle are kept in the shed, which can accommodate only about 400.

Due to irregularities in cattle distribution, the authorities stopped the process a few months ago. Every year, crores of rupees are spent on cattle health and maintenance of shed.

Following the death of the cattle, on the directions of Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha, a team of veterinary doctors

led by Dr Anji Reddy visited the cattle shed to find the cause of the deaths. The team said the mortality rate is increasing due to poor management. Recent heavy rains filled the shed floor with muddy water.

Calves frequently die due to stampedes, the team opined. They segregated sick and healthy cattle, moving the sick ones to a dry area to prevent further deaths. They also appealed to devotees to bring healthy oxen instead of calves to offer to the temple. It may be recalled that it is an old tradition and belief that devotees from far-flung areas bring calves and leave them for Lord Shiva. The temple adopts these calves and uses them for the Arjita Seva programme.



## Nilambur bypoll: CPM learns 'lesson one', tries to force 'wail' in UDF camp

**The IUML workers will have to work overtime to tide over the resistance some sections have developed against the candidate.**

**KOZHIKODE.** In a political masterstroke, the CPM decided on Friday to field its 'anti-fascist' face M Swaraj in Nilambur where by-election would be held on June 19. With the move, the party aims to cash in on the apathy a section in the Muslim community, which constitutes around 43% of the voters in the constituency, has reportedly developed towards the UDF candidate, in addition to blunting the allegation that the state police is toeing the Sangh parivar line. The party thinks that Swaraj's anti-fascist image will help it woo the Muslim voters who are discontented over UDF's selection of Aryadan Shoukath, whose past utterances and postures are problematic. An impressive performance will help the CPM wash off, to some extent, the 'anti-Muslim'

tag its opponents are trying to slap on the party.

Pro-CPM social media handles have started unearthing Shoukath's remarks against the Panakkad family. Also, the 'anti-Muslim' content in his films are

media post on Palestine after the attack on October 7, 2023 are being revisited to prove his secular credentials. The CPM leader had said that no matter what the country did, it is imperative to stand with Palestine.

His speech in the state assembly on eulogising Variamkunnath Kunjahammed Haji, the leader of the 1921 Malabar struggle, is also being reported on the social media.

What adds to the UDF woes is former MLA P V Anvar's declaration that he would make public his assessment as to why Shoukath is not a winnable candidate in Nilambur.

Shoukath has not yet reacted to the controversies related to his past.

He visited the Panakkad family soon after the declaration of his candidature and held discussions with Syed Abbas Ali Shihab Thangal and Syed Munavvar Ali Shihab Thangal.



widely debated on social media. The statements by his father Aryadan Muhammad on the IUML are also being used against the candidate.

On the other hand, Swaraj's Facebook comment after the Supreme Court order in the Ayodhya case and his social

## Nurdle 'invasion' triggers ecological, economic concerns along Kerala's coastline

**Reporter Shainu Mohan and lensman B P Deepu visit Valiya Veli near Thumba, where shipwreck debris has heightened the woes of the coastal community**

**Kerala.** A disaster at sea has turned into a catastrophe on land for Kerala's coastal communities. Since the Liberian ship MSC ELSA 3 sank off the coast on May 24, tonnes of debris have been washing ashore. For the fishing hamlets along Thiruvananthapuram's coast, already battered by climate change and sea fury, the wreck has brought fresh hardship. And uncertainty. Besides shattered containers, plastic nurdles, which are used to make a wide range of products, now blanket the shoreline. At Valiya Veli near Thumba, 60-year-old fisherman Titus A says the waves pushed debris all the way into his front yard. "All I could do was watch helplessly," he shrugs. "I live with a family of seven and



have two grandchildren. We are scared of the remains of a shattered container, which is lying close to my house. Soon the waves will push it to my house." The fishing community, already grappling with reduced fishing days due to rough weather, now fears a long-term

environmental and economic fallout. "Besides some visits by the officials, nothing has been done to clear the debris," says Titus.

Sheeba T, a 31-year-old mother of two, says she restricts her children indoors out of fear. "We don't know what kind of chemicals are present out there," she says.

Experts, meanwhile, urge immediate action. "The government has initiated efforts to remove it manually with the help of volunteers in some areas.

Unfortunately, we don't have the expertise to expedite the process," notes A Biju Kumar, professor in the department of aquatic biology and fisheries at University of Kerala. "Tonnes of pellets are there in those containers.

## Odisha's only free bone marrow transplant service at SCB on 'death bed'

**BHUBANESWAR.** After the liver transplant fiasco and a struggling kidney transplant unit, the highly successful bone marrow transplant (BMT) unit at SCB medical college and hospital (SCBMCH) in Cuttack seems to have been pushed to its death bed.

The state-of-the-art facility, which had the distinction of being the first government-run centre in the country to offer free bone marrow transplants, is gasping for survival for the last few months, thanks to the political and bureaucratic apathy.

The last transplant performed at the unit, in February 2025, was a milestone in itself as it was the first paediatric allogeneic transplant in the state. Since then, the lights have dimmed, and the life-saving care has come to a grinding halt.

People privy to the development attributed the sudden downfall of the unit to severe crunch of transplant specialists and the failure of the state government to retain experts. The unit is virtually defunct due to non-renewal of the contract of Prof RK Jena, former head of the department, who was continuing as the chief BMT physician post-retirement.

The government had in April last year extended him a four-year contract with annual renewal. With the renewal not forthcoming, Prof Jena has stopped attending duty, which has pushed the unit to a complete standstill as there are no other qualified BMT specialists in the department.

While around 35 patients, all having cleared their pre-transplant evaluations, are now waiting in limbo, 160 others are struggling without adequate follow-up care post-transplant. "Plagued with inadequate faculty and lack of political will, the unit is now staring at an uncertain future as Prof Jena's exit has dealt a body blow. It is shocking that the government let go of someone who was central to the functioning of such a vital facility," sources said.

Started in April 2014 with autologous transplants, the unit has so far successfully conducted 180 transplants with a high survival rate. Sources said, the post of professor and assistant professors in the clinical haematology department remain vacant.

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Advocate Pooja Bhaskar Sharma



# CCTV cameras to cycle tracks: 5 key infrastructure projects in Gurgaon await CM nod

**Gurgaon.** Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini will chair a meeting of the high-powered purchase committee (HPPC) on Monday to review and clear key infrastructure and utility projects across the state. At least five major projects worth Rs 223 crore are likely to be tabled for approval for the city, including phase 2 of the city-wide CCTV installation project — a 66 kV substation at the Chandu Budhera water treatment plant — construction of footpaths and cycle tracks in sectors 58–61 and 59–61, and two large-scale sewer line upgrade projects across the city. The second phase of the city's adaptive traffic management and surveillance system, estimated to cost Rs 160 crore, was pending approval for nearly eight months. GMDA floated tenders in March 2024, and five firms were found technically eligible by Oct last year. The proposal, however, was stuck due to the mandatory clearance

required from the HPCC for projects over Rs 10 crore. GMDA, through the project, aims to install 2,722 CCTV cameras at 258 locations across the city. The plan was approved in June 2022, during GMDA's 10th authority meeting. It is expected to boost traffic regulation and public safety in several areas. Under Phase 1, GMDA had installed 1,200 cameras at 218 locations across the city and Manesar by August 2022. Pertinent to note that the prolonged delay in Phase 2 impacted the rollout of Phase 3, which proposes to add 10,000 more cameras at 2,000 sites, including public spaces, community zones, and government buildings.

"The case has been submitted for the high-powered purchase committee's approval. Once the work starts, it will take 18 months to complete the project," the GMDA official said.

To ensure an uninterrupted power supply to the city's primary water treatment facility,

GMDA proposed the construction of a 66 kV substation at the Chandu Budhera plant. The substation is expected to cost Rs 16 crore and will be completed in 12 months once approved. Currently, the new filtration unit at the plant is operating on temporary power drawn from an 11kV feeder from the Daultabad substation, which is inadequate for the plant's growing capacity. Three filtration units—one partially commissioned, one under construction, and one under tendering—will benefit from the new substation. Planned over a 15-acre plot, the facility will include four bays, two 10 MVA 66/6.6 kV transformers, and two 3000 kVA 6.6/0.415 kV transformers, along with supporting equipment.

To improve pedestrian and cyclist mobility, GMDA proposed the construction of dedicated cycle tracks and footpaths along the 2 km master roads between Sectors 58–61 and 59–61. The Rs 15.9

crore project will include table-top crossings, green areas, bus lay-bys, play zones, and sitting spaces to promote non-motorised transport along the busy Golf Course Extension corridor. The timeline for completion is nine months once work is allotted. In addition, two sewerage projects costing over Rs 31 crore have also been put forward for approval. The first project, costing Rs 12.1 crore, involves desilting and rehabilitation of sewer lines of varying sizes from 450mm to 1800mm in diameter along the master road from Sectors 33–34 to Hero Honda Chowk and near Basai Chowk. It will be carried out using cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) technology to ensure long-lasting results and will take at least nine months to complete. The second project, worth Rs 19.3 crore, will upgrade a severely damaged 1800mm master sewer line along Sohna Road from Subhash Chowk to Shishpal Vihar via Village Tikri.

## News box

### Prisoner dies in Faridabad, kin say medical negligence

Faridabad: A 35-year-old undertrial prisoner died under suspicious circumstances in Neemka Jail, Faridabad, triggering allegations of medical negligence by jail authorities from his family.

The deceased, identified as Sohanpal, was arrested on May 16 in connection with a diesel misappropriation case involving the Ballabhgarh depot of the state roadways. His family was informed about his deteriorating health through a phone call from jail authorities at around 4am on Friday. Due to his poor health, he was admitted to the Faridabad Civil Hospital, where he died during the treatment. However, Sohanpal's father, Krishanpal, claimed that he had visited his son just a day before his death. During their meeting, Sohanpal had complained of a mild fever. The deceased's father alleged that "timely and proper medical care could have saved his son's life." He further claimed that even after depositing Rs 11 lakh with the Roadways Department for the loss that the department incurred and paying a Rs 2.5 lakh bribe to a senior official, his son was still sent to jail. The family has accused both the jail administration and hospital staff of negligence, and they alleged that the delay in transferring Sohanpal to the hospital and inadequate treatment contributed directly to his death.

Rajendra Kumer, the investigating officer from Sadar police station in Ballabhgarh, confirmed that a report regarding the incident has been submitted to the duty magistrate. "Autopsy report will clarify the cause of death," he said. The family wants a thorough investigation and strict action against those responsible for the alleged negligence.

### Stop promoting gangsters & crimes in music, STF tells Haryanvi singers

**Gurgaon.** In a move to curb the growing influence of gangster culture in regional music, the special task force (STF) has asked singers to stop glorifying criminals, weapons, and drugs in their songs. The directive comes amid mounting concerns over the impact of such content on youth and follows the removal of 40 controversial songs from social media platforms over the past three months. The inspector-general of police, STF, Simardeep Singh, convened a special meeting at the city's STF office on Friday with prominent Haryana-based singers, including Amit Saini Rohtakia, Mukesh Jaji, Narender Bhagana, and several others. "These songs glorify negative elements of the society and significantly influence young minds. Our technical cell maintains strict vigilance online and promptly initiates the removal of such content. This monitoring will continue," Singh said. The controversy over provocative lyrics in Haryanvi songs has been simmering for years. The genre, known for its folk roots, has increasingly faced criticism for shifting towards themes of violence and criminal behaviour. The issue gained prominence in March this year, when the city cops halted singer Masoom Sharma's concert at Leisure Valley after he performed a previously banned song — 'Ek Khatola Jail Ke Bhitari'. Similar action has been taken against Punjabi singers as well, including Happy Raikoti, and the late Sidhu Moosewala, who faced an FIR in 2020 for promoting gun culture. In fact, the Punjab and Haryana high court had in 2019 passed an order prohibiting the promotion of weapons or drugs in songs.

At the Friday meeting, IG Singh insisted that many such songs were exploited by anti-social elements to glorify their gangs. "We have no personal agenda against any artiste. But, we cannot allow the corruption of youth through such content. It's our responsibility to channel their energy in the right direction," he added.

### Donald J. Trump—A Defining Force in 21st Century Global Politics

Contd...Front page

He recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, moving the U.S. embassy there — a move welcomed by Israel but condemned by Palestinians and much of the international community.

4. NATO and Military Alliances: Trump often criticized NATO members for not contributing their fair share, pressuring allies to increase defense spending. His unpredictability raised concerns among traditional allies but appealed to voters who wanted reduced military involvement abroad.

5. India-U.S. Relations: Under Trump, U.S.-India ties saw strengthening in defense cooperation, trade negotiations, and shared strategic concerns about China. His 2020 visit to India for the "Namaste Trump" rally in Ahmedabad was a highlight of his international diplomacy.

#### Political Style and Global Reactions

Trump's blunt communication style, frequent use of Twitter, and disdain for traditional media often put him at odds with world leaders. However, he cultivated strong ties with authoritarian figures like Vladimir Putin (Russia), Kim Jong-un (North Korea), and Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil). His critics accused him of undermining democratic norms and global cooperation, while his supporters praised his directness and assertive stance against foreign exploitation of U.S. interests.

#### 2020 Defeat and Continued Influence

Donald Trump lost the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden but refused to concede, alleging widespread voter fraud — claims that were widely rejected by courts and election officials. The storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, by his supporters further intensified global scrutiny. Despite the controversies, Trump remains a powerful force within the Republican Party. As of 2025, he is again a frontrunner in the race for the presidency, making his return a possibility that the world cannot ignore. Donald Trump's presidency changed the American political conversation, challenged the global order, and ignited both fierce opposition and loyal support. His unapologetic nationalism, unorthodox diplomacy, and focus on economic realism have left a lasting mark. As Trump continues to shape U.S. politics, his foreign policy legacy — from recalibrated alliances to trade realignments — will be studied for decades. Whether viewed as a disruptor or a visionary, Trump's influence on world affairs is undeniable.

### MCG sets new norms for project approvals, contractor payments

**Gurgaon.** MCG on Friday took a slew of decisions regarding contractor payments and project approvals. MCG officials made it clear that the commissioner would not grant ex-post facto (from a thing done afterward) approvals, saying all necessary approvals must be secured prior to commencing work. The officials established a new protocol for payment delays, directing contractors to first report such cases to their union rather than immediately pursuing legal action. The union would then be responsible for forwarding these cases to the MCG for resolution. Regarding bill payments, the MCG Contractors Union head said that the civic body officials said "there will be no delays" and assurance to that effect was given. "Officials told us not to delay work and said that timely completion and quality of work will prevent payment issues. They also told the contractors to inform the union before any case goes to court and the union will present it to the commissioner for resolution," he said. On Friday, the union met with commissioner Pradeep Dahiya to request a 21-day timeline for processing payment files of completed projects. During the meeting, the MCG officials also discussed the responsibilities of contractors during the monsoon season, stressing the importance of "proper execution to prevent waterlogging issues in the city." The MCG officials also said junior engineers must document their site visit frequency during project execution. Union head Manish Saidpur said, "We asked the MCG commissioner to set a 21-day timeframe for payment files. All work will now be conducted on the Haryana Engineering Works Portal (HEWP), with bills processed from start to finish on HEWP." Saidpur said, "Regarding objections on files, the commissioner told us that the SOP must be completed and any issues should be communicated through the union. The commissioner instructed us to inform chief engineer Vijay Dhaka about the old payments."

## Maximum temperature drops 3.5°C, high winds bring relief from intense heat in Gurgaon

**Gurgaon.** Residents of the city woke up to a cooler morning on Friday as the city experienced a dip in temperature.

The minimum temperature dropped to 24.5 degrees Celsius, marking a 2.4°C decline from the previous day. The maximum temperature also saw a significant fall, settling at 34.1°C, which was 3.5 degrees lower than Thursday's high.

The cooler conditions were accompanied by overcast skies and persistent gusty winds, which helped keep the mercury in check throughout the day. According to local weather officials, the drop in temperature was primarily due to increased cloud cover and strong winds sweeping across the region. Meteorologists forecast similar weather patterns over the coming days, with the possibility of light rain in parts of NCR, including Gurgaon. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a yellow alert for the region, warning of

thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds ranging from 30 to 40 kmph at isolated locations. The alert remains in effect until next Thursday. While Friday remained largely dry, the overcast skies and breezy



conditions brought much-needed relief to residents grappling with the heat. IMD advised citizens to stay updated with local weather alerts and take necessary precautions, especially during windy spells. The current weather shift is

expected to provide temporary comfort, though officials caution that conditions may change rapidly. Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant and plan their outdoor activities accordingly. Meanwhile, Delhi witnessed an overcast sky on Friday, though no major weather activity was recorded until 8 pm, except for a trace of rain at Lodhi Road. While the weather department had forecast thunderstorms, rain, and strong winds for Friday evening and the coming five days, the day remained mostly calm. The cool conditions and light westerly winds contributed to a drop in both humidity and temperature. The maximum temperature settled at 34.8 degrees Celsius—six degrees below normal and a notable drop from Thursday's 39.1 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature was 27.3 degrees Celsius, one degree below normal. Humidity ranged between 75% and 50%, and wind speeds hovered around 8 km/h.

