

"Let Us Empower Nari Shakti": PM Modi Calls For Support On Women Reservation Bill

PM Modi said strengthening women's participation in legislative institutions is an important step towards fulfilling that vision.



New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that the proposed amendments to the Women Reservation Act is not merely a legislative exercise but a reflection of the aspirations of crores of women across India and urged all MPs to come together to support this move.

In a signed article posted on his website narendramodi.in, the prime minister also said that the move is an affirmation of a principle that has long guided India's civilisational ethos that society progresses when women progress.

He said it is imperative that the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and the Assembly elections to the various states in the coming times are conducted with

women's reservation in place. The prime minister said the nation stands at the threshold of a historic occasion, and it is an opportunity to deepen the foundations of the country's democracy and to reaffirm the collective commitment to equality and inclusion.

He said that on April 16, Parliament will be convened to discuss and pass an important Bill that advances women's reservation.

"To describe this merely as a legislative exercise would be an understatement. It is a reflection of the aspirations of crores of women across India," he said.

The Budget Session of Parliament has been extended and a special three-day sitting of the House has been convened on April 16 to 18 when the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', more commonly known as Women Reservation Act, would be amended for its implementation from 2029 general elections. It will ensure an

increase in the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816, of which 273 will be reserved for women. The provision to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was brought by amending the Constitution in 2023, but it will come into effect after the completion of the delimitation exercise on the basis of 2027 Census. Therefore, it is expected to come into force only in 2034 if the present law remains as it is.

According to the broad contours available, the number of Lok Sabha seats would be increased from the present 543 to 816, with 273 seats reserved for women. The reservation will also be done on a "vertical basis" with seats allocated for SCs and STs.

The redrawing of the constituencies will be done on the basis of 2011 Census rather than the proposed 2027 Census. A similar exercise will be carried out for state assemblies.

Why no FIR after 7 years?: AAP on back foot as HC pulls up Punjab government over multi-crore SC scholarship scam

New Delhi.(Agency)

An alleged multi-crore scam in a post-matric scholarship scheme for Scheduled Caste students that occurred during the Congress government's tenure in Punjab has come back to haunt the incumbent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government after the Punjab and Haryana High Court questioned why no First Information Report (FIR) had been registered despite the matter being under inquiry for years.

The scam came to light in 2019, when Captain Amarinder Singh was the chief minister, and Sadhu Singh Dharamsot was the social justice, empowerment and minorities minister. After several inquiries—during the Congress as well as the AAP government's regime—and the dismissal of five officials, no FIR has been registered. The AAP government had handed the case to the Punjab Vigilance Bureau in January 2023.

Hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL), a division bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sanjiv Berry on Monday directed the state to clarify whether the complaint disclosed a cognisable offence and, if so, why an FIR had not been lodged within the stipulated time frame.

In its order, the bench noted that the complaint dated May 29, 2023, was still under preliminary inquiry and sought a clear response on "whether the complaint...discloses a cognisable offence or not, and if yes, then why was the FIR not filed within the stipulated period of 15 days/30 days" as mandated by the Supreme Court in Lalita Kumari vs Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The order has sent the government into a tizzy. "We are now looking at the files again," an official said, adding that the vigilance bureau has already been investigating the matter. "The probe is on.

Short news

CM Siddaramaiah accuses EC of bias, defends guarantee schemes

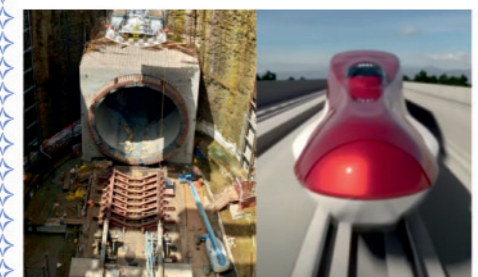
BENGALURU.(Agency)

slamming the Election Commission of India (ECI) for seeking a clarification on the guarantee scheme funds released to Davanagere and Bagalkot Assembly segments, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that the guarantees implemented by his government are not "this-by-election-time announcements". "Targeting Karnataka's guarantee schemes is not just political - it is anti-poor, anti-women, and anti-Karnataka," he posted on social media platform 'X'.