## Gas leak: FIR registered against auto parts facility owner after eight fall ill in Gurgaon

**Gurgaon.** Days after eight people, including three children, were hospitalised following exposure to a mysterious odour allegedly emanating from an auto parts facility in Basai village, an FIR was lodged against the factory owner.

The FIR was lodged on May 27, four days after the incident, police said on Friday. Atul Suri, the factory owner, faces charges under sections 125 and 280 of the BNS for endangering human lives and creating health-hazardous atmospheric conditions. The complaint was lodged by Mahesh Bharadwaj, whose family members were among those affected. A police officer said, "We are waiting for the technical report by the authorities which will clear the fact that if the coolant recovered from the spot

caused danger to the health of the residents." Suri told TOI the coolant, mixed with water for cooling melted iron to prepare steel components, "is harmless and odourless". He claimed the complaint about the coolant has come in the wake of his Sept 2023 land purchase, despite operating there since 2007 on lease. He said the complaints were "orchestrated" by tenants sharing a common landlord. Suri questioned why those who locked the factory gates weren't charged for endangering employees' lives.

On being asked about his industrial operations in a residential area, he said he paid industrial property tax since the factory was set up and also "had commercial registration of the plot". The area reportedly houses numerous

factories operating without proper permissions. However, Akanksha Tanwar, the regional pollution board officer, said a previous investigation of the same factory found no evidence of chemical or gas leakage. The incident occurred on May 23 when residents experienced severe symptoms including eye irritation, vomiting and acute stomach pain. Those affected — Geeta and her daughters Khushi and Annu, Mahesh's wife Sarita, his son Devansh, Pooja and two children Srishti and Dhrishi — received treatment at Sector 10 Civil Hospital. Local residents protested by locking the factory gates until police intervention. The authorities have requested technical analysis of the coolant. However, 30 employees present during the incident reported no adverse effects.

## CM highlights government initiatives undertaken for the welfare of advocates

### Special Correspondent

Prayagraj, May 31: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed the inauguration ceremony of the advocate chambers and parking building, constructed at a cost of 7680 crore within the High Court premises, on Saturday in the presence of Chief Justice of India Justice Bhushan Ramakrishna Gavai. During the event, he recalled the 2017 program organized at the Allahabad High Court, where the Prime Minister emphasized that the first condition of good governance is the rule of law. The Chief Minister stated, "In the rule of law, the litigant is as important as the bar and bench." He expressed empathy for advocates, noting that despite working under difficult conditions—such as broken chambers or even under trees—they continue to strive for justice. Highlighting the significance of the day, the Chief Minister said, "Today marks the 300th birth anniversary of Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar. This year is also the Amrit Mahotsav year of the implementation of the Constitution of India." The Chief Minister described Prayagraj as the land of India's heritage. Since ancient times, this land has drawn national and global attention not only for the confluence of the sacred rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati but also as a land of religion, knowledge, and justice in modern India. Prayagraj is also the land of the

Mahakumbh. By taking a holy dip at the Sangam here, every Indian has felt a deep connection with their heritage and a sense of pride. CM Yogi remarked that although

enjoy the available facilities." Praising the excellent arrangements, CM Yogi said that along with multi-level parking, the facility also includes advocate chambers, a



multilevel parking structures have been built, they often remain unused. He urged urban bodies to allow commercial use of some parking space to ensure success. He cited the example of a multilevel parking in Gorakhpur, built six years ago, which initially failed. "I suggested that the top two floors be converted into commercial spaces to make it operational. As soon as this was implemented, the entire complex started getting fully occupied. People who earlier used to park their vehicles on the streets now park inside the complex and

cafeteria, a modern kitchen, and conference amenities. "This can serve as a new model for infrastructure development." CM Yogi explained that once the Integrated Court Complex is constructed, litigants will have access to all judicial services under one roof, including chambers and parking for advocates, as well as housing facilities for judicial officers. He emphasized that this initiative to build quality complexes will become a model. Both the central and state governments are committed to providing maximum

facilities at district courts and addressing advocates' challenges. He highlighted that the Advocate Fund amount has been increased from ₹1.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh, and the age limit raised from 60 to 70 years. Additionally, a separate corpus fund of ₹500 crore has been established. In case of an accident involving an advocate, the trustee committee will utilize this fund to support the affected family. New advocates are also receiving assistance for journals, magazines, and books during their first three years. CM Yogi stated that such excellent infrastructure will accelerate the pace of justice delivery and add a new dimension to progress. He recalled the successful Maha Kumbh held in Prayagraj, which attracted over 66 crore devotees from across India and abroad. The Allahabad High Court played a significant role in efficiently managing the event, enhancing Prayagraj's stature. He said that if everyone fulfills their responsibilities in line with the spirit of the Constitution envisioned by Baba Saheb, meaningful results can be achieved. The CM stated that the multilevel parking and advocate chambers have been constructed excellently. He assured that any funds required for their expansion will be made available soon, enabling even better infrastructure in the land of justice, knowledge, and religion. This will ensure that litigants in Uttar Pradesh receive timely justice.



## NEWS BOX

## US Man Charged For Assaulting American Airlines Flight Attendant In Mid-Air Meltdown

**world.** A 24-year-old Kansas man has been charged after he allegedly grabbed a flight attendant and dragged her up the aisle of a Chicago-bound flight, leaving from Bradley International Airport in Hartford, Connecticut. The Department of Justice said Julius Jordan Priester was arrested and charged with assaulting the cabin crew member.

The incident took place on Tuesday (May 27) when the American Airlines flight was over 30 minutes into the journey, according to a report in the New York Post. United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut David Sullivan said Priester stood up, started taking off his shirt and ran to the back of the plane yelling, "Help me". He added that Priester then grabbed a flight attendant, who was seated, and shouted, "You're coming with me," and forcefully brought the victim to the ground. As the kerfuffle ensued, several passengers intervened and managed to subdue Priester, bringing him back to his seat in the process. Although he continued acting erratically and making incoherent statements, the authorities added. The plane was diverted back to Bradley after the captain declared an emergency. As the plane safely touched down, Connecticut State Police arrived onboard and arrested Priester, who was taken to a local hospital for evaluation. The condition of the flight attendant, whose identity has not been disclosed, remains unknown. Meanwhile, American Airlines issued a statement, lauding the flight crew for their reaction to the incident. "We do not tolerate violence, and we thank our team members for their professionalism and our customers for their assistance," the statement said.

Prosecutors revealed that Priester already has a criminal history in Kansas, including an aggravated assault charge. Priester remains in police custody with a court hearing lined up. The charges of interfering with flight crew members and attendants carries a maximum term of 20 years of imprisonment.

## "Working On Everything": Biden Says "Feeling Good" After Cancer Diagnosis

**Washington.** Former US President Joe Biden told reporters Friday he was feeling "optimistic" about the future after delivering his first public remarks since revealing he had an aggressive form of prostate cancer. "Well, the prognosis is good. You know, we're working on everything. It's moving along. So, I feel good," Biden, 82, said after an event in Delaware belatedly marking Monday's Memorial Day federal holiday.

Biden's office announced earlier this month he is battling prostate cancer with a Gleason score of nine, which places him in the most severe category.

The veteran Democrat told reporters he had decided on a treatment regime, adding that "the expectation is, we're going to be able to beat this." "It's not in any organ, my bones are strong, it hasn't penetrated. So I'm feeling good," he said. The mental and physical health of the former president, the oldest person ever to hold the office, was a dominant issue in the 2024 election. After a disastrous debate performance against Trump, Biden ended his campaign for a second term. When Biden's office announced his diagnosis, they said the cancer had spread to his bones. But Biden told reporters: "We're all optimistic about the diagnosis. As a matter of fact, one of the leading surgeons in the world is working with me."

The political row over Biden's aborted candidacy has become a major scandal since the release of the book "Original Sin" -- which alleges that Biden's White House covered up his cognitive decline while he was in office. The ex-president was asked about the controversy and responded with sarcasm, joking that "I'm mentally incompetent and I can't walk."

He said he had no regrets about initially running for a second term, and that his Democratic critics could have challenged him but chose not to "because I'd have beaten them."

## Israeli Strikes Target Syria's Coastal Cities

**Cairo.** Israeli strikes targeted Syria's coastal cities of Latakia and Tartous, killing one person, the Syrian state news agency reported on Friday, despite recent talks between Israel and Syria's interim government.

The Israeli military confirmed shortly after it struck what it described as weapon storage facilities containing missiles that "posed a threat to international and Israeli maritime freedom of navigation" in Latakia. One civilian was killed in the strike on Latakia, the Syrian state news agency reported. Israel has for years waged a campaign of



aerial bombardment that destroyed much of the country's military infrastructure and this ramped up since the Israeli war in Gaza. But the strikes have largely stopped in recent weeks as the two sides engaged in direct talks aimed at avoiding conflict.

# Colombia Withdraws Statement On Pak Casualties After India's Objections

**Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said that India was disappointed with the Colombian government for expressing condolences over the loss of lives in Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, rather than sympathising with the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack.**

**Bogota.** In a significant accomplishment for India in its global outreach effort to expose Pakistan and to convey its zero tolerance against Terrorism, Colombia, which earlier in its statement sympathised with Pakistan over the loss of lives, has now withdrawn its statement. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who is leading the all-party delegation to the Americas during his Bogota visit, expressed dismay over the South American country's stance during a press conference on Thursday. He said that India was disappointed with the Colombian

government for expressing condolences over the loss of lives in Pakistan during Operation Sindoor, rather than sympathising with the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack. "We were a little disappointed in the reaction of the Colombian government, which apparently expressed heartfelt condolences on the loss of lives in Pakistan after the Indian strikes, rather than sympathising with the victims of terrorism," said Mr Tharoor. "We will say to our friends in Colombia, there can be no equivalence between those who dispatch terrorists and those who resist them. There can be no equivalence between those who attack and those who defend. We are only exercising our right of self-defence, and if there is any misunderstanding here, on this core, we are here to dispel any such misunderstanding", he added. While speaking with ANI on Friday, after the Indian delegation met with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio in Bogota, said that "we are very confident



with the explanation that we received today and the detailed information that we now have regarding the real situation, the conflict, and what happened in Kashmir, we can also continue the dialogue..." Mr Tharoor appreciated Colombian position on the matter after explaining India's view and position. "The Vice Minister very graciously mentioned that they have withdrawn the statement that we had expressed concern about and that they fully understand our position on the matter, which is something we really value," Mr Tharoor said on Colombia withdrawing its

earlier statement to ANI. "Began today with an excellent meeting with the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Rosa Yolanda Villavicencio, and her senior colleagues dealing with the Asia-Pacific. I expressed India's view of recent events and voiced disappointment at Colombia's statement on 8 May, conveying 'heartfelt condolences' to Pakistan. The Minister assured me that the statement had been withdrawn and that our position was now properly understood and strongly supported", tweeted Mr Tharoor after meeting with the vice minister. Mr Tharoor is leading the multi-party delegation to the Americas. After visiting Panama and Guyana, Mr Tharoor and his delegation arrived in Colombia on Thursday in an effort of India's global outreach to convey India's zero tolerance against terrorism. After concluding the Colombia visit, the all party delegation on Saturday will be heading to Brazil and the United States.

## Donald Trump To Increase Steel Import Tariffs To 50%

**world.** US President Donald Trump said Friday that he would double steel import tariffs to 50 percent, speaking in Pennsylvania at a US Steel plant where he also touted a partnership between the American steelmaker and Japan's Nippon Steel. "We're going to bring it from 25 percent to 50 percent, the tariffs on steel into the United States of America, which will even further secure the steel industry," he said.

"Nobody's going to get around that," he added in the speech before blue-collar workers in the battleground state that helped deliver his election victory last year. The doubling of levies will take place next week, said the White House in a social media post. Since returning to the presidency in January, Trump has imposed sweeping tariffs on allies and adversaries alike in moves that have rocked the world trade order and roiled financial markets. He has also targeted sector-specific goods including steel, aluminum and automobiles with 25 percent tariffs. On Friday, Trump mounted a defense of



his trade policy, arguing that tariffs helped protect the US company.

He added that the plant would not exist if he did not also impose duties on metals imports during his first administration.

In his speech, Trump stressed as well that despite a recently announced partnership between US Steel and Nippon Steel, "US Steel will continue to be controlled by the USA."

He added that there would be no layoffs or outsourcing of jobs due to the deal.

A proposed \$14.9 billion sale of US Steel to Nippon Steel had previously drawn bipartisan opposition, and former president Joe Biden blocked the deal on national security grounds shortly before leaving office.

The terms of the new partnership remain murky, however. The United

Steelworkers union (USW) which represents thousands of hourly workers at US Steel facilities, said in a statement Wednesday that the "partnership" announcement "continues to raise more questions than answers." "Nippon still maintains it would only invest in USS facilities if it owned the company outright. We've seen nothing in the reporting to indicate that position has changed," the USW statement added.

Trump said previously that US Steel would remain in America with its headquarters to stay in Pittsburgh, adding that the arrangement with Nippon would create at least 70,000 jobs and add \$14 billion to the US economy. But union leaders said they had no confirmation of how much of the \$14 billion would go towards union-represented sites, if any.

Trump had opposed Nippon Steel's takeover plan while on the election campaign trail, but since returning to the presidency, he signaled that he would be open to some form of investment after all.

## "Pakistan Is A Theocratic State": Indian Delegation In Indonesia

**Jakarta.** CPI(M) MP and member of the all-party delegation, John Brittas, while addressing the Indian diaspora in Jakarta on Friday, criticised Pakistan for choosing to become a theocratic state, stating that it was a nation formed in the name of religion who were triggered by hate. "Pakistan is a theocratic state... They chose to be a nation in the name of a religion, and they are triggered by hate. India decided on its path. Two hundred million Muslims are in India, the second-largest Muslim community after Indonesia. This reflects the real character of India..." Mr Brittas said.

He emphasised that India is a secular democracy that celebrates pluralism and diversity, which represent the country's real culture. "I am from Kerala. The unique nature of this delegation is that out of five political

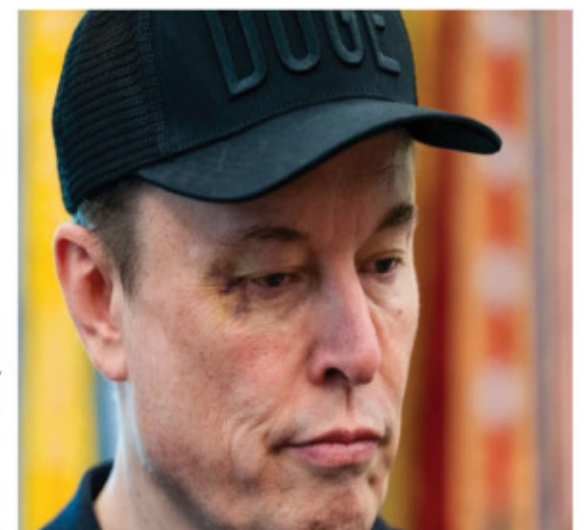
parties, three are against the ruling party, but we are here together for a mission. This represents the real culture of India. That is how India is distinct from



Pakistan. India is a secular democracy, plural and diverse. Terrorism sponsored by the state is something more dangerous than an insurgency or a terrorist activity triggered by a criminal gang," he further added. Mr Brittas

went on to say that the presence of diverse political voices in the delegation itself was proof of India's democratic coexistence.

"Asim Munir said something about how Hindus and Muslims are different. Can you ever vouch for that? And Salman Khurshid is here... We are all together. I am from Kerala... I am a Christian. In Kerala, we have three major religions. We coexist in harmony. That is the message of India. Pakistan has been asking for evidence. Khwaja Asif, the defence minister of Pakistan, in an interview, said that they have been indulging in this dirty job of nurturing and harbouring terrorist organisations for three decades..." he stated.



X. "Musk's son X -- full name X /E A-Xii -- made frequent appearances in the White House when his father was running DOGE's cost-cutting rampage through the federal government. He even sat on Musk's shoulders during the SpaceX magnate's first Oval appearance back in February, and was seen picking his nose next to Trump's 'Resolute' Dek. Musk took the chance to joke at French President Emmanuel Macron's expense when it came to his black eye. After Trump was asked for his reaction to a video of Macron's wife apparently shoving the French leader's face, Musk laughed and said: 'I've got a little shiner here.' Musk, wearing a DOGE baseball cap and a T-shirt saying 'The Dogefather,' joked about it again when he was asked how he got the injury.

# 44 killed in Israeli strikes in Gaza amid hunger crisis after warehouse loot

**Washington.** US President Donald Trump has intensified his war with Harvard recently, with social media users claiming that his hatred for the Ivy League university comes from his son, Barron Trump, not being accepted. But, the President's biographer, Michael Wolff, has suggested something else. According to him, it was Trump, not Barron, who was rejected by Harvard. Wolff, the author of 'Fire and Fury', 'Siege: Trump under fire', and this year's 'All or nothing', presented his theory about the US President during a podcast with the The Daily Beast. While the host, Joanna Coles, suggested that many people linked to Trump studied at Harvard, Wolff said, "It's important not to lend too much calculation and planning to anything he does." "But the other thing is that, by the way, he didn't get into Harvard. So one of the Trump things is always holding a grudge against the Ivy League," he added. Trump studied at Fordham University in 1964 after four years of

attending the New York Military Academy. Two years later, he transferred to the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania - where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics. However, there is no official data available on whether the US President applied to Harvard, let alone he was rejected. No published biographies have also mentioned this claim. A White House spokesperson hit out at Wolff and The Daily Beast for "peddling fake news", adding that Trump did not need to apply to an "overrated and corrupt" university like Harvard. "They both peddle fake news for clickbait in a hopeless attempt to amount to something more than lying losers. The President didn't need to apply to an overrated, corrupt institution like Harvard to become a successful businessman and the most transformative President in history," Taylor Rogers said.

'The Trump show' Wolff, additionally, suggested that apart from



"holding the grudge", Trump's "TV star instincts as a producer" play a key role in his legal battle against Ivy League Universities - especially Harvard. According to the author, Trump needs an enemy. "That's what makes the show great, the Trump show. He picks fantastic enemies. And Harvard, for all it represents, fits right into the Trump show. The president loves the drama. He's done what he set out to do - dominate the headline. What do you do? You go after Harvard in a way that is draconian, dramatic, and existential. It's threatening Harvard on that level," he told The Daily Beast. Trump-

Harvard battle Donald Trump's crackdown on Harvard has taken a more aggressive stance within a few months of the Republican leader taking office for the second term - saying that he is seeking to eliminate antisemitism on campuses. He had even accused his predecessor, Joe Biden, of letting some of the Ivy League universities off the hook. Harvard had first fallen prey to the crackdown last month when the White House put a \$2.2 billion freeze on federal funding. Trump had put forth a few conditions to revoke the ban on federal funding, but refused to bend the knee. Last week, the administration sent a letter to the university banning the Ivy League's ability to enroll international students amid an ongoing investigation into the university. It also mentioned said that Harvard could still reverse the government's ban and enroll foreign students - if they fulfill Trump's conditions within 72 hours. However, the university refused again.



## NEWS BOX

## Red Cross Society to open Jan Aushadhi stores at all Andhra Pradesh govt general hospitals

**VIJAYAWADA.** In a move to make essential medicines more affordable and curb profiteering, the State government has permitted the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) to set up Jan Aushadhi medical stores in all 26 district Government General Hospitals (GGHs). The decision follows concerns raised by the Director of Medical Education (DME), who noted irregular pricing and profiteering at generic medicine shops in teaching hospitals. Many of these outlets, initially allotted to Self-Help Groups, are now reportedly operated by private individuals offering inconsistent discounts.

The Jan Aushadhi outlets will operate under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), a Union government initiative that ensures quality generic medicines at affordable prices. The PMBJP model, overseen by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Union Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers, sources medicines directly from manufacturers through a transparent tendering process.

## Five dead, 13 missing as Kerala reels under monsoon fury



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.** The southwest monsoon picked up pace with different parts of the state experiencing extreme rainfall and flood-like situation, leading to five deaths being reported on Friday, while 13 people went missing. As many as 1,894 people have been shifted to 66 relief camps across the state. Holiday has been declared for Kollam, Kottayam and Idukki on Saturday. The situation is expected to improve, with only isolated heavy rainfall expected on Saturday.

Two people died when their country boat capsized in flooded paddy fields near Kollad in Kottayam. The deceased are Joby V J, 36, of Kollad, and Arun Sam, 37, of Polachira. A fisherman — Anthony of Pulluvila — died and two others went missing after their boat capsized off Vizhinjam coast. In another instance in Thiruvananthapuram, nine fishermen went missing. Sadiq, 36, of Kasaragod died after he was trapped in a flash flood. Nalini from Thalassery went missing on Thursday night. Annakutty, 85, an MGNREGA worker from Koothattukulam died on Thursday, after a tree fell on her.

Malappuram native Abdul Bari, 52, who went fishing at Anchavadi Pariyangad river in Kalikavu has been missing. In Kannur, fire brigade evacuated 50 families in Thavakkara and Kannur-2 village. In Manjeshwar, floodwaters washed away a parked car and 2 two-wheelers. In Kozhikode, a house collapsed near Balussery. A relief camp is operating in Vadakara and two in Kozhikode. In Malappuram seven houses were damaged. A relief camp is operating in the district at Emadu taluk, with 24 inhabitants.

## Tidal waves flood seaside villages, submerge crops in Odisha's Kendrapara

**KENDRAPARA.** Tidal surges due to the depression over the Bay of Bengal coupled with incessant rains and gusty wind for the last four days have caused seawater to enter many villages and inundate vast swathes of farmland in the coastal pockets of Kendrapara district. The gushing seawater has swept standing summer paddy crops at Lanchuda, Akhadasala, Tantiapala, Batighar, Badatubi, Sanatubi, Kajalapatia, Kandarapatia, Suniti, Babar, Talachua, Rangani and other villages.

Bichitrnanda Behera (55) of Langudi said tidal waves entered the village on Thursday after breaching the weak saline embankment at four places. As a result, many farmers lost their crops to the rolling water.

Similarly, Sahadev Mandal of Batighar said due to the tidal ingress, around 3,000 acre of agricultural land have been submerged in seawater. "Many farmers had raised paddy crops. Their hopes have been dashed after saline water entered their fields due to the weak embankment," he alleged.

Farmer leader and president of the district unit of Krushak Sabha Umesh Chandra Singh said the fate of a large number of paddy and vegetable growers is now at stake as the tidal ingress has damaged their crops.

Former MLA of Kendrapara Kishor Tarei said seawater often enters the coastal villages due to non-repair of saline embankments and construction of sub-standard sluice gates. Around 50 sluice gates and a major portion of the embankment in Rajnagar and Mahakalapada blocks is on the verge of collapse. The administration is yet to take any step to repair it, he claimed.

Additional district magistrate (ADM) of Kendrapara Nilu Mohapatra said all the block development officers have been directed to submit reports about the damage caused by saline ingress in the seaside villages. "After getting the reports, we will take appropriate steps to help the affected people." Meanwhile, continuous rain for the last four days has inundated low-lying areas in Kendrapara town, throwing normal life out of gear.

## Walayar: Kerala's jackpot junction, town of thousand dreams

**PALAKKAD.** Nestled right on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border, the tiny Walayar town located on the Palakkad - Coimbatore highway, is more than just a checkpoint town - it is Kerala's own jackpot junction, a dazzling maze of neon-lit lottery stalls packed shoulder-to-shoulder. The streets and pocket roads hum with energy, the air thick with hope, and the buzz of buyers from across state borders is impossible to ignore.

Over 130 kiosks and countless street vendors are selling Kerala lotteries here making Walayar a dazzling world of dreams, risk, and relentless hope.

"You wouldn't see any other place in Kerala where so many stalls and street sellers are concentrated in one locality like in Walayar. Believe it or not, almost all the stalls in Walayar sell well over 500 tickets on a given day. The number crosses 1,000 each on Sundays, when people from Tamil Nadu come in huge numbers and purchase tickets for up to next 10 days," says C Babu, district secretary of the All Kerala Lottery Traders Union, explaining the magnitude of the lottery trade in Walayar. "Some believe in a few lucky numbers, many believe in particular weekdays while a huge number of buyers believe in ticket sets and books. The availability of books and sets is also a reason why people flock to Walayar," Babu adds. About 96 lakh tickets are printed for a day's sale by the Kerala government and above Rs 24 crore is

distributed as lottery prizes. The maximum prizes are given in Rs 5000s which total Rs 9.72 crore.

"Those who come to Walayar always look for tickets in books (one book is 25 tickets) and sets (a set is 12 books). People generally buy one or two tickets, but in Walayar people



generally buy 12 tickets in the same numbers (last four digits).

They believe they will win the Rs-5000 prize if purchased in that style, and it has happened scores of times here also," said a ticket seller in the Walayar Dam Road.

It's such a buzzing place that the service road of the National Highway and pocket roads are filled with two-wheelers and four-wheelers, majority of them bearing Tamil Nadu registration, but there isn't a proper grocery

shop, garment shop or medical shop, vegetable shop or financial firm in Walayar. And whatever small shops are located there, all sell lottery tickets! There are a couple of small restaurants, tea shops and toddy shops where, too, you can see lottery tickets displayed for sale and they become empty as the lottery results are out.

"There's nothing here. Just the lottery sales. At least 40 per cent of the buildings and stalls are owned by people from Tamil Nadu. The land price has skyrocketed to Rs 12 lakh a cent on the roadside, but there isn't an inch available to be sold out," says Mohammed Basheer, a local resident.

Everyone who holds a piece of land here is busy building commercial spaces. Majority of employees and buyers hail from Tamil Nadu, and most of them speak Tamil. A quiet yet thriving system operates behind the scenes - online ticket sales! Walayar stalls would provide ticket numbers and its photos through WhatsApp and other social media platforms to their regular customers from faraway places Chennai, Bengaluru and Salem and buyers often transfer money through digital payment apps.

"It's a trade built almost entirely on trust - no receipts, no guarantees, just mutual faith in an unwritten code. Evidently, sellers with Tamil Nadu background have more online customers," stall owners say.

## Woman dies after spinal cord surgery at private hospital, kin protest in Telangana

**NIZAMABAD.** Angry relatives of a 35-year-old woman staged a protest at a private hospital here on Friday, accusing doctors of negligence following her death while undergoing treatment for spinal cord surgery.

Police were deployed at the hospital to control the situation as tensions flared between the grieving family and hospital staff. The deceased, A Kavitha, a resident of Padgal village in Velpur mandal, was admitted to the hospital on May 28. She underwent surgery the next day. She passed away in the early hours of Friday at 7.45 am, with doctors attributing her death to post-surgical bleeding.

However, her family refused to accept the explanation, claiming medical negligence and demanding compensation and justice.

Hospital authorities insisted they followed proper medical protocols and urged the family to file a formal police complaint if they suspected wrongdoing. Circle Inspector G Ganapathi of Nizamabad Town Police said that Kavitha was the wife of Rural Medical Practitioner (RMP) A Suresh and that the doctors were known to him.

## Shelter in Tamil Nadu's Adichanallur damaged, treasures at weather's mercy

**Though multiple artefacts, including burial urns, potteries, and metal articles, have been shifted to a nearby archeological gallery, several others have been retained in the trenches for display.**

**THOOTHUKUDI.** Several burial urns and pottery items excavated at Adichanallur archaeological site are facing the risk of irreversible damage as shelter covering a part of the C-site in the ASI-controlled area collapsed a few days ago due to strong winds. The trenches now stand exposed to the elements. Excavation at the site is done by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The site is spread across 125 acres on a mound at Adichanallur village located on the banks of the Thamirabarani river. Experts believe that the site could be 2,900 years old. The area is divided into three sites. The A-site has several urn burials, B-site has an onsite museum, and C-site has a number of urn burial trenches. According to sources, the C-site, which has over 10 burial trenches, is covered by thatched roofing and not adequately maintained. Though multiple artefacts, including burial urns, potteries, and metal articles, have been shifted to a nearby archeological gallery, several others have been retained in the trenches for display. "Due to the



recent strong winds, one of the thatched roof shelters had crashed and burial urns and other artefacts are exposed to the sky. Rainwater has entered the trenches and has accumulated in the excavated urns and potteries," said Kamarasu, a writer from Muthalankurichi, a village located close to the site.

"As a temporary measure, ASI staff had covered the trenches using tarpaulin sheets and placed iron rods over them to hold them in place. But strong

southwest monsoon wind blew away the sheets," Kamarasu added. Further, he said ASI does not show interest in protecting the site and said the staffers at Adichanallur often try to hide the facts.

The excavation at C-site reached a milestone when gold diadem and gold earring, besides jar stands made of bronze, and other iron metals were found. Such valuable metal artefacts were not found at the other two sites. A full skeleton of a man resembling a warrior was also excavated from C-site. The thatched roof shelter covering several quadrants at C-site is covered by tarpaulin to prevent rain from damaging the trenches and artefacts, but it is leaky, said A Muthusamy, a resident of the Adichanallur.

A senior ASI official told TNIE that a proposal seeking approval and funds to establish an on-site museum at the C-site was sent to the union government but no response has been received yet. He added that tin sheet sheds would be built soon to replace the thatched-roof shelters.

## TGSRTC staff return lost valuables worth Rs 19 lakh, earn praise for honesty

**TGSRTC MD Sajjanar lauded the sincerity of the staff, K Anjaiah, drivers Yakub Pasha, Mubeen and Ramesh, who belong to the Suryapet and Miyapur-2 depots.**

**HYDERABAD.** The staff of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) have demonstrated honesty and integrity in the course of their duties by returning bags containing valuables worth Rs 19 lakh that were left behind by passengers on different buses.

On May 25, a woman passenger travelling on the Suryapet-Hyderabad route accidentally left her bag on the bus. Upon reaching the Suryapet bus station, conductor K Anjaiah and driver Yakub Pasha discovered the bag. It contained gold jewellery worth Rs 6 lakh and a mobile phone. Without delay, they handed over the bag to the Suryapet depot authorities. The

belongings were later returned to the passenger in the presence of RTC officials. On the same day, a male passenger forgot his bag on an airport bus

officials. In another incident on May 15, a woman passenger left behind a bag containing gold ornaments worth Rs 8 lakh on a Pushpak airport bus travelling from the Hyderabad airport to Lingampally. The bag was found near Allwyn Cross Road by driver Mubeen, who promptly handed it over to the Miyapur-2 depot officials.



TGSRTC MD Sajjanar lauded the sincerity of the staff, K Anjaiah, drivers Yakub Pasha, Mubeen and Ramesh, who belong to the Suryapet and Miyapur-2 depots. They were felicitated by senior officials for their commendable service at Hyderabad Bus Bhavan.

## Madurai spruced up for CM Stalin's two-day visit, 20-km long roadshow

**Chief Minister M K Stalin is expected to arrive on Saturday afternoon and head to New Jail Road in a road show covering Mandela Nagar, and will pass through Avaniyapuram, Jaihindpuram, and Arapalayam.**

**MADURAI.** Madurai has been spruced up ahead of Chief Minister MK Stalin's two-day visit to the city on Saturday for a host of events, including a 20-km-long road show.

Over the last few days, the city corporation and highways department carried out patchwork on several roads, including Aruppukottai main road, in the city. Chief Minister M K Stalin is expected to arrive on Saturday afternoon and head to New Jail Road in a road show covering Mandela Nagar, and will pass through Avaniyapuram, Jaihindpuram, and Arapalayam. At the New Jail Road, he would unveil a bronze statue of former mayor S Muthu.

The chief minister will also inaugurate two bridges that were recently completed in the city. In view of the roadshow, special arrangements have been made throughout the 20 km in the city.

DMK flags have been installed on both sides of the road. Barricades have been fixed to regulate the crowd.

On Sunday, On Sunday, the chief minister will attend the DMK's general body meeting at Uthangudi. He will arrive at the venue in a road show from Circuit House.

Speaking about the arrangements, a DMK functionary said, "DMK is hosting the general body meeting in Madurai after almost four decades. About 7,000 party functionaries from across the state who have received invites only will be allowed to take part in the event. A 100-foot-tall flagpole has been installed in front of the meeting venue.

Special parking and dining arrangements have been made." On Friday, IT Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan inspected the arrangements.