Siddaramaiah said that the guarantee schemes are ongoing programmes of his government.

"We have implemented the guarantees as part of the commitments made to the people during the 2023 Assembly elections. Funds are regularly transferred to beneficiaries in a transparent and structured manner, in accordance with scheme guidelines. This is governance—a direct investment in human dignity, household stability, and economic participation—not inducement," the CM said.

Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train project: NHRCL releases plan for 16 km tunnel construction



New Delhi.(Agency)

The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHRCL) has released plan to construct a 16-km-long tunnel as part of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project. Spanning 508 km, this is India's first high-speed rail corridor, passing through Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train tunnel

It plans to construct a 21-km-long tunnel for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project between Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) and Shilphata in Maharashtra. The tunnel will also include the country's first 7-km-long undersea stretch beneath Thane Creek.

Of the total 21 km, 5 km of tunnelling using the New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM) has already been completed, while the remaining 16 km will be constructed using Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs). According to NHRCL, the lowering and assembly of the TBM has now commenced for the 16 km tunnel section between BKC and Sawli (near Ghansoli).

Bangladesh Foreign Minister meets Jaishankar, seeks return of ex-PM Sheikh Hasina

According to the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi, Jaishankar reiterated "India's desire to engage constructively with the new Government and further strengthen bilateral ties".

New Delhi.(Agency)

The visiting Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Khalilur Rahman conveyed to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval that the BNP government led by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman will pursue a "Bangladesh First" policy based on "mutual trust and respect and reciprocal benefit".

In an official statement Wednesday, the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry also "reiterated its request to extradite Sheikh Hasina and her Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to Bangladesh who have been awarded the death penalty by the International Crimes Tribunal". Former PM Sheikh Hasina has been in Delhi since August last year after being ousted following widespread



protests.

The statement added that Bangladesh has sought an increase in the supply of diesel and fertilizers by India.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi, Jaishankar reiterated "India's desire to engage constructively with the new Government and further strengthen bilateral ties".

"The two sides agreed to explore proposals for deepening the partnership through the relevant bilateral mechanisms.

Follow-on official meetings are expected to take place at an early date," it said. Both sides also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, the MEA said.

This is the first high-level political outreach to Delhi by the new government in Dhaka. The BNP swept to power in February this year, 18 months after the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina government.

Rajnath chairs third IGoM meet, discusses energy prices, food safety measures

New Delhi.(Agency)

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Wednesday chaired the third meeting of the Informal Group of Ministers (IGoM), which was briefed about the easing of energy prices in the backdrop of the ceasefire that was agreed upon by Iran and the US on Wednesday after weeks of tensions in West Asia.

In a statement issued late Wednesday, the Ministry of Defence said the Ministers in the IGoM — formed to take stock of India's readiness in view of the recent developments in West Asia — were informed that key sectoral parameters will continue to be closely monitored and appropriate measures will be taken. They were also informed that India has ensured the evacuation of the highest number of vessels than any other country from the Strait of Hormuz over the past 40 days.



Singh directed all departments to continue focusing on preparedness, coordination, and resilience building to stay ready to deal with any eventuality. In a post on X, he stated that the government is ensuring continued availability of LPG, petrol and diesel, fertilisers for farmers and facilitating supply of essential commodities in the country.

The statement noted that a total of eight LPG vessels, carrying approximately 340TM, equivalent to around 11 days of India's import requirement, have successfully transited the Strait of Hormuz over the past 40 days, reinforcing the country's energy security and supply stability. "There have been no reports of dry-out at LPG distributorships, and delivery of domestic LPG cylinders continues despite all across the country," it noted. Other initiatives discussed at the meeting were the doubling of the supply of 5kg Free Trade LPG cylinders beyond the 20% allocation earmarked for priority segments, dispensing

Mission Samrath 4.0 takes Punjab's Shikhya Kranti to next level with attendance-linked reform: Harjot Singh Bains

The Sikh Times

CHANDIGARH, April 9: Punjab has pushed its Shikhya Kranti (education revolution) into the next phase, with Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains, along with former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister and AAP Punjab Prabhari Manish Sisodia, on Thursday launching Mission Samrath 4.0, a flagship foundational learning programme aimed at achieving global excellence in education. The new phase introduces a state-wide attendance tracking system under which parents will receive daily SMS alerts on their child's attendance, marking a decisive shift towards real-time accountability and stronger learning continuity in classrooms. Declaring it as the next big leap in Punjab's Shikhya Kranti, the Education Minister said Punjab, already ranked No.1 in the PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) survey, is now moving from recognition to results by tightening

classroom accountability and scaling proven teaching practices. He underscored that CM Bhagwant Singh Mann has raised the educa-



tion budget to ₹19,279 crore, ensuring funds reach classrooms rather than remain stuck in files, driving visible transformation from basic infrastructure to measurable learning outcomes across government schools. Highlighting Punjab's top rank in the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024,

Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains said that under the leadership of CM Bhagwant Singh Mann, the Punjab Government has introduced the attendance tracking system as part of Mission Samrath 2026-27. He stated, "Parents will receive daily SMS alerts on their child's attendance, with notifications for every absence, aiming to boost regular attendance, learning continuity and classroom engagement. Any child absent for seven days will trigger a district-level parent contact, while absence beyond 15 days will be flagged to state headquarters. This will ensure both learning continuity and child safety." Emphasising the impact of the programme, the Education Minister stated, "Mission Samrath has transformed classroom dynamics. This phase focuses on enhancing teaching quality and accountability through attendance tracking, improved monitoring and sharing the best practices. Our goal is to ensure that every child achieves strong foundational learning."

Contd.....page-3

House security cannot afford slightest lapse: Delhi Speaker Vijender Gupta

The sequence of events was reviewed in detail, including the available footage which is currently under technical examination.

New Delhi.(Agency)

A day after a major security breach at the Delhi Assembly, Speaker Vijender Gupta on Tuesday conducted a high-level review meeting where he said that the security of the premise cannot afford the slightest lapse. Gupta observed that the incident calls for a decisive strengthening of systems. He directed immediate measures, including installation of hydraulic road blockers at all gates, reinforcement of access control points, and creation of a more responsive on-ground security mechanism within the premises.

The sequence of events was reviewed in detail, including the available footage which is currently under technical examination.

Emphasising that preparedness must be matched with accountability, Gupta called for a clearly defined and unified command structure between CRPF and Delhi Police, with a single point of authority to ensure coordinated and immediate response in critical situations.

Gupta said that any delay in communication weakens response capability and directed that real-time information sharing between all agencies be treated as essential to operational readiness.

Focusing on the access management of the House, he directed that all entry and exit points be strengthened through improved positioning, strict control protocols and enhanced infrastructure. He recommended that each gate be manned by a minimum of two trained personnel of Delhi Police/CRPF to ensure coordinated vigilance.

No entry without verification

Gupta said that no vehicle should be permitted entry without proper security clearance and verification under any circumstances calling for a coordinated vigilance among all security personnel deployed at the House.

News box

Motorcyclist injured in crash; car driver accused of drunk driving, claiming CRPF links

GURGAON.(Agency)

A man was injured after a car allegedly driven by an intoxicated person collided head-on with his motorcycle on CRPF Road near Kheda ki Dhani on April 4 night. The victim, Manoj Adhana of Kadarpur village, was returning home around 9.30pm when a Swift car coming from the opposite direction hit his motorcycle. The impact threw him off the bike, leaving him injured on the road. In his complaint, Adhana alleged that the driver was under the influence of alcohol and behaved arrogantly after the crash. He further claimed that the driver identified himself as a CRPF personnel and said no action could be taken against him. "He was working at the CRPF camp and said that he is in the CRPF police and nobody can do anything to him," the complaint stated. Passers-by and family members rushed him to Artemis Hospital in Sector 51. He was later shifted to a private hospital in Sector 30 for further treatment. Police said they received information from the hospital and collected the medico-legal case (MLC). The victim recorded his statement on April 7 after being declared fit by doctors. A case has been registered under Sections 281 (rash driving) and 125A (act endangering life) of BNS at Sector 65 police station. "We are verifying the allegations, including whether the driver was under the influence of alcohol. Efforts are underway to trace and identify the accused," an officer said.