## No change in schedule of Mega DSC: Andhra Pradesh govt

**The School Education Department said the exam to fill 16,347 teacher posts will be held from June 6, saying delays could harm 2.45 lakh candidates and disrupt the academic year for many students.**

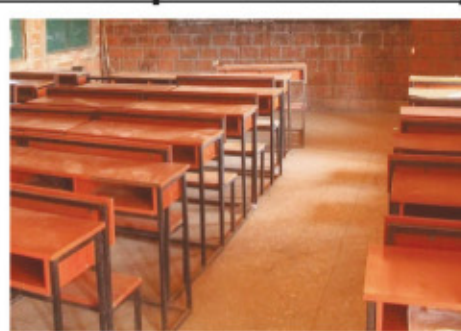
**VIJAYAWADA.** The State government has made it clear that the Mega DSC-2025 examination will be held as scheduled from June 6, dismissing the widespread demand on social media from aspirants for its postponement. In a statement issued on Friday, the School Education Department clarified that any delay in conducting the exam will jeopardise the future of 2.45 lakh candidates, and disrupt the academic year for lakhs of school students. The government reiterated that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu signed the Mega DSC file on June 13, 2024, soon after assuming office as part of his commitment to strengthen the education system in the State, and fulfil the aspirations of unemployed youth.

Under the leadership of HRD Minister Nara Lokesh, the government initiated the process to fill 16,347 teacher posts, and

ensured that the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) was conducted transparently twice. The Mega DSC syllabus was uploaded on the official website in November 2024, giving aspirants more than six months to prepare for the exam. Responding to the aspirants' plea for over a 90-day preparation period post-notification, the government explained that the recruitment process was initiated with the issuance of GO No. 27 on June 13, 2024, and candidates were given ample time to qualify through two TETs.

Further delay will force new teachers to join in the middle of the academic year, causing a loss of four to five months of syllabus coverage for students, and negatively impact their academic progress, it said.

On the demand for one question paper per district, the government said the Computer-Based Test (CBT) model, followed in DSC-2018 and Special DSC-2019, ensures



transparency, avoids human error, prevents paper leak, and enables real-time evaluation. The court has also upheld the normalisation policy adopted for such large-scale exams.

Addressing the demand for age relaxation for OC candidates, the government said the maximum age limit has been extended from 42 to 44 years, and for SC, ST and BC

candidates it is 49 years, while for persons with disabilities (PWD), the limit is 54 years.

Dismissing the objection that TET was not conducted for Mega DSC, the government clarified that apart from the two State-level TETs held in February, and October 2024, candidates who cleared the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) in December 2024 are also eligible for Mega DSC.

Regarding appeals to consider the exam schedule with a humanitarian perspective, the government asserted that adequate opportunities have already been provided through two TETs, and a six-month preparation window. Though the original plan was to complete the recruitment before the commencement of academic year, the notification was issued on April 20, 2025 due to administrative delay, and SC classification issue.



# Science, research reel under US fund squeeze

THE Donald Trump administration has barred Harvard University from enrolling international students. Though US courts have put the order on hold, it has come as a big blow to the academic world in America and caused concern across the world. Harvard is not alone. Facing massive cuts in federal funding, several universities have announced a hiring freeze, laid off staff and stopped or curtailed admitting new graduate students. Ever since the new administration took over in January, there has been talk of cutting down “wasteful expenditure and inefficiency.” Among the sectors affected by this diktat, science and research have been the worst hit. The budgets of two major funding agencies of scientific research – the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) — have been slashed. The proposals for next year call for spending cuts ranging from 40 to 55 per cent for the two agencies.

The impact of this funding squeeze has been severe. Several important projects have either been wound up or curtailed; scientists are losing jobs and those left behind face an uncertain future. NSF Director Sethuraman Panchanathan has quit — 16 months before his tenure was to end — following the termination of hundreds of NSF projects. NIH head Jayanta Bhattacharya was forced to address a Town Hall of staff to brief them about the evolving situation. The crisis has repercussions in many countries, including India, as several institutions globally have joint projects with American institutions supported by research grants from the NIH and the NSF. In 2023, the NSF had some 200 joint projects in India. Scientists are considered a national asset, especially in America, which built a formidable research and innovation edifice after World War II by welcoming talent from all over the world. For instance, Panchanathan studied at the University of Madras and the Indian Institute of Science. Thousands of scientists in universities across America and agencies like NASA are immigrants from India and other Asian countries.

As research projects are getting folded up, funding is drying up and scientists are being laid off, other countries with a good research base are trying to attract American scientists. Canada has launched ‘Canada Leads’ for early-career life sciences researchers from America. Research universities in France have started the ‘Safe Place for Science’ initiative for American researchers willing to relocate. Australia has announced the ‘Global Talent Attraction Program’ that offers competitive salaries and relocation packages.

The European Union has indicated that it would enact a law to ensure the freedom of scientific research and welcome American scientists under its ‘Choose Europe for Science’ plan. Germany’s Max Planck Society, which works with researchers from across the world, has reported a rise in applications from America.

It is being suggested that India should also seize this opportunity and welcome not only researchers of Indian origin but also other American scientists. If there are joint NSF/NIH-supported research projects facing the axe in America, the Indian partner institution could offer to take ownership and continue such projects in this country.

All such ideas are not new, only the context has changed. In the 1950s and 1960s, when India was building its scientific infrastructure, concerted efforts were made to attract global scientific talent at the institutional and national levels. This included scientists persecuted in their homeland.

British scientist JBS Haldane, who faced criticism at home for his Marxist and anti-imperialistic views, was offered a position at the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. American physicist Bernard Peters joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research following his persecution in America. Political reasons apart, both PC Mahalanobis and Homi Bhabha attracted global talent at their respective centres due to their reputation in the international scientific community. At the institutional level, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research tried to get Nobel laureates as directors for its prestigious labs like the National Physical Laboratory in the 1960s.

# A draconian law, Section 152 of the BNS, and a professor

Prof Mahmudabad was arrested under Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which was earlier Section 124(A) of the erstwhile IPC

I concede that liberal humanists like me cannot expect the Supreme Court to meet all our expectations. Judges have case law to contend with, for instance. But the SC Division Bench’s order in Prof Ali Khan Mahmudabad’s case puzzled and disappointed me. And I am not the only citizen whom the honorable court has stunned. Reading the professor’s post, which I sourced from an acquaintance (since I am not on Facebook), I could find not a single word to make me wonder if the scholar had intended to endanger the unity, sovereignty and integrity of our nation-state. Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), under which he was arrested, penalises secession, armed rebellion and subversive activities. The professor has certainly not displayed any such intention in his post.

If the court had read any such intent into his post, it would not have released him on bail. But surprisingly, it passed on the task of decoding the post to an SIT (special investigation team) consisting of three IPS officers, including a woman (because two women defence officers were mentioned in his post). Incidentally, courts are frequently ordering the setting up of SITs nowadays. I am proud to learn that IPS officers are deemed more competent to interpret English words than members of the higher judiciary. I doubt if the judges’ opinion on the comparative abilities to fathom the nuances of English will be shared by the majority of Indian citizens.

What could have offended the Chairperson of the Haryana State Commission for Women, Renu Bhatia? In his post, the professor was positive on every aspect of the official response to the terror attack on innocent Hindu tourists in Pahalgam. While commending the government for choosing a Muslim woman officer to brief the media, the professor had stated that right-wing forces should commit themselves to real secularism by condemning lynchings and bulldozing of houses mostly of Muslims who are suspected of involvement in crimes. There was nothing wrong in that argument. Many Indians (including this writer) have deplored such acts of vandalism, which are patently unlawful. Even the Supreme Court has come down heavily on the use of bulldozers by local authorities without following the due process. In a country governed by the “rule of

law”, such vigilante shortcuts are far from kosher. Well-meaning critics of the executive’s excesses, like I felt I was and still am, will have to revise our approach to criticism of the government when its actions or lack of action, as the case may be, violates the principle of the “rule of law”. As a corollary to this stand, I need to deplore the lack of



spine displayed by the police, first, and the subordinate judiciary, next, in rushing to arrest the professor and remanding him in police custody for crimes that many believe he did not commit!

I will digress here to bemoan the introduction of Section 152 of the BNS. Section 124(A) of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code (IPC) pertained to sedition. Many of our great freedom fighters had been arraigned in courts under that provision of the colonial law. But the Modi-Shah government “reintroduced” it without using the dreaded word ‘sedition’ or its Hindi equivalent.

The provisions of Section 152 of the BNS are more severe than those of Section 124(A) of the IPC. The definition of “subversive activities” lends itself to varied interpretations. Ordinary citizens like Prof

Mahmudabad find themselves more vulnerable now.

Leaving a beleaguered minority voiceless is a sure recipe for disaster. It is not too late to take corrective action. Start with an education programme that compels women, and Muslim women in particular, to avail of secular education that dwells on three Rs — wRiting, Reading and aRithmetic. That alone will put them on the road to equality with menfolk. Cases like the one involving Shah Bano will then not come up.

Reverting to the judgments emanating from the Supreme Court, I have to state that I had great hope when Justice BR Gavai took oath as the Chief Justice of India (CJI). His recent order staying the Enforcement Directorate’s (ED) investigation in the TASMAR (Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation) case was welcome. There was a feeling that the ED was being used or even misused by the government to needle Opposition-ruled governments. The agency will need to restrain its enthusiasm after this order. However, I was taken aback when the CJI recently visited Mumbai. At a reception accorded to him by the Bombay Bar Association, he gently chided the Chief Secretary, the DGP and the city’s Police Commissioner for “not following the protocol” by not receiving him at the airport on his arrival from Delhi.

I checked the rules and found that they did not require these three busy officers to be present at the airport on the CJI’s arrival. Initially, I was a bit worried since I had occupied the Commissioner of Police’s chair from February 1982 to May 1985. I had never been asked by the Protocol Department to present myself at the airport. Chief Justices SP Bharucha, SH Kapadia, SA Bobde and DY Chandrachud were from the Bombay Bar. They must have visited Mumbai during their tenures. The Secretary, Law and Judiciary, and the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court had surely received them and seen them off, as required by the rules. After CJI Gavai’s lament, the Maharashtra Government has issued an administrative fiat that whenever the CJI visits Mumbai, he or she will be treated as a state guest. I do not know if that entails the presence of the Chief Secretary, the DGP and the Commissioner of Police at the time of the CJI’s arrival and departure.

# Northeast on new tracks to progress

A railway line finally linking Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, to the national grid and the simultaneous expansion of the region’s road, air and river networks would transform trade, productivity and the intermingling of people like never before

The hallmark of a remote region’s integration with the mainland is connectivity that facilitates the easy movement of people and goods. India’s northeastern region, which is undergoing a massive railway expansion to reverse decades of institutional neglect, is a prime example. Eighteen projects worth ₹74,000 crore are laying 1,368 km of rail tracks, including 13 new lines. Their completion will pave the way for the simultaneous expansion of intra- and inter-regional movements. The latest development is a railway line finally linking Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, to the national grid. It is the fourth northeastern capital to have a railway station. Tracks are expected to arrive soon at three more of the eight states, including Gangtok in Sikkim. Simultaneous expansion of the region’s road, air and river networks would transform trade, productivity and the intermingling of people like never before. This would be a far cry from the earlier decades when people and animals jostled on rickety Dakota and Fokker planes that hopped between distant towns in the region as the



Northeast remained tenuously connected with mainland India.

In recent decades, insurgency and militancy have again turned the region into a security nightmare, adding people’s alienation to the woes of economic disconnect. The situation has caused a large number of the region’s youth to migrate in search of jobs. Manipur is on the boil even now. However, a renewed developmental focus and investment are bringing in dividends. The region boasts new educational, medical and sports institutions, improved conditions for trade, and a more profitable exploitation of the region’s natural potential in tea, timber and oil. The expanding rail network will alleviate transport bottlenecks by facilitating faster freight movement. That would reduce prices and storage losses while increasing jobs. Increased economic activity around a transport grid can help reduce insurgency-related issues, stabilise the region through improved incomes, and aid national security with faster deployment of the armed forces when needed.

# NDA’s first women cadets ready for tomorrow

## The first batch of 17 women cadets will pass out from National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla today

Today, the first batch of 17 women cadets (19 had joined, two dropped out) will pass out from the National Defence Academy (NDA), marking a historic milestone for the armed forces and the nation. They came from a generation accustomed to speed and instant connection — but they adapted to bugles, boots and discipline. These cadets stepped into the precincts of the NDA to undergo one of the toughest regimens imaginable. Their journey was not just about breaking barriers; it was about setting benchmarks. A transformation not only of individuals — but of an institution. It all began on a rain-washed afternoon in July 2022. As the girls stepped on the platform at the Pune railway station — bags on their backs, hearts in their throats — a tall, broad-shouldered ‘drill Ustad’ greeted them. His voice cut through the railway din, firm yet proud: “From this moment, you are not civilians. You wear the honour of the Indian armed forces.” That single sentence set the tone. No fanfare. No exceptions. Only expectations and the start of something historic.

The drive to Khadakwasla was quiet, each cadet lost in thought. As the Tri-Shakti Gate loomed and they entered the NDA, the imposing architecture greeted them — aircraft on display, cadets sprinting past on cross-country routes, others executing crisp drills on the parade ground. Cadets in mid-air during volleyball spikes, squads barking out drill commands — it was a world already in motion.

Everything looked rehearsed, efficient, overwhelming. 19 newly inducted girls, surrounded by over 2,200 male cadets — what were they thinking? Some wore pride, others caution. They were excited, but unsure. Brave, but still seeking

belonging. The Academy had prepared with precision. Romeo Squadron was refurbished — rooms restructured, lights upgraded, duty officers reassigned. New security protocols were drawn. A revised code of conduct was institutionalised. Yet, the essence of training remained untouched. The NDA wasn’t creating exceptions — it was raising the bar.



Traditions were respected, but inclusivity was now part of that. Training began like a thunderclap. The first term was a

whirlwind of early wake-ups, punishing PT, relentless drills, academic lectures and quiet nights of aching limbs. The ‘drill Ustad’ — towering, sharp-eyed and fierce — became icons of fear and respect. They roared on the parade ground, yet shielded their cadets like elder brothers. PT instructors focused not just on physical toughness but on inner resilience, adapting routines to match cadets’ progress with silent encouragement. Academics brought a different kind of challenge. Held in the stately Sudan and Manoj Pandey Blocks, the classes offered everything from geopolitics and military history to physics and service fundamentals. Cadets rushed in breathless from morning PT, faces still wet from drills, uniforms slightly out of place. They tried to sit upright — but heads nodded off mid-lecture, not out of disinterest but sheer fatigue. The instructors understood. They’d been cadets too. Questions flew, notes scribbled furiously and quiet moments of clarity landed like victory. The Divisional Officers — often the first and most enduring influence on a cadet understood that these girls were not just joining a course; they were creating a legacy.

When a woman cadet faltered in a PT test or struggled with drill, it was the Divisional Officer who stood beside her — sometimes with quiet advice, sometimes with a stern word that stung, but strengthened. They guided them into the military way of life — adjusting to routines, accepting command structures and building mental toughness. Over time, these cadets didn’t just adapt — they flourished. They led drills, topped academics and inspired juniors. By the sixth term,

they weren’t seen as women cadets — they were seen as leaders. The rhythm of the NDA gradually became their own — etched in parade commands, squadron assemblies and the quiet rustle of fatigues at dawn. For the girls, it meant trading ponytails for close-cropped crew cuts. They picked up the drill vocabulary, learned to march with poise, and synced their energy to the beat of the Academy. In this routine, they found rhythm and resilience. The NDA has its own scent — the sharpness of polish, the earthy smell of monsoon drills, the metallic scent of rifle oil at the range and the steamy comfort of early morning chai. For the cadets, this rhythm is not imposed — it seeps in, until it becomes their own heartbeat. The NDA stopped feeling like an institution. It became home. When the girls were integrated into squadrons, the dynamics changed. The male cadets adjusted, watched, then welcomed. Together, they competed in games, parades and obstacle courses. They failed, they won, and they cheered each other. The squadron spirit didn’t shrink — it grew. Within squadrons, bonds evolved. As the terms rolled on, their bond extended beyond gender. Male course-mates, earlier unsure, now stood shoulder to shoulder with them in training and triumph. By the third term, jokes flew in the ante-rooms. By the fourth term, they were picking each other up after falls — literally and figuratively. By the sixth term, they weren’t just the first women batch — they were a united course, bound not just by shared memories but a shared spirit of excellence. When parents came during mid-terms, they found someone different. The girl who left with a small suitcase returned taller, tanned, and sharper in tone and thought. The transformation was unmistakable —





The practice of meditation is the practice of controlling ones thoughts and learning to focus your thoughts is the key for meditation.