Mini-truck rams vehicle ahead in Gurgaon, helper dies

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 26-year-old conductor of a mini-truck died after his vehicle rammed into another moving ahead at Rampura Chowk in Kherki Daula on Tuesday night. The deceased was identified as Dheeraj. His mini-truck was travelling towards Manesar when the accident took place. The driver of the truck also sustained injuries, police said, adding that they received information of the incident around 6am on Wednesday. "The body has been kept in the mortuary and will be sent for post-mortem examination once the victim's family members arrive," a police official said. The sequence of events leading to the crash is yet to be established. "We are examining whether speeding, driver fatigue or poor visibility contributed to the accident," the official said. A complaint from the victim's family members is awaited and no case has been registered. "Further action will be taken based on the family's statement and the findings of the post-mortem," another official said. Police are also trying to identify the vehicle that was hit and gather details on the incident from the driver and witnesses. "Efforts are underway to collect CCTV footage from nearby areas to establish the circumstances of the accident," the official said.

Mediclaime denied, Noida consumer forum asks insurer to pay Rs 50k to client

Noida.(Agency)

The district consumer disputes redressal commission on Tuesday ordered Reliance General Insurance Health Care to pay a Surajpur resident Rs 46,210 towards a mediclaime claim it had rejected, along with 6% annual interest from the date of filing of the case. The commission ruled that the claim was denied on false grounds. The panel, comprising president Anil Kumar Pundir and member Anju Sharma, noted that the policyholder had disclosed all pre-existing medical conditions while purchasing the plan and directed the insurer to settle the claim within a month. The company was also directed to pay Rs 2,000 as litigation cost and Rs 2,000 as compensation for causing mental agony to policyholder Rajkumar Bhati. Bhati had filed an application with the commission on Jan 30, 2024, saying he had obtained a group mediclaime policy from Reliance General Insurance Health Care in 2019, which covered treatment cost up to Rs 2 lakh. He renewed the policy in subsequent years by paying the premiums on time. When Bhati fell ill on Oct 11, 2023, he contacted the company, and the customer care officer said he could seek treatment at any nearby hospital, other than the company's healthcare provider. Bhati got admitted to Nishkarsh Medicare Centre located at Zeta 1, Greater Noida, and was discharged on Oct 15. He said he had spent Rs 46,210 on his treatment and sent all the bills via email to the insurer. His claim was rejected. He then sent a notice to the insurer through his lawyer on Dec 24, but no response was received. Describing the actions of the company as deficiency in service under the Consumer Protection Act, Bhati sought relief from the commission.

Wedding season is here, Noida directs gas agencies to verify requirement before supply

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

In the wake of the wedding season and a spike in LPG demand, the district administration has imposed strict conditions on the approval of additional cylinder requests. Officials have asked gas agencies to verify the requirement first. District supply officer Smriti Gautam said the demand has surged in recent days due to multiple weddings, bhandaras and other large gatherings. She said for the last two weeks her office has received over a dozen such requests every day. "We have directed gas agencies to allow such requests but only after conducting a physical verification," she said. She added verification is necessary to ensure that cylinders are being sought for genuine purposes and are not diverted. The advisory says that an additional domestic cylinder issued for events must be returned the day after its use. This, officials said, is aimed at maintaining equitable distribution and preventing artificial shortages during peak demand. Residents and event organisers have been asked to coordinate directly with their respective authorised gas agencies, rather than seeking informal arrangements. The supply department has also instructed agencies to work with sales officials to ensure allocations are made following norms.

Al-Falah moves HC against state takeover, calls administrator order

GURGAON.(Agency)

Al-Falah University and Al-Falah Charitable Trust have moved the Punjab and Haryana high court against Haryana govt's decision to place the private university under a state-appointed administrator, calling the action an "unbridled and arbitrary" takeover that strips the institution of its autonomy. In its petition, the minority-run university challenged both the March 18 order appointing IAS officer Amit Aggarwal as administrator and the legal provisions introduced through the Haryana Private Universities (Amendment) Act, notified on Jan 6. It argued that the amended law allows the govt to assume complete control of a private university under the guise of addressing "grave lapses" relating to national security, public security or law and order. The plea says the powers conferred under sections 44B and 46 of the new act effectively place the university's management, finances and property in outside hands, with no clear