You must focus on the subject you are meditating on — love, success, money, happiness and peace. Before we can start effective meditation, we have to make sure that our environment is conducive. You cannot get pure thoughts in a dirty, smelly, filthy room. If there is too much noise coming in from other rooms, you are setting yourself up for failure and will give up easily because you cannot concentrate.

**Designing a meditation room**

This can be an incredibly enjoyable and satisfying process. If you are fortunate enough to have a space that you can dedicate purely to the practice of meditation, then what you read here will help you to create your very own special sanctuary.

A meditation room is meant to be a place of relaxation and serenity. Any source of distraction, such as TV, computer and telephone, should be kept out of the space. Decorating your meditation room is a very personal thing, since everyone has different ways of relaxing. Your meditation room should be a room

that you can walk into and instantly begin to feel relaxed in. Everything in the room — the colors, the items, the decorations should help you with your daily meditation. Therefore, your deliberations for your own meditation room are important and vital for continued success with meditation.

**Location**

Choose a room that is as far from distraction as possible. If you live in an apartment or condo, use a space that doesn't share a wall with other units.

**Colour**

The colours you choose will have an effect on your perception of space in the room. For example — darker colours may feel very cozy, but they can make a room feel smaller. Lighter colours on the other hand will help open a room up, but may not have the warmth you seek. Paint the room a colour that is calming for you. Blues and yellows are believed to produce a calming effect. Greens and blues are great choices, but you wouldn't want to use red or orange — these colours are too stimulating and provocative. Most interior decorators will advise you to avoid the overuse of bold colors,

# Decorate your Meditation Room



however if a certain color resonates positively with you, then do not hesitate to defy convention and use as much of it as you like. Not all traditional decorating advice applies when you are designing a meditation room. Keep your desired room theme in mind and go with your instincts. Any kind of wall decorations or borders that will draw your attention away from your meditation should be removed.

**Lighting**

Use lighting that relaxes you. Fluorescent lights have been proven to cause anxiety and fatigue in many people, so avoid them. Natural light works well, or you can use candles to create soft light.

**No clutter**

Keep it simple. Don't clutter up your space. Decorating any room is always the fun part, but you don't want to go overboard with accessories in your meditation room. You should only surround yourself with beautiful and meaningful items, not clutter that will ultimately distract you from why you're there. Your room should include only those things that relax you. Candles, plants and fountains are

popular in meditation rooms. You may also want a CD player to play meditative music during your meditations.

**Comfortable seating**

Include comfortable seating. If you spend most of your time on the floor, make sure you have plenty of comfy cushions or a mat that can support your stance. If you sit or kneel, make sure you have the right bench or chair to use. You can meditate in peace only if you are physically comfortable. Meditation chairs are made for ultimate comfort, but some prefer the simplicity of a mat. If you have a serene atmosphere and a comfy seating place, your meditation sessions will be more effective.

**Paint and air quality**

If you are concerned about the purity of the air in your meditation room, please consider using low-emission paints so as to minimize the presence of chemical fumes. Low emission paints reduce this effect dramatically. If you intend to use any high-gloss paints in your meditation room, make sure you select a water-based variety. Oil-based high gloss paints look great, but they take days to dry properly and they can smell for weeks afterwards.

**Dream board**

You may also want to include a dream board that you've created. This is a large piece of paper or poster board filled with images that remind you of your goals and deepest desires. It's believed that if you meditate on these things and envision them in your life, they will come to you.

**Burn incense**

Scents play a big role in meditation. Smelling certain scents induce calming and relaxation and even lift stress. Smelling scents are also associated with memory enhancement. An important fact about scents, if you can't identify the ingredients in incense, then you do not want to purchase them. Also, your smoke should never be black, it should always be white. Sandalwood is the number one scent used by Buddhists; the aroma is warm, thick and rich, very nectarous and has slight undertones of wood, almost like good aged red wine. More common scents like Lavender help you relax and distress your mind and body. Violet or jasmine is very good as well, but they are sleep inducing, and you don't want



to fall asleep. Finally, when it comes to decorating a meditation room in your home, follow your personal style and tastes to create a relaxing atmosphere in which you feel comfortable.

## Themes for a Dream Bedrooms



Themed bedrooms are getting increasing popular. Themes are no longer restricted to just styling up an individual, but have become an intrinsic part of many homes. Creating interiors on a theme that reflects one's lifestyle and taste is becoming increasingly popular with people getting more and more involved in home decor.

In fact, one of the most popular trends in home decor today is 'theme bedrooms'. You can design a

'zen' bedroom, or a classical or retro bedroom - the options are plenty; all that is required is your imagination and creativity. Says interior designer Shilpi Dokahia, "Themed rooms have existed for quite sometime now. However, they have become extremely popular of late, as people are becoming more lifestyle and fashion conscious. Just like they know what to wear to work, to sleep, to party, they know how to decorate their personal spaces. They

no longer believe in living only for others, and have started living according to their taste and preferences."

Agrees interior designer Mallika Thakker, "Creating a theme bedroom allows you to make your own dream zone to escape into. It creates a different destination, and gives us a break from the everyday mundane world that we live in. One can extend their imagination and creativity to no limit to personalise their bedroom. It is the room, where one spends a lot of time in, and the surroundings contribute a lot to the comfort." Just like changing fashion, people are more clued into changing interior trends too. They know that interior is bold or subtle, ethnic or contemporary, theatrical or classy, Mediterranean or South African, colour coordinated or contrasted and so on. So is the awareness that the moment you enter a house, it shouts out a specific theme, either through the wall colours or wallpapers, or through the accessories like the lamp shades, upholstery, cushion covers and carpets too. Interior designer Akshika Luthra Hemnani attributes this to the excessive travelling that people do these days. "The world is becoming smaller and smaller, and so people are getting exposed to a lot new styles and themes. They are exposed to varied eye-catching home decors at the places they travel to, and want to replicate this in their own space, especially the bedroom, which is an intimate place."

The Zen theme, Retro theme, Moroccan theme, the evergreen Classical and Earthy themes are few of the most popular themes today. In fact, rather than doing up the entire room on a theme, people are using accessories to create theme look. Explains interior designer Bindiya Chabbria, "Interiors has now become subjective.

It's got to do a lot with your own taste and so emphasising on accessories for a theme is the best option. Not only is it easy to create a theme for your room using accessories, it can be changed from time to time making it affordable and cost effective. So, using cushions, carpets, curtains and even upholstery, you can give a different look to your room."

### Eco-chic decor on a budget

Sustainable and eco-friendly decorating ideas for your home.

**Upcycled furniture**

Scour secondhand furniture markets for material to create fresh furniture for your home. Two bookshelves can be joined to make a table. Old wooden chairs and shelves can be sandpapered and polished (or repainted) to look fresh.

**Bottle vase showpiece**

Create a unique centerpiece for the living room without spending thousands of rupees. Collect old glass bottles in different colours, shapes and sizes. Place them together on a wooden tray. Fill some of them with flowers, dried leaves and potpourri.

**Plant screen**

Want your bedroom to have an open view and still maintain your privacy? Place potted plants by the window to create a natural screen from prying eyes. The pure air filtration that the plants provide is an added bonus.

**Wine cork trivet**

With a little inventiveness, you can use corks of wine bottles to make a trivet. A trivet is an object placed between a serving bowl and a dining table to protect the tabletop from heat or water damage. To make one, collect 50 to 60 wine corks and



arrange them upright in a circle. Buy a medium-sized metal clamp from a hardware store and bind the corks tight to make an ecofriendly trivet!

**Glam bathroom**

You've picked the most gorgeous combination of tiles for the bathroom, then why settle for harsh fluorescent lights? Rig up an old chandelier from a used furniture market and light it up with energy-efficient LED bulbs that give off a warm glow.

**Quilt of scarves**

Don't reject old woollen scarves after they've been worn out. Line up a few that have identical colours or patterns and stitch them together by hand to make a scarf quilt for wintry nights.



# Congress leader slams PM over terror response credit: Not a single man's job

**Congress leader and Member of Parliament Renuka Chowdhury highlighted that the fight against terrorism is not a single person's achievement but a collective effort by every Indian.**

New Delhi. Congress MP Renuka Chowdhury on Friday emphasised that the response against terrorism is a collective effort and questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise that he will raze the hideout of the terror mastermind. "This is not a single man's achievement. It is the collective achievement of every Indian. Please do not take individual credit for political gain," Chowdhury told news agency ANI. She highlighted that the fight against terrorism is not a single person's achievement but a collective effort by every Indian. "How can this be your (PM Modi) promise alone? Were you aware of the Pahalgam attack beforehand? It is our armed forces who have given a fitting response—give them the credit. It is the citizens who continue to live in border areas despite constant threats—there are people who have stood firm in the face of fear," she further added.



**Congress MP said fight against terrorism is collective, not individual achievement. She questioned PM's promise to raze terror mastermind's hideout alone. Chowdhury credited armed forces and border citizens for strong response.**

Addressing a rally in Kanpur on Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned Pakistan that India will not differentiate

between state and non-state actors when it comes to terror and those responsible will be held accountable and punished, regardless of their location or affiliation, an ANI report mentioned.

"If I say this straight in Kanpuriya, dushman kahin bhi ho honk diya jayega," said PM Modi.

As per the ANI report, Prime Minister also laid down India's stand and its plan of action against terrorism, saying that any terrorist attack that happens, India will respond strongly to every terrorist attack, with the timing and terms of the response decided by the Armed Forces.

"In its fight against terrorism, India has decided on three rules: every terrorist attack will be answered strongly. The army will decide on how to answer and in what way to answer. The conditions to respond to a terrorist attack will also be decided by the army," said PM Modi in his speech.

## Ex-MLA Gets 6 Months In Jail For Threatening To Blow Up Parliament



New Delhi. A Delhi court on Friday sentenced former Madhya Pradesh MLA Kishore Samrite to six months in jail for threatening to blow up Parliament in September 2022 over his 'unfulfilled demands'. Special Judge Vikas Dhull noted that the threatening letter and the suspicious substance were sent to Parliament, "which is the temple of Indian democracy".

"It is a forum where issues of all hues and pertaining to national interest are expected to be discussed with decorum and in deference to public aspirations. For the highest contemplative body of the country to be subjected to a threat of being blown up with dynamite and the threatening letter to actually be accompanied by a suspicious substance is indeed a grave circumstance which requires an appropriate sentence," he said.

It is equally pertinent that the convict is not just an ordinary citizen, but a former MLA from Lanji in Madhya Pradesh's Balaghat district, the judge said. "Being most acquainted and sensitised to the security of Parliamentary establishments and more so to the sanctity of such representative institutions, his dispatch of such a threatening letter to the Parliament acted to normalise the threat of violence towards the elected Houses of the Parliament. If such conduct is not deterred, it raises the prospect of others emulating the course taken by Samrite for voicing his dissent towards government policies. Perhaps, every such threat would not be accompanied by harmless substances," the judge said. The judge also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on Samrite. A parcel containing some suspicious substance related to explosives, besides an Indian flag, and a copy of the Constitution was received through speed post at the Parliament House on September 16, 2022.

## Delhi sees first COVID-19 death amid new 294 active cases, India's count climbs to 2,710

New Delhi. Delhi has reported its first COVID-19-related death after a 60-year-old woman died due to the infection as India grapples with a recent surge in infections. Health officials confirmed that the woman was admitted to the hospital with severe abdominal pain and vomiting. The patient was diagnosed with Acute Intestinal Obstruction and an emergency laparotomy (abdominal surgery). Critically, routine post-surgery testing revealed her positive COVID-19 status, despite her having exhibited no prior symptoms of the virus before her hospitalisation.

This tragic death comes as the national capital experiences an uptick in cases, with 56 new infections reported in the last 24 hours, bringing Delhi's active caseload to 294. Across India, the situation also shows a concerning trend. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) data indicates a total of 2,710 COVID-19 cases nationwide, with 511 new infections and 7 fatalities recorded in the past 24 hours alone. The current spike in cases is being led by Kerala, which has reported a significant 227 fresh infections, pushing its active caseload to 1,147, nearly half of the country's total. West Bengal has added 59 new cases, increasing its active tally to 116, while Maharashtra, a state historically impacted by previous waves, reported 84 new cases, bringing its total infections this year to 681 and its active cases to 467.

Health authorities are closely monitoring the situation, particularly the emergence of subvariants. According to May 2025 classifications by the World Health Organisation (WHO), subvariants L.7 and NB.1.8.1 are categorised as Variants Under Monitoring. While not yet deemed Variants of Concern or Interest, these strains are suspected of contributing to the rising infections observed across India, China, and other parts of Asia.

## Ravi Shankar Prasad condemns anti-India protests by Pak nationals in Copenhagen, calls it 'sign of desperation'

New Delhi. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Ravi Shankar Prasad has strongly criticised a group of Pakistani nationals who had raised anti-India slogans outside a venue in Copenhagen, Denmark where an Indian parliamentary delegation was interacting with the members of Indian diaspora. While he was addressing the Indian community, he described the protests as a sign of desperation, that the demonstrators were acting under directives of handlers in Pakistan. He said that such actions are reflecting Pakistan's opposed stance against India. Prasad also drew attention to the suffering of people in Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Balochistan and that there are many who are desperate to come to India in the face of the ongoing subjugation and the inhumane treatment that they face. He further pointed out that Pakistan is experiencing significant turmoil and that India has fought four traditional wars, none of which has been initiated by India. He also highlighted the fact that Pakistan had also lost those wars. He also added, that the Pakistan envisioned by Jinnah has now become a military run enterprise.

The Indian parliamentary delegation in Copenhagen comprises of members such as BJP MP Daggubati Purandeswari, Samik Bhattacharya, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi, Congress MPs Ghulam Ali Khatana and Amar Singh, former Union Minister MJ Akbar, and former Ambassador Pankaj Saran.

Priyanka Chaturvedi had emphasised the all the political parties need to stand united in combating the issue as contentious as terrorism. They all, need to stand together as Indians, despite their existing political differences. She also criticised the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for providing financial assistance to Pakistan.

## IMD sounds 'orange alert' as heavy rains and hailstorm lash Himachal Pradesh

New Delhi. Himachal Pradesh is on high alert, with the meteorological department issuing an 'orange warning' for heavy rainfall and a 'yellow warning' for thunderstorms accompanied by gusty winds across isolated areas for two days from Saturday. The warnings come after the state experienced significant disruption on Friday morning, particularly in its capital, Shimla. Friday began with a hailstorm, followed by a 40-minute heavy downpour that brought the city to a standstill. Dark convective clouds drastically reduced visibility to mere meters, forcing vehicles to navigate slowly with headlights on.

School children faced considerable inconvenience,



with buses running late and many getting drenched while waiting. The intense rainfall also led to choked drains overflowing and garbage scattering across the roads, painting a chaotic scene. Beyond Shimla, heavy rainfall was also recorded in Solan and Mandi. Since Thursday evening, Rajgarh topped the charts with 70 mm of rain, followed by significant downpours in Ghaghas (47 mm), Jubbarhatti (46.1 mm), Kasauli (43 mm), and Dharampur (32.4 mm).

Shimla itself received 29.7 mm, with Murari Devi and Baggi also reporting substantial amounts. Concurrently, gusty winds ranging from 39 to 61 kilometres per hour swept across locations like Bilaspur, Seobagh, Bajaura, and Kukumeri.

Thunderstorms lashed numerous areas, including Kangra, Bhuntar, and Palampur, while hailstorms were specifically observed in Shimla. Looking ahead, the weather office has issued an 'orange' alert for heavy rain on May 31 for Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, and Mandi districts, extending to Shimla, Solan, and Sirmour districts on June 1.

## Name mix-up: Nitesh who trespassed got bail, but Nitesh who raped was released

New Delhi. A case of mistaken identity led to the release of the wrong person from jail in Faridabad and the suspension of five employees as a result. The Neemka Jail housed two men whose names were the same - Nitesh - and so were their fathers, but their crimes were polar opposites. One was charged with trespassing while the other was accused of repeatedly raping a minor boy. The jail administration was supposed to release the Nitesh charged with trespassing but instead mistakenly let the other go, news agency PTI reported.

A search is underway to catch the rape accused, with Sadar Station House Officer telling PTI that he will be caught soon.

Nitesh Pandey, 27, was arrested in October 2021 for raping a nine-year-old boy in Faridabad. He is the



son of one Ravinder Pandey. The other Nitesh, 24, whose father's name is also

**One Nitesh was a rape accused while the other was charged with trespassing. Faridabad court granted Nitesh charged with trespassing bail. Police launched search to catch rape accused, five jail employees suspended.**

Ravinder, was jailed on Sunday on

charges of house trespass and assault.

The 24-year-old Nitesh was granted bail on Monday by the Faridabad Court Chief Judicial Magistrate. This man didn't have a surname as opposed to the rape accused - a factor evident enough to avoid confusion. Now, the jail administration has claimed that Nitesh Pandey managed to obtain his release by "hiding his identity", PTI reported. "We have

lodged a complaint with the Sadar Police Station against Nitesh Pandey for obtaining his release by hiding his identity," PTI quoted jail deputy superintendent Vikram Singh as saying. Meanwhile, the five employees who were suspended following the mistaken release happened after an internal probe conducted by jail superintendent Harendra Singh.

## Gaurav Gogoi slams Assam government's arms license policy near border areas

**Gogoi termed the policy "highly condemnable" and accused the ruling BJP government of promoting a strategy that prioritises weapons over the essential needs of the people.**

New Delhi. Assam Congress President and Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi on Friday came down heavily on the Assam Government's recent decision to grant arms licenses to civilians residing in border and remote areas. Gogoi termed the policy "highly condemnable" and accused the ruling BJP government of promoting a strategy that prioritises weapons over the essential needs of the people.

Speaking to the media, Gogoi said, "People of Assam want water, employment, education, and medical facilities, not guns." He argued that the controversial move, instead of protecting citizens, may lead to an increase in fake encounters, citing recent Supreme Court criticism over



alleged police excesses in Assam.

Gogoi warned that such a policy could be misused to arm workers aligned with the BJP and RSS, potentially endangering innocent businessmen and shopkeepers in the region.

"Under the new policy, more fake encounters can take place. The honest shopkeepers there, the businessmen there will face difficulties in the days to

come. All these guns will go to BJP and RSS workers. The current government has made a highly condemnable policy. They should roll-back the policy," said Gogoi.

The criticism follows a May 29 Cabinet decision under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to approve a Special Scheme for Grant of Arms Licenses.

The initiative targets original inhabitants and indigenous Indian citizens in vulnerable and border areas, with the stated goal of enhancing personal security and deterring unlawful threats.

Defending the decision, CM Sarma claimed the policy would empower communities to safeguard themselves in high-risk zones. The policy was approved during a cabinet meeting held at the Lok Sewa Bhawan in Guwahati.

## 5 killed as heavy rain lashes Northeast, red alert issued in Assam

New Delhi. The monsoon continues to advance across India, triggering heavy rain in several states and affecting thousands. From Kerala to the Northeast, widespread rainfall has cost lives in multiple states. Heavy rain created mayhem in Mizoram, where at least three houses collapsed in Lawngtlai town and landslides blocked roads across the state. One man died and another was injured after a wall collapsed in Aizawl, while several homes were damaged or swept away in Aizawl and Champhai districts.

In Tripura, a 16-year-old boy drowned, and 57 families were shifted to relief camps after rain flooded low-lying areas. Meanwhile, Meghalaya reported three deaths - a woman died in a landslide, a man drowned, and a teenager was killed by a falling tree. Over 1,000 people in 25 villages were affected by floods and landslides.

A red alert for very heavy rain was sounded across Assam, where flash floods and severe waterlogging disrupted life in cities like Guwahati. In Sikkim, heavy rains caused landslides in the Theeng and

Chungthang areas. According to the Mangan district administration, many properties have been damaged. In Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the state recorded its highest May rainfall in 125 years, with 28 districts receiving more than normal precipitation. Notably, a landslide amid heavy rain on Friday morning hit a house in Karnataka's Mangaluru, killing two people, including a 3-year-old child. Kerala on Friday saw strong winds and heavy rain flooding homes and roads, especially in Thrissur, Kannur and Kasaragod. Power lines were damaged, uprooting trees and forcing many to relocate. In Himachal Pradesh, hailstorms lashed Shimla and the IMD issued orange and yellow alerts for the next two days.

Now, let us take a look at the region-wise forecast-

### SOUTH INDIA

The region will see widespread rainfall with



thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds (40-50 kmph) over Kerala and Coastal Karnataka from May 30 to June 1. Similar conditions are likely in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Coastal Andhra Pradesh and parts of Telangana on May 30 and 31. Extremely heavy rain is likely over Kerala and Mahe on May 30. Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Interior Karnataka and Rayalaseema may also experience isolated heavy rainfall through June 2.

### NORTHWEST INDIA

Scattered to fairly widespread rainfall is

expected with thunderstorms and gusty winds (40-50 kmph) over Jammu-Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi. A thundersquall with wind speeds of 50-60 kmph is likely over parts of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh on May 30 and June 1. Isolated heavy rainfall may occur in Jammu-Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh on May 30 and 31. Dust storms are likely over Rajasthan and parts of Northwest India from June 2 to 5.

### NORTHEAST INDIA

Widespread light to moderate rainfall is likely to persist across the Northeast over the next seven days. Isolated heavy to very heavy rain is forecast over Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura through June 5. On May 30 and June 1, Assam and Meghalaya are expected to witness intense spells, with exceptionally heavy rainfall (above 30 cm) likely over Meghalaya on May 30.



# How will you style your Coffee table?

People are styling their coffee tables in variety of ways and making them attractive as ever. While books is one of the most common things to decorate the table with, here we give you some ideas on how you can make this area and the coffee table lively and attractive:

**1) Candlestands and a tray**  
The market is going crazy with candles and stands to keep them and so decorating your



**Coffee Table is that special area in your house where you love to enjoy your coffee in luxury or browse through a book at any time of the day.**

table with a beautiful candlestand, which can be lit in the evening will bring joy. A tray should be nice to decorate with flowers or artefacts.

**2) Your choice of drinks and bar**  
You can easily put a tray if the table is small and if it is big, you can make a mini bar area on the table. The tray can have your list of favourite liquor and a pair of glasses, opener and ice tub, so you are ready to party.

**3) Coffee Table books**  
A coffee table is incomplete without books and that's why you have coffee table books for this purpose. While you can easily put them neatly in an orderly manner on the table, you can also display some of your favourite books in such a way, that they reflect your choice and gives a reason to converse with your guests.

**4) Small boxes**  
Small decorative boxes that can have your remote control, emergency kits, pair of spectacles, pen and paper, napkins, coasters can be kept in them. This will help not keep these things outside just anywhere in your



room.

**5) Flower vases**  
Flower vases are to be chosen according to the size of the room. Not too big or not too small. If possible fresh flowers add to the fragrance of the room, but if not possible arrange for a few artificial flowers which come in huge variety these days.

**6) Two coffee tables**  
When the room is big, you can add one more coffee table and use that one for putting artefacts or relaxing your legs.

**7) Round tray on a rectangle table**  
This will look ideal when the table is small and you want to decorate it with a tray and some interesting things on it.

**8) Personal style statement**  
The table can also have a box that keeps your painting brushes or choice of pens which you require to write when you sit down near it. You can also keep your favourite piece of artificial jewellery or any handicraft piece that you just bought.

**9) Table cloth** Table cloth is not just meant for the table. If you come across a nice earthy coloured cloth, which will add style, then it is ideal investing in one.

## How rattan furniture from Thailand is making waves

It is not about spending a leisure holiday in Thailand now! While people discuss adventure and beauty of Thailand, they are also now going there to buy home decor and furniture. Bangkok has become popular for its Rattan furniture and you find designer homes housing a lot of this Rattan furniture from Thailand.



Rattan is a palm and grows in the tropical regions of Asia, Africa and Australia. Rattans are used for making furniture and baskets. It can accept paint and stains and so it is available in many styles and can be moulded into a variety of styles. More durable than bamboo, and suitable in garden environment, people in India purchase the furniture mainly for rooftop gardens and their drawing rooms. Rattan is also used for sofas, minibars, chairs, cupboards and more.

In addition, Thailand is also popular for transformation of natural materials such as bamboo, rattan, para wood, teakwood, leather and water hyacinth into fabulous and functional contemporary pieces. Crafactor and Yothaka are the two leading brands that set the trend for both materials and designs each year. Agal decor, Korakot International, Papaya Vintage shop and Yothaka are also some of the important places for buying furniture in Thailand.

## 10 tips to attract Wealth with vastu

Ever imagine living in a world which is not materialistic? Well, had that been true it would've been the ideal place to live in, but sadly money does form a very important part of our lives and if you are struggling to hold onto it, then you ought to read



through these amazing Mahavastu tips to increase your wealth, shared by Vastu guru Khushdeep Bansal.

1. Five elements or Panchtattva and the 16 Mahavastu zones determine how you think, react.
2. Vastu-perfect homes attract wealth.
3. In the north vastu zone, ensure that blue is the main colour; avoid red shade, designating space for kitchen and toilet. Also, don't place a dustbin, broom, washing machine, mixer-grinder here. The kitchen represents fire and with wrong placements, you'll end up diluting money, opportunities and career.
4. Keep a money plant in a green vase, or hang a scenery showing a lush field or thick forest in north zone. These will attract money and better career opportunities.
5. The north west vastu zone is the one which gets you support (financial) of banks and relevant persons in your ventures
6. A beautiful entrance brings happiness and prosperity, and helps in appreciation of an individual's value in the society. If it is a sloppy and unkempt one, troubles will hound you.

For instance, the south-west door will bring in debts, loans and financial problems. A north vastu entrance

brings good career opportunities and money. The east vastu entrance brings peace. The west entrance brings in wealth and prosperity. The south entrance is also a beneficial one.

7. Keep the kitchen in the south east or south south-east. The main colour should be pastel shades of red, orange and pink. Keep the safe, work table, drawing room in the northern areas for a healthy money flow.
8. In the West, the main colours are white and yellow. This is another location for the safe. Use round shapes as these represent the earth element here. The west south-west is the zone of savings. Keep this clean and use as a place for studies. Keep money and valuables in an iron safe in this area— this will ensure your wealth remains safe.
9. Overall, see if there is a harmonious and balanced energy cycle in your house.
10. Get your house thoroughly checked using the 4-Step Mahavastu method. Discover which areas have an imbalance and whether zones are cut, extended or missing. These areas can be treated with simple vastu cures using colours, lights, symbols, rangoli and plants.

## How to decorate your house with purple

**To add some colour to your house, there is nothing better than a touch of purple to make your abode look brighter. Here's how...**

Purple is considered to be the current colour of the season. There are so many ways you can add a hint of this hue to your room.

**Living area:** You can have curtains in light or dark purple. However, you can also pair white curtains along with purple upholstery. A combination of purple, pink and white floral designs look great.

**Bedroom:** Your bedsheet or bedcover can be in purple or mauve. Alternatively, you can also have a purple wallpaper in your bedroom to make the whole room look soothing.

**Dining area:** You can have a table runner in purple or possibly also have seating in the dining room in shades of purple.

**Tips —**  
- Purple looks best when combined with patterns in white.  
- Make sure that you do not overdo with the whole purple look.

- While choosing a shade of purple, always go with a milder hue. This way you won't go wrong with the colour. Other colours you can choose — - Pink is another colour that looks good as a colour option just as purple. - If you do not want bright shades, you can alternatively select a sombre shade of green as well.





# Govt cuts import duty on crude edible oils to 10% to cool prices

**New Delhi.** The Centre on Friday reduced the basic custom duty on crude palm oil, crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil to 10 per cent, a move aimed at bringing down the retail prices of cooking oils and protecting domestic processors. Earlier, the duty on these three crude edible oils was 20 per cent. India imports more than 50 per cent of its domestic edible oil requirement. India imported 159.6 lakh tonnes of edible oils during the 2023-24 oil marketing year (November to October), valuing Rs 1.32 lakh crore. A notification in this regard was issued by the finance ministry on Friday with immediate effect.

When contacted, Union Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said the government has slashed the basic custom duty on crude edible oils to 10 per cent from 20 per cent. Industry body Solvent Extractors Association of India's (SEA) executive director B V Mehta said the basic custom duty on crude palm oil, crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil has been reduced to 10 per cent from the earlier 20 per cent. The effective import duty (including the basic custom duty and other charges) on these three products will now be 16.5 per cent as against the 27.5 per cent earlier. The basic custom duty on refined oil remains unchanged at 32.5 per cent. At present, the effective duty on refined oils is 35.75 per cent. Industry bodies SEA and the Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) welcomed the decision. They have been demanding increasing the duty difference between the crude and refined edible oils to protect the domestic processors. In a late-night statement, SEA president Sanjeev Asthana said, "The government's decision to increase the duty differential between crude and refined oils from 8.25 per cent to 19.25 per cent is a bold and timely move. It will discourage imports of refined palmolein and shift demand back to crude palm oil, thereby revitalising the domestic refining sector."

# Layoffs Strike Again! THIS Tech Giant Lays Off Many Employees Due To ...; Name Of The Company Is... — Its Not Infosys, Google, TCS

**New Delhi.** The tech industry in recent months has faced tough times with major companies like Google, Microsoft and IBM laying off hundreds of employees. Now, LinkedIn is also joining this trend, cutting 281 jobs across California, according to TOI reports. This move follows Microsoft, LinkedIn's parent company, which announced a layoff of 6,000 employees—about 3 per cent of its workforce—in early May 2025. LinkedIn has informed its employees about the layoffs through an official WARN notice filed with local claims. Most of the job cuts will affect engineers and staff in other departments. About 159 positions are being cut in Mountain View, 60 in San Francisco, 23 in Sunnyvale, and 11 in Carpinteria. In addition, 28 remote workers based in California have also lost their jobs. Software engineers faced the biggest impact in LinkedIn's recent job cuts with over 71 positions, including senior roles, being eliminated. In April, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said that AI was behind these layoffs, showing how artificial intelligence is replacing some human jobs—especially in software development. In fact, AI now writes up to 30 per cent of the company's code.

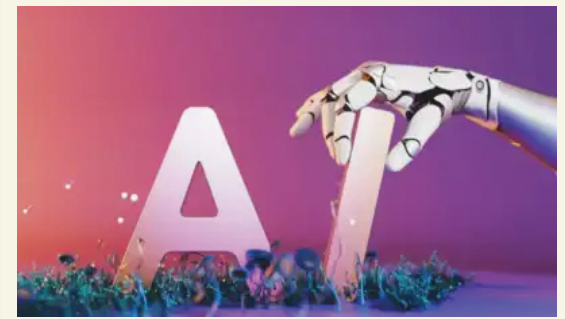
**Wider Impact Across Departments**

The layoffs also affected specialists in fields like machine learning, DevOps, and systems infrastructure. Other impacted roles include deal desk strategists, product managers, designers, and various professionals across departments. So far, neither LinkedIn nor Microsoft has officially commented on these job cuts. No clarity on total job cuts yet

The report does not reveal the full scale of LinkedIn's layoffs. While the company is headquartered in Sunnyvale and Mountain View and has offices around the world, details on the total number of impacted employees are still unclear.

# Government selects 3 more teams for foundation models of AI

**NEW DELHI.** India is broadening its efforts to develop AI foundation models. After Sarvam AI, the government on Friday selected three more teams - Soket AI, Gan AI, and Gnani AI - for building indigenous AI models. IT and electronics minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the country has 367 data sets loaded on AI Kosh. "So the app ecosystem is also now developing. In a sense, the entire ecosystem is now getting built." Govt has also announced the availability of 16,000 more GPUs, which would take the compute facility available to startups and



researchers to 34,000. Vaishnaw said significant progress was made on the India AI Mission, with a focus on the "democratisation of technology". The compute facility, supercharged with 34,000 GPUs, will enable India to develop the AI ecosystem in a big way. "I would like to make some mention about the three teams that were selected today. Like Sarvam, these three teams also have a very big target ahead of them. Whichever sector they focus on, they must be among the top five in the world," Vaishnaw said.

# Govt Succeeds In Keeping Fiscal Deficit In Check At 4.8% Of GDP For Fy25

## Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday approved its highest ever dividend of a staggering Rs 2.69 lakh crore to the Narendra Modi government.

**New Delhi.** The government has succeeded in meeting its fiscal deficit target for 2024-25, fixed at 4.8 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the revised budget estimate for the year, data released by the Contoller General of Accounts on Friday showed.