limit on how long such control can continue. Read with other sub-sections, it argues, the law permits the state to retain control even after "normalcy" has been restored, amounting to an effective dissolution or conversion of a private minority institution. Calling the provisions unconstitutional, the petition invokes Articles 14 and 30, alleging the amendment is "manifestly arbitrary", fails the test of reasonableness and violates the rights of a minority institution to administer itself. It also challenges two govt communications dated Jan 14, alleging they were issued with "malicious intent" and showed "complete non-application of mind". The trust has sought quashing of the amended provisions and the related notices. The university told the court the state's intervention was unjustified because it had already acted against those allegedly involved in the incident that triggered the crackdown. In the petition, it said four faculty members linked to the

Nov 10 blast near Red Fort were terminated immediately after their alleged involvement came to light. It described the episode as a "completely



unforeseeable" turn and said it acted promptly, responsibly and transparently. Al-Falah was at the centre of a white-coat terror module behind the Delhi blast that killed 15 persons. The petition names the terminated faculty members as Nisarul

Hassan, Umar-un-Nabi, Shaheen Saeed and Muzammil Shakeel. While Umar-un-Nabi, an assistant professor, was alleged to have driven the explosives-laden car, two other faculty members were arrested for storing large quantities of ammonium nitrate. The case was filed in Feb. When it first came up, the high court noted that the state had already entered appearance on advance notice and asked it to file a detailed reply within six weeks. The bench also allowed the petitioners to implead the Union home ministry as a respondent. On the question of vires, the court issued notice, signalling that it would examine the constitutional validity of the 2025 amendment. For now, it said the petitioners could reply to any show-cause notices, while authorities could continue proceedings in accordance with the law. At the latest hearing on April 6, the court granted more time to both the Centre and the state to file replies. The matter will now be heard on May 5.

Gurgaon civic body launches portal to track progress of infrastructure projects

Gurgaon.(Agency)

MCG has developed a management information system and mapping portal to improve monitoring and transparency in development works across the city. Officials said mapping of projects has already begun on the portal. A training session for assistant and junior engineers was held on Tuesday under the chairmanship of MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya. Engineers were briefed on the mapping process and directed to complete mapping of roads in their respective areas within a week in the first phase. They were also asked to seek assistance from the technical team if



required. Corporation officials informed that sewerage, drainage and other development works will also be mapped in subsequent phases. The system is expected to help curb duplication of works, repeated entries or multiple

allotments of the same project.

The commissioner said, "Through this portal, MCG is taking significant steps towards making administrative functions more transparent and accountable by utilising technology. This will not only enable real-time monitoring of development works but will also help provide better facilities to citizens."

During the meeting, Dahiya also directed officials to make advance arrangements for the monsoon, including deployment of machinery and pumps to tackle waterlogging. He stressed that all departments must coordinate to prevent any loss of life during the season.

On picnic with friends after exam student drowns in water-filled pit in Noida Sector 94

Noida.(Agency)

A 23-year-old student died after drowning in a water-filled pit near the Supernova building in Sector 94. Police said the incident occurred around 4pm on Wednesday. Harshit Bhatt, a resident of Indrapuram, was pursuing an undergraduate degree in physical education at a private university in Sector 125. Police said he had appeared for his final paper for the sixth semester earlier in the day and decided to go for a picnic with three of his friends. The four men had gathered near a large water-filled pit located on the site of the proposed Noida Habitat and Convention Centre behind the Supernova building. The project, which was being developed by the UP Rajkiya Nirman Nigam Limited (UPRNNL), had been stalled since 2022. Noida Authority had cancelled the tender after UPRNNL had sublet the site to a third party that was excavating the soil illegally. The men had allegedly entered the site through a broken section in the boundary wall. They had planned to celebrate the completion of their exams with a picnic near the edge of the pit. Around 3.30pm, the group decided to

take a swim. His friends told police that Harshit was the first one to enter. After two laps around the pit, Harshit tried to



venture further toward the centre, but he did not realise the depth and began to drown. One of his friends tried to rescue him but failed as his foot got trapped in a marshy patch. Realising the situation was beyond their control, they alerted the police. Teams from the Sector 126 police station, NDRF, SDRF and the fire department reached the spot along with divers. They eventually pulled Harshit out and rushed him to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. The body was later sent for post-mortem examination. Deputy

commissioner of police Saad Miya Khan said preliminary investigation suggests death due to drowning, though police are examining all aspects of the incident. No formal complaint has been filed by the family at Sector 126 police station yet, and further action will depend on the complaint and post-mortem findings. The divers involved in the rescue operation said that the edges of the pit were relatively shallow, but the centre was significantly deeper and contained marsh-like sludge. Although the water appeared clear from above, the sticky bottom made it difficult for anyone trapped to escape. Harshit's family is reeling from the shock of his death. His father is in the Indian Army and is currently posted in Ladakh. His mother and aunt told police that Harshit was never professionally trained but he had always enjoyed swimming. During inspection of the site, police found beer cans and liquor bottles near the pit, indicating the students might have been intoxicated. Police said the investigation is ongoing and further action will follow based on findings and statements from witnesses.

He said that a special mobile app has been developed for enumerators, which will also work in offline mode and will automatically update data when the network is available, ensuring smooth operations even in remote areas. The DC urged citizens to provide correct and clear answers to all questions, as it is legally mandatory. Before starting the Census process, officials involved in the process will be given training. Training programmes for enumerators and supervisors in the district started on April 6. Training has been organised in 28 batches from April 6 to 8. Subsequently, training programmes will also be organised at various locations from April

Tenders revised 6th time, no company for waste pickup in Gurgaon yet

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The long-awaited streamlining of door-to-door waste collection in the city has hit yet another roadblock. MCG has been forced to scrap its ongoing tender process to hire two private contractors for the entire city. The delay comes from Haryana urban local bodies (ULB) department revising the request for proposal (RFP) for the sixth time, prompting the civic body to halt the current bidding process. MCG officials will now prepare a revised cost estimate and send it to the department before new tenders can be floated.

Earlier, the civic body had floated the tender to hire two agencies for the city's door-to-door waste collection estimated to cost Rs 315.2 crore. MCG officials said that the latest revision in RFP significantly alters the eligibility criteria for participating agencies. Earlier, bidders were required to have prior experience working in a metropolitan city. The ULB department has now diluted the condition, allowing agencies with experience in any municipal corporation to qualify. The repeated changes to the RFP have not only stalled the tender process but also pushed back the timeline for implementing a unified door-to-door waste collection system in the city. MCG executive



engineer Sunder Sheoran said, "We are going to make a fresh estimate based on the revised clauses in the RFP. We will submit the fresh estimate by the beginning of the next week." According to the latest letter sent by the ULB Haryana to MCG and MCF (Faridabad), the civic body has been directed to incorporate two key amendments in the RFP for door-to-door municipal solid waste collection and transportation work, following decisions taken in a meeting chaired by the chief minister on March 7. The most significant change relates to eligibility conditions for bidders. Under the clause in the previous RFP, companies were required to show experience in door-to-door collection and

transportation of municipal solid waste (MSW) up to the processing site, or in an integrated project including collection, transportation and processing in any metropolitan area during the last seven financial years (2018-2025). The amended clause narrows the eligibility criteria geographically. Instead of allowing experience in "any metropolitan area," bidders must now demonstrate similar experience specifically in a municipal corporation area during the same seven-year period. Under the previous RFP clause, yearly price escalation was mainly linked to the Wholesale Price Index (WPI). The contractor's payment could increase

every year based on WPI (inflation index). However, now escalation will be divided into manpower and non-manpower (fuel, machinery etc.) components.

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Editor-in-Chief
Gurcharan Singh Babbar
Mob : 9654077232, 9971359517
Website : www.thesikhetimes.in
Email : sikhetimesindia@gmail.com

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Mission Samrath 4.0 takes Punjab's Shikhya Kranti to next level with attendance-linked reform: Harjot Singh Bains

Continued from page 1. Reflecting on his journey, he added, "I'm grateful for this responsibility (being the Education Minister). Earlier, every MLA wanted to be a minister, but never the education minister. For me, it has been a dream job."

He further underlined improvements in school infrastructure under the Bhagwant Mann government, stating that every senior secondary school with more than 500 students now has a dedicated campus manager, while schools with over 100 students have been provided security guards and sanitation staff, facilities that were once unavailable.

Explaining the core focus of Mission Samrath 4.0, he said, "The programme ensures that children in grades 3 to 8 master reading, writing and mathematics." Sharing a classroom example, he added, "A class 8 student from Gardale village in Ropar said, 'I passed class 5, but knew nothing. Thanks to Samrath, I can now talk to you with confidence.'"

will now be scaled across government schools to accelerate learning outcomes, particularly for students requiring additional support. Minister Harjot Singh Bains noted that Mission Samrath has already become one of India's largest foundation learning programmes, covering nearly 12 lakh students and engaging over 70,000 teachers annually.

learning well. This is a step towards global excellence." He further emphasised the philosophy behind the reforms, stating, "Every child cannot be sent to IIT, but the government's duty is to ensure that no child falls below the bottom line."

safely.' That small act of accountability, that real-time reassurance, is worth more than a thousand grand declarations." Secretary School Education Sonali Giri welcomed the dignitaries and said, "We will ensure every student and parent feels proud to be part of government schools."

gaps, activity-based learning, and continuous mentoring for teachers. Building on Punjab's emergence as the top-performing state in the PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024, the Punjab Government has now launched Mission Samrath 2026-27 to move from national leadership towards global excellence in education.

dance, ensure learning continuity, enhance classroom engagement, and build stronger accountability between schools and families, while reinforcing the link between attendance and learning outcomes.

Consumer protection authority issues 57 notices, slaps Rs 1.24-cr fine on coaching institutes

New Delhi: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued 57 notices to coaching institutes for misleading advertisements and unfair practices, with penalties of Rs 1.24 crore imposed on 29 of these.

timless crimes" that expose consumers to "unsafe, substandard or even toxic products" while eroding public revenue. "Economic growth is meaningless if it is not built on trust and consumer safety," he said.

remained complex. Devesh Chandra Srivastava, Special Commissioner of Police (Crime), Delhi Police, said counterfeit networks often operate across multiple jurisdictions and require sustained coordination and intelligence-sharing to dismantle.

Bejon Kumar Misra of the Consumer Online Foundation said many consumers unknowingly purchase counterfeit goods due to price sensitivity and lack of information.

ly curbing illicit trade and protecting consumers. The notices were issued to various coaching institutes across the city, highlighting their involvement in selling counterfeit goods and misleading advertisements.

PUBLIC NOTICE: My client Bhagwan Singh (Aadhar No. 6026 2939 4899) S/O Ramji Lal R/O H.N.S-14/3, Block-A, Jeevan Jyoti Rajew Camp, Okhla Phase-2, Okhla Industrial Estate, S.O., South Delhi, Delhi-110020, also at H-16/925 Sangam Vihar New Delhi-110062 has severed all relations with his daughter Aarti Chakravarti (Aadhar No.-8892 5995 8594) divorced her from all his movable and immovable properties due to her misbehaviour.

NAME CHANGE: I SANGITA KUMARI W/O SURENDRA RAM R/O FLAT NO 2 E 2 ND FLOOR POKHET L SHEIKH SARAI NEW DELHI 110017 have changed my name to SANGITA DEVI Permanently for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I TAANVI KAUSHAL SINGH W/O JALAJ SINGH R/O G-284, 2ND FLOOR PREET VIHAR DELHI 110092 have changed my name to TAANVI KAUSHAL Permanently for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I Rachna Chawla W/O Baldev Mitter, R/O 239, RAJDIHANI ENCLAVE, Pitampura, North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Rachna Rani for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, Anis Parvez, son of Mohd Hanif, residing at 496 GH-9, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi: 110087 - hereby declare that in the school records of my son, Rehan Siddique, my wife's name has been erroneously recorded as Shagufa Ali. However, her actual and correct name is Shagufa Parveen.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Be it known to all that my clients namely SH. MAHESH, S/O NARESH, AND REKHA, W/O SH. MAHESH, both are resident of H.NO. 80, GALI NO. 03, RAMESH YAGGI COLONY, JHARODA MAZRA, BURARI, NORTH DELHI-110084, has