According to the CGA data, the Central government collected Rs 30.36 lakh crore as revenue from both tax and non-tax receipts, which works out to 98.3 per



cent of the revised Budget Estimates (RE). The Central government's expenditure during 2024-25 was Rs 46.56 lakh crore or 98.7 per cent of the RE. The capital expenditure on building physical infrastructure, such as ports, highways, and railways, was Rs 10.52

lakh crore, up from Rs 9.49 lakh crore in the previous year. This reflects the government's investment in bid ticket projects to spur growth and create more jobs. The Centre's fiscal deficit for 2023-24 was 5.63 per cent of the GDP. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has fixed a

glide path of lowering the fiscal deficit to 4.4 per cent for 2025-26. A declining fiscal deficit reflects the strengthening of the fundamentals of the economy and paves the way for growth with price stability. It leads to a reduction in borrowing by the government, thus leaving more funds in the banking sector for lending to corporates and consumers, which leads to higher economic growth.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday approved its highest ever dividend of a staggering Rs 2.69 lakh crore to the Narendra Modi government. The dividend payout is a robust 27.4 per cent increase over the corresponding figure of Rs 2.1 lakh crore for the previous year. The record dividend will help to keep the fiscal deficit in check while enabling the Finance Ministry to continue with its expenditure on big infrastructure projects to spur growth and social welfare schemes to uplift the poor in 2025-26.

# IndiGo to cut ties with Turkish Airlines amid row over Ankara's support to Pak

**New Delhi.** IndiGo will terminate its leasing agreement with Turkish Airlines by August 31, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said on Friday, amid rising concerns over Turkey's recent political stance backing Pakistan. The decision comes after the airline was granted a final three-month extension to avoid disruption in passenger services.

Currently, IndiGo operates two Boeing 777-300ER aircraft on a damp lease from Turkish Airlines, which it uses for direct flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Istanbul. A damp lease is a type of aircraft leasing where the airline rents a plane along with the cockpit crew from another airline, but uses its own cabin crew. IndiGo's leasing agreement with Turkish Airlines was originally due to expire on May 31. IndiGo had requested a six-month extension, but

this was turned down by the regulator. In a statement, the aviation regulator said the three-month extension was "one-time, last and final" and was given "based on the



undertaking from the airline that they will terminate the damp lease... and shall not seek any further extension." The move follows Turkey's public support for Pakistan and its condemnation of India's air strikes on

terror camps earlier this month, straining diplomatic ties. The backlash has also included the aviation security watchdog BCAS revoking the security clearance for Turkish firm Celebi Airport Services in the interest of national security. Travel associations and online portals have since issued advisories against visiting Turkey.

While IndiGo has defended its partnership with Turkish Airlines in the past, highlighting its benefits for Indian travellers and contributions to aviation jobs and connectivity, CEO Pieter Elbers said on Friday, "We are compliant today and we will continue to comply with any government regulations." Last week, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoohan Naidu said the ministry was reviewing inputs from IndiGo and security agencies before making a final decision on the matter.

# Transparency and Integrity Are Crucial...': FM Sitharaman Reacts To CBIC Reply On GST Graft Allegation

**New Delhi.** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said that providing services to taxpayers is the government's duty, and this must be done while maintaining transparency and integrity. She was reacting to the CBIC's detailed response to a GST corruption allegation on the 'X' platform. "A detailed response from CBIC. To provide service to the taxpayer is our duty. While so serving the taxpayers, transparency and integrity are crucial in earning their trust and confidence. Confident that the Board and the field formations will remain sensitive and responsive," FM Nirmala Sitharaman said in a post on X on Saturday, May 31. What's The Issue? Vinod Gupta, founder and director of VG Learning Destination, shared a post on LinkedIn highlighting bribery in GST registrations. He said he applied for GST registration number of a firm 20 days ago. "Objections started coming in. Till today, the number has not been allotted," he wrote. He said both giving and taking bribery are crimes. "I know I will get it (GST registration number after committing

the crime)," he wrote. Raja wrote, "CBIC has no idea of ground reality of corruption in GST Registrations. Their Executive Officers are so corrupt that even VG Sir has to vent out his frustration. Better Top level Officers take control of Registrations to save the



country from corruption. Raise your voice before it's too late. Please Stop your work for few seconds and raise your voice against corruption in GST." What CBIC Said The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), which is the apex body on indirect taxes like GST, responded to Raja's post on X with a detailed clarification. It said the ARN

(Application Reference Number) was pending for reply from taxpayer side and it was duly informed to the taxpayer. The application will be processed by the Delhi GST authorities upon receipt of the pending information. The CBIC wrote: "Dear Abhishek Rajaram, The fact of the case of Shri Vinod Gupta who wrote about GST registration issue on LinkedIn are as below: The application was filed this week on 26th May (Monday) which was assigned to Delhi State GST. The Central GST authorities had no role in this matter. As per Delhi State GST authorities, the case was processed immediately and a query was raised about the missing designation of the person who has signed the Rent Agreement on behalf of the Company. At this stage the ARN was pending for reply from taxpayer side and it was duly informed to the taxpayer. The application will be processed by the Delhi GST authorities upon receipt of the pending information. You are kindly requested to not circulate wrong information on the social media without knowing the facts."



account of revival in core sector in Q4 as evident from high frequency indicators. The overall growth in capital formation for FY25 now stands 7.1 per cent. India's economy grew by 7.4 per cent in Q4 FY25 as against 8.4 per cent growth in same quarter last fiscal. Riding on Q4 numbers, the annual FY25 growth is estimated at 6.5 per cent. Almost all sectors exhibited better growth numbers in Q4 FY25. While industry grew by 6.5 per cent, the services sector grew by 7.3 per cent in Q4. Within industry during Q4, construction sector grew by whopping 10.8 per cent (6-quarters high) and manufacturing sector increased by 4.8 per cent. The private consumption maintained its health run in Q4 although there was sequential slow rate of growth in Q4. Overall, the private consumption registered a growth of 7.2 per cent for FY25. The export demand was healthy for whole year, registering a growth of 6.3 per cent, while the imports contracted for the whole year by 3.7 per cent. According to the SBI report, this growth was front-loaded because of export push amidst US tariffs uncertainty.

# Significant financial changes that you could face from tomorrow June 1

## There will be momentous financial changes from the first day of June 2025 over a wide array of issues from credit card rules to EPFO from companies issuing Form 16 to rate cuts in fixed deposits by a bank.

**Kolkata.** June can be a very significant month for the entire country financially. The Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India is supposed to meet on June 4-6. With inflation under control — in fact, it is under the RBI target of 4% — many analysts think the RBI could go for a further slashing of Repo Rate by 25 basis points. If it turns out to be correct, it would be the third consecutive trimming of the key policy rate in this country that could drive down both the lending rate and the deposit rates in banks and NBFCs. While that will further slash EMIs on a

variety of loans and spur aggregate consumption, a decline in deposit rates will also put those who depend on steady interest income to meet their regular expenses — typically the elders and retirees — in difficulty. But there are other financial changes too that will be applicable from the very first day of the new month. Let's have a look at those.

### Form 16 deadline

For salaried persons the first step of filing income tax returns (ITR) begins with their employers distributing Form 16, which contains the details of income tax deductions from his/her salary. June 15 is the deadline by which all employers who deduct tax to issue this essential document to their employees. Changes in credit card rules

Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank could be tweaking credit card rules for their customers. From the first day of June, Kotak Mahindra Bank is introducing caps on reward points across domains such as fuel, rent, utility bills and even insurance and 1% transaction fee will be levied on fuel payments that rise above the threshold every month. There will be an impact on the wallet since payments for rent and education will

entail 1% charge irrespective of the amount. HDFC Bank is set to revise lounge access policy for Tata Neu Infinity and Tata Neu Plus cardholders from June 10. Access to lounges will be offered via vouchers based on spending. From June 20, there will be phased changes to



REWARDS Credit Card of Axis Bank. It will impact cashback, reward points, lounge access etc.

### EPFO 3.0 rollout

The transition of once fuddy duddy EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) that began several months ago could reach some sort of a culmination in June with the launch EPFO 3.0. One of the services that EPFO

will be providing is that it will begin instant PF withdrawals through ATMs and UPI and very fast processing of claims. One can also expect a faster and more efficient grievance redressal system.

### New Rule for overnight mutual funds

Market regulator SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) has announced a revision of cut-off timings for overnight mutual fund schemes. The new cut-off time from June 1 is 3 pm for offline transactions and 7 pm for online transactions. In short, it means transactions made after this time will be processed on the following working day and it can have an impact on the NAV at which the transaction will be conducted.

### Aadhaar and LPG prices

Oil marketing companies usually revise LPG prices from the first day of every month. Moreover, June 14 has been set as the last day for free Aadhaar detail updates via the myAadhaar portal. Once this deadline is missed, one has to pay Rs 25 online and Rs 50 at Aadhaar centres for any update one needs to carry out.



NEWS BOX

Ashwani Kumar's growth impresses Jayawardene: He's handled every challenge well

NEW DELHI. Mumbai Indians (MI) head coach Mahela Jayawardene was full of praise for left-arm seamer Ashwani Kumar, following his marvellous show in the ongoing season of the Indian Premier League 2025 (IPL 2025). Kumar has scalped nine wickets from six innings so far at an average of 19.66. He registered figures of 1/28 in 3.3 overs in the Eliminator fixture against Gujarat Titans (GT) and dismissed Shahrukh Khan.

Kumar made his debut in the ongoing season against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and picked up 4/24 in three overs, winning the Player of the Match award. Amid Ashwani's rapid rise, Mahela Jayawardene extolled the 23-year-old seamer, mentioning his ability to rise to every challenge.

"Ashwani is a great talent. This season, he's handled every challenge we've thrown at him really well. He hasn't played much state cricket, but the skill was obvious when we first saw him. We've given him simple plans to avoid confusion, and he's had strong support from players like Boom (Bumrah), Deepak, and Hardik. Execution under pressure is what matters, and he's done that," Jayawardene said in the post-match press conference. Furthermore, Jayawardene said that it's just the beginning and there's a lot more to come from Ashwani.

"Even in the GT game when he came on as a



concussion sub, and in the KKR game, he bowled brilliantly. We use him tactically based on opposition, and he continues to learn. This is just the beginning — there's much more to come from Ashwani, and we're committed to grooming him the right way," he added. Ashwani also scalped 2/28 in Match 56 against Gujarat Titans (GT), albeit in a losing cause. Meanwhile, Mumbai Indians beat GT by 20 runs in the Eliminator fixture. After opting to bat first, MI posted a massive score of 228/5 in their allotted 20 overs as Rohit Sharma played a magnificent innings of 81 (50).

In reply, GT were restricted to 208/6 in their 20 overs and got knocked out of the tournament. They will next take on Punjab Kings (PBKS) in Qualifier 2 on Sunday, June 1.

County stint has helped me: Sai Sudharsan set for England Tests after stellar IPL

PARIS: Holger Rune asked for a spectator to be removed at the French Open on Friday, claiming the man shouted aggressively at him after Rune showed frustration by slamming his towel into his towel box.

Rune was playing Frenchman Quentin Halys on Court Philippe-Chatrier when the incident happened near the end of the third set of the Dane's 4-6, 6-2, 5-7, 7-5, 6-2 third-round win. Rune, the No. 10 seed, said the man took exception to the way he threw his towel down. "The guy was yelling aggressive with me, he reach(ed) out for me," he said.

"I thought this was very strange, because I did not do anything against him and he should not interact with a player on the court. It's a bit embarrassing. I told the supervisor that I would prefer him not being there, because it was a bit uncomfortable. They said they'd check the video, and if it was true what I said they would get him away. I guess they checked, and I didn't see him for the rest of the match."



Rune felt he was blameless

"I am allowed to hit the towel into my towel box, I didn't do anything against him. I think maybe he got annoyed that I threw the towel in my towel box. But I can do whatever I want with my towel box as long as I'm keeping respect for everyone, which I believe I did, and the umpire believed so because I didn't get any warning."

Remaining Time - 9:43

Roland-Garros has earned a reputation in recent years for rowdy and sometimes unsettling behaviour - with particular hostility reserved for opponents of French player American player Taylor Fritz and Belgian David Goffin have been upset by the behavior of home fans in the past two years. Rune was upset by only the one fan this time. "I was actually very happy about the rest of the crowd," he said.

"They were very respectful."

He plays eighth-seeded Lorenzo Musetti of Italy in the fourth round.

Champions League Final: Flair meets discipline as PSG face Inter Milan in a battle of contrasting styles

Paris Saint-Germain meet Inter Milan in the biggest clash of football on Saturday evening. PSG — a testament to agility, speed and flair — is set to face a stern test against Inter Milan's maturity, grit and experience.

NEW DELHI. France's Paris Saint-Germain are set to face Italy's Inter Milan in the final of the Champions League on Saturday, May 31. The French champions, synonymous with flair, speed and agility, will be squaring off against the Italian runners-up Inter Milan, who are known for their tactical mettle and maturity on the ball. PSG are under the coaching of Spaniard Luis Enrique, where they have banished the star culture which was prevalent in the team. The project PSG, which brought Lionel Messi,



Neymar and Kylian Mbappe together hoping for a Champions League title, would never have believed in a thousand years that all it took to reach the final and start as the favourites was the abolishment of one thing they were known for. Inter Milan, on the other hand, coached by the brilliant Simone Inzaghi, are in their second final in three years. Inzaghi's tactical brilliance has kept the ageing squad together. His mastery was proven in the two nights of the semi-final against Barcelona, where Inter ground out a

win against the behemoth that the Blaugrana have been this season. In sharp contrast, PSG swatted their way into the Champions League final, beating Arsenal in both legs of the semi-final. Success for PSG would make them the first French champions of Europe since bitter rivals Marseille in 1993, and finally reward years of huge investment from their Qatari backers, who bought a majority stake in the club in 2011.

Inter face the prospect of a trophyless season after seeing Napoli pip them to the Serie A

title. But Inter have shown they are a threat on the European stage after epic wins over Barcelona in the semi-finals and Bayern Munich in the quarter-finals. Here's everything you need to know about the Champions League Final:

Champions League final: Timing

The Champions League final between Inter Milan and PSG will kick off at 12:30 AM IST on June 1. Champions League final: Live streaming details In India, the match will be livestreamed and broadcast by the Sony Sports Network.

Champions League final: Players to look out for Georgian winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia has starred for the team since joining from Napoli in January. Bradley Barcola, Dsir Dou and Ousmane Dembélé are chipping in the goals. The team has one of the world's best goalkeepers in Gianluigi Donnarumma, who is enjoying his best ever football at the moment. On the other hand, Inter count on Argentina star Lautaro Martinez to lead the team with his captaincy and goals. They also have some solid players in defence, led by their goalkeeper Yann Sommer, who single-handedly kept Inter from conceding a truckload of goals against Barcelona in the semi-final.

French Open: Yuki Bhambri, Robert Galloway stun 7th seeds, Rohan Bopanna into R3

NEW DELHI. India's Yuki Bhambri and America's Robert Galloway made their way through to the third round of men's doubles in the French Open 2025 after pulling off a stunning victory over seventh seeds Nikola Mektić and Michael Venus. On Friday, May 30, the Indo-American duo won their second round match 6-7(4), 7-6(7), 6-3 in two hours and 32 minutes at Roland Garros. Bhambri and Galloway started their campaign with a 6-3 6-7(8) 6-3 win over Robin Haase and Hendrik Jebens in the first round before taking down Mektić and Venus. In the third round, they will be up against the American duo of Christian Harrison and Evan King. Harrison and King had a dominating second round where they beat Manuel Guinard and Romain Arneodo 6-4, 6-0.

Rohan Bopanna advances

In another doubles match, Rohan Bopanna and Adam Pavlasek from Czechia rallied back from a set down to beat the French duo of Fabien Reboul and Sadio Doumbia. In two hours and 10 minutes, they won the match 6-7 (2-7), 7-6 (7-5), 6-2. In the third round, Bopanna and Pavlasek will lock horns with Henry Patten from the United Kingdom and



Harri Heliövaara from Finland. Patten and Heliövaara will go into the match after beating Gabriel Diallo and Jacob Fearnley 6-2, 6-3. Earlier on May 28, India's N Sriram Balaji booked his berth in the second round of men's doubles in the clay-court major. Balaji and Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela from Mexico defeated Camilo Ugo Carbelli and Yunchaokete Bu 6-2, 6-1. Balaji and Reyes-Varela will be up against the fourth-seeded Italian pair of Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori in their second-round match on Saturday, May 31.

IPL 2025: Sai Sudharsan strives for T20 improvement, not fussed about India call-up

IPL 2025, GT vs MI Eliminator: Sai Sudharsan said that he still has a lot of work on his game to become a prolific T20 batter. On Friday, Sudharsan's 80-run knock went in vain as Gujarat Titans lost to Mumbai Indians by 20 runs.

NEW DELHI. Sai Sudharsan stated that he isn't overly concerned about selection for India's T20 team ahead of next year's T20 World Cup. The left-handed batter became the youngest player to score 700 runs in a single IPL season, following his 80 off 49 balls for the Gujarat Titans (GT) in the Eliminator against the Mumbai Indians (MI) on Friday at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium in



Mullanpur. However, his efforts went in vain as GT were eliminated from the tournament after a 20-run loss. Over 15 matches, Sudharsan amassed 759 runs at an average of 54.21 and a strike rate of 156.17. The southpaw acknowledged that he still has room for improvement in the T20 format before seriously considering a national team

call-up. "Playing for the country is obviously a dream for everyone, and I would love to do that. But right now, I'm not thinking along those lines. Looking at the season, there are several areas where I need to improve as a T20 batter," Sudharsan said in the post-match press conference. "There are many facets of the game I should work on before I return to T20s, so my focus is currently on that. Of course, when the opportunity comes, I will give my best for the country," Sudharsan added. Only four players—David Warner (848 in 2016), Jos Buttler (863 in 2022), Shubman Gill (890 in 2023), and Virat Kohli (973 in 2016)—have scored more runs than Sai Sudharsan in a single IPL season. Meanwhile, Sudharsan has earned a call-up to the Indian Test squad for the upcoming five-match series against England. On Friday, he appeared well on track to guide Gujarat Titans (GT) to victory. However, after he was dismissed by Richard Gleeson while attempting a ramp shot to fine leg, GT lost momentum and eventually fell short, finishing at 208 for six while chasing 229.

Unplayable yorker, inevitable genius: How Jasprit Bumrah sank the Gujarat Titans

NEW DELHI. Wasn't that yorker special? Let's get to that a little later. Can excellence be made to look effortless? Can mastery feel routine? Ask an artist, a writer, or an athlete. They'll tell you how rare it is to create something that satisfies both the soul and the world. Greatness is usually a grind; brilliance, a fleeting reward. But then, there are exceptions. Michael Phelps slicing through water like a force of nature, Usain Bolt turning races into parades. Simone Biles rewriting the laws of gravity. Mondo Duplantis soaring beyond limits. These are athletes who made perfection look like second nature. Jasprit Bumrah belongs in that league. With every spell, every searing yorker, he makes you wonder if it's all inevitable. Excellence, in his hands, feels like an everyday affair. By now, we've seen countless spells where Jasprit Bumrah has painted masterpieces across the 22 yards: the searing yorkers, the deceptive slower balls, the inswingers that crash into the stumps, the outswingers that kiss the edge and fly to the slip cordon.



MOMENTUM MEETS GENIUS

Friday's IPL 2025 Eliminator between Mumbai Indians and Gujarat Titans was yet another blessed evening for cricket lovers. It was another chance to witness a master at his zenith. Mumbai Indians were in their element on the big stage. In a tactical masterstroke, the five-time champions chose to bat first in Mullanpur - a day after Punjab Kings were skittled for 101 at the same venue. Captain Hardik Pandya said at the toss that the pitch at Maharaja

Yadavindra Singh International Stadium wasn't quite the same as the one where Royal Challengers Bengaluru's pacers ran riot the day before. He was confident it would play better - and MI made the most of the batting-friendly surface. Powered by Rohit Sharma's 50-ball 81, a brutal cameo from Jonny Bairstow, and useful contributions from Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik himself, Mumbai piled on a daunting 228. Gujarat Titans, ever the scrappy underdogs, weren't ready to roll over even after losing captain Shubman Gill for just 1. Sai Sudharsan and Washington Sundar, batting at No. 4, flipped the script with a stunning 84-run stand off just 44 deliveries. By the end of the 13th over, Gujarat were cruising at 148 for 2. Sai, calm as ever, was accumulating at pace without fuss; Washington, meanwhile, showed why he's so highly rated in Indian cricket circles, launching crisply timed big hits. Gujarat had plundered 63 runs between overs 9 and 13, and hope was very much alive.

Stupidity and the C word: Shreyas Iyer's and the philosophy of Langda Tyagi

IPL 2025: Shreyas Iyer's cricketing journey has been marked by brilliance, resilience, and underappreciation, much like the tragic figure Langda Tyagi from Omkara. Despite injuries and setbacks, his talent and leadership continue to shine.

NEW DELHI. If Langda Tyagi were a cricket fan, he'd be tempted to remind Shreyas Iyer of his iconic philosophy - only a thread separates stupidity and the C word. Pull the string and you struggle to figure out what's stupidity and what's cricket. For nothing else explains Shreyas Iyer's cricket career. On current evidence, Iyer is one of Indian cricket's bahubalis, a worthy successor to Virat Kohli's Omkara. He has the same swag, the same middle-finger-up mindset, and the game to back it up. His big-game performances reveal, if not rival, the Kohli template - hunger to fight for India's honour,

and decimate rivals. In the 2023 Cricket World Cup, he amassed 530 runs in 11 innings at an average of 66.25, with a strike rate of 113.24, including two centuries and three fifties. He was the first middle-order batter to score over 500 runs in a single World Cup. An Unsung ICC Hero In the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, Iyer scored 243 runs at an average of 48.60, with three fifties, emerging as India's top batter and the tournament's second-highest run-scorer, contributing significantly to India's title win. His ability to dominate spin and deliver in high-pressure knockout games was key to India's triumph. But his performance was forgotten like Bipasha Basu's item numbers in Omkara - entertaining but just a rite of passage. Like in Bollywood, cricketing fame is reserved for the A-listers. Iyer's contributions have been eclipsed by the defiance of Kohli, the derring-do of Rohit, the magic of Jasprit Bumrah, and the T20 brilliance of Surya Kumar Yadav. But as Dolly Mishra says in Omkara, even when the moon's half, it is still the moon. The L Factor



It is evident Iyer has the wretched luck of Langda Tyagi, the sharpshooter upstaged by a college kind in Vishal Bharadwaj's cult classic Omkara. His career has been plagued by injuries and off-field controversies. From the cusp of greatness, he has been pulled

back many times. Even in the IPL, Iyer keeps reminding us of his resilience and luck - the lack of it. He is a successful IPL captain - the only one to lead three franchises to the play-off stage. His batting has the same selfless spirit that defines Rohit Sharma's exploits. And, like Bumrah, he is an exemplar of come-backs - someone who has risen above recurrent injuries and reclaimed his uncelebrated glory. In 2020, Iyer became the only captain to guide Delhi Capitals to their maiden IPL final, where they lost to Mumbai Indians. In 2021, a shoulder injury forced him to miss the first half, with Rishabh Pant taking over as captain. Despite returning for the second half, DC management retained Pant as captain (who ditched them later.)

In 2022, Kolkata Knight Riders acquired and appointed him captain. After a disappointing 2022, Iyer missed the next season due to a back injury, with Nitish Rana leading KKR. He returned in 2024 to lead KKR to their third IPL title, their first in a decade. But Iyer was surprisingly released by KKR before the 2025 auction.



Not Just Fans, Even

# Shivangi Joshi's

Friends Can't Wait For Her TV Comeback

Shivangi Joshi and Harshad Chopda's fans are in for a treat as the date is set for the premiere of the much-awaited show, *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain*. After several delays, the makers have announced that the new season of the show will start from June 16. Not just fans; even many of Shivangi and Harshad's colleagues are quite excited for the show. The actress re-shared a story on Instagram by Karishma Jain, a producer, who congratulated them for the show. Karishma Jain had shared the promo of *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain* and wrote, "Congratulations...rooting for my favourites."



Alongside Harshad and Shivangi, the show also stars an impressive supporting cast, including Nitin Bhatia, child artist Kiara Sadh, and others.

She also tagged Shivangi, Harshad and Ketaki Walawalkar Rana, a creative director associated with the show. The new season, produced by Ektaa Kapoor, stars Shivangi Joshi as Bhagyashree and Harshad Chopda as Rishabh—culturally disparate individuals united by love. Rishabh is a charming Punjabi guy, and Bhagyashree is a Tamilian woman. They are portrayed as the ideal married couple, exuding warmth, understanding and natural chemistry. Set to premiere on June 16 at 8:30 PM, the show will air every Monday to Friday on Sony TV. In a recent interview, Shivangi confessed that she underwent a huge physical makeover to fit the character. In the interaction with Aaj Tak, Shivangi Joshi and Harshad Chopda discussed the upcoming season of *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain*. Harshad appreciated Shivangi's attention to her work saying that she engaged herself in the character with extraordinary passion and conviction. Shivangi also revealed that she gained 8 kg to add authenticity to her character. "Mujhe bohot khana pada hai. Mujhe weight gain karne ke liye bola tha. Toh maine gain kiya hai kaafi. 8 kgs I have gained. Toh mehnat toh lagi hai kaafi khane mei (I had to eat a lot. I was asked to gain weight. So I have gained 8 kgs I have gained. So I had to do hard work in eating)," she said.



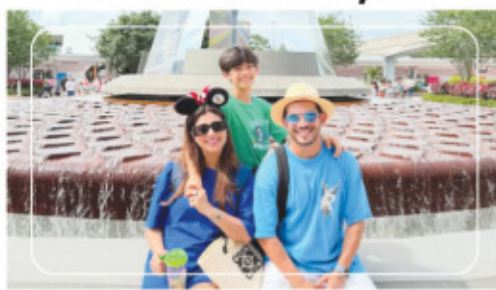
# Shilpa Shetty

Discusses Antiphospholipid Syndrome And Its Impact On Pregnancies

Shilpa Shetty Kundra has always been vocal about her personal and professional life with her fans. From suffering from cervical spondylosis to welcoming a daughter via surrogacy, the actress has shared every chapter of her life with Instafans. In a similar vein, the actress once opened up about suffering from antiphospholipid syndrome (APS), also known as APLA. During an interaction with a media outlet, she also revealed that she sustained several miscarriages before opting for surrogacy to have her second child in 2020. Talking to Pinkvilla in 2020, the actress shared that she tried having a second child after Viaan, but things didn't turn in their favour because of her miscarriages. "After Viaan, I did want to have another child for the longest time. But I suffered from an autoimmune disease called APLA, and that came into play every time I got pregnant. So I had a couple of miscarriages, so it was a genuine issue. I didn't want Viaan to grow up as a single child because I'm also one of two, and I know how important it is to have a sibling. Coming from that thought, I did explore other ideas as well, but that didn't pan out well," she said. After waiting for nearly four years, the Dhadkan actress finally chose to go for surrogacy. "At a time when I wanted to adopt, I had put in my name, and everything was underway. But then, the Christian missionaries shut down because they had a tiff with CARA. I was so irritated, and we decided to try the surrogacy route. We had Samisha after three attempts. I had honestly given up on the thought of another child," she revealed. Antiphospholipid syndrome, or APLA, is an autoimmune disorder where the body's immune system mistakenly attacks its cells, including blood platelets. It results in abnormal blood clotting within the arteries, veins and organs, leading to miscarriages and potentially stillbirth in pregnant women. Shilpa Shetty tied the wedding knot with businessman Raj Kundra in 2009. The couple embraced parenthood with the birth of their son, Viaan, in May 2012. Their daughter, Samisha, was born on February 15, 2020, via surrogacy. On the cinematic front, Shilpa Shetty last starred in Rohit Shetty's web series, *Indian Police Force*, in 2024. She played Tara Shetty alongside Sidharth Malhotra and Vivek Oberoi. Now, she is awaiting the release of her upcoming Pan-India film *KD - The Devil*. The Kannada action thriller, directed by Prem and bankrolled by KVN Production, boasts an ensemble cast of talented actors, including Dhruva Sarja, Reeshma Nanaiah, V Ravichandran, Ramesh Aravind, Sanjay Dutt, Nora Fatehi, Jisshu Sengupta and Nora Fatehi, among others. Set in Bengaluru during the 70s and 80s, the action thriller is inspired by a real-life incident.



Arjun Bijlani's Magical Disneyland Date With Wife Neha And Son Ayaan

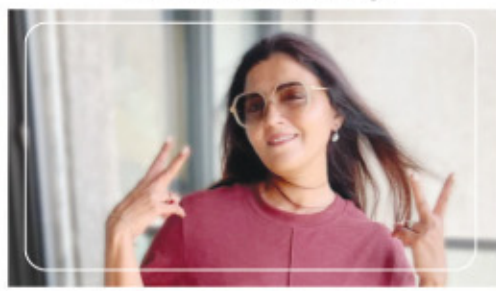


Get ready for a dose of family goals. Arjun Bijlani recently treated his fans to a sneak peek into his magical Disney Land vacation with wife Neha and son Ayaan. The actor's Instagram posts were filled with infectious joy, showcasing the perfect family getaway. With the caption, "A day well spent!! And this is just the beginning!!", Arjun teased fans about more exciting adventures to come, building anticipation for what's next. In a picture-perfect moment, the Bijlani family steals the show with their vibrant smiles during their perfect family vacation. Ayaan, donning adorable Mickey Mouse ears, radiated pure joy, capturing the essence of childhood wonder. Meanwhile, Arjun and Neha, dressed in coordinating blue outfits, exuded a relaxed, sun-kissed vibe. Arjun's straw hat and Neha's chic shades added a dash of flair. But it was Ayaan's joyful energy that became the highlight of the post, reminding everyone of the timeless magic of Disney that brings out the kid in all of us.

Another delightful photo showcases Arjun and Neha's beautiful chemistry, as they strike a romantic pose. Their bond shines through in the eye-catching post, exuding warmth, laughter, and an effortless joy. Arjun and Neha are also seen showcasing their Mickey Mouse cards, which highlight their immense excitement for the fun-filled adventures.

In no time, fans flooded the comments section with heart and fire emojis, praising the actor for spending quality time with his loved ones. A fan commented, "Enjoy your Disney Adventures... looking forward to seeing the big one .. favourite people (sin)." Another user wrote, "How beautiful you are. May God protect you and make you happy, my master. I hope you are well. My regards to you and your family. I love you." "Have fun in the USA (sin). Waiting for more of your Vacation stories there," a comment read. Arjun Bijlani, who was last seen in the TV show *Pyar Ka Pehla Adhyaya: Shiv Shakti*, has been a part of several iconic shows like *Miley Jab Hum Tum*, *Naagin*, and *Ishq Mein Marjawan*. Apart from participating in Rohit Shetty's reality show *Khatron Ke Khiladi*, Arjun has also hosted reality shows like *Splitsvilla* and *Dance Deewane*.

Jyoti Mukerji Joins Jhanak As Arjit Taneja's Mother After Generation Leap



Krushal Ahuja and Hiba Nawab's TV show *Jhanak* is gearing up for a generation leap of 20 years next month. The new development marks the exit of the current actors, making way for new leads. Reportedly, Arjit Taneja, Riya Sharma and Twinkle Arora have been finalised to replace the previous stars. In a fresh update, Jyoti Mukerji has also joined the cast to play a pivotal role after the leap. As per the reports, Jyoti Mukerji will be playing Arjit's mother post the much-anticipated generation leap. FYI, Jyoti, throughout the years, has worked in more than 20 television shows including *Gharana*, *Kitty Party*, *Mulk*, *Santaan*, *Aandhi*, *Asha Ki Kiran* and *Pratima*. She made her small-screen debut with Anurag Basu's show *Manzilein Apni Apni*. Directed by Shaibal Banerjee and Sujit Pyne, *Jhanak* first aired on TV in 2023. It is reportedly a loose adaptation of the Bengali series *Jol Nupur* which aired on Star Jalsha. Produced under Magic Moments Motion Pictures, the popular daily soap revolves around *Jhanak*, a young woman who is forced into a marriage with her cousin Arshi's fiancé, Aniruddh, to avoid an obsessive stalker after her mother's death. Ever since its premiere, the show has continued to win audiences over and performed well on TRP charts thanks to its gripping storytelling and on-screen chemistry between the leads, Krushal Ahuja and Hiba Nawab. Recently, the lead duo received a heartwarming farewell from the team of the daily soap. Their makeup room was decked up with balloons, flowers and lights in a touching gesture. A video shared by the actor also saw him and Hiba cutting a farewell cake. Earlier in a chat with Zoom, Hiba Nawab shared her first reaction after learning about the big leap in *Jhanak*. She said, "20 to 25 days ago, the makers informed us about the leap. I won't look like a 50-year-old, and I don't want to do that. They didn't even ask me (laughs). And ya, it (leap) is happening." Extending her heartfelt wishes to the new star cast, Hiba added, "I won't say I am leaving the show but there is a leap. There will be a new cast coming in. There will be a new *Jhanak* coming in. I wish them all (the new star cast) the very best. I gave a lot to this show for a year and a half. I want everyone to continue showering love on *Jhanak* and like its new cast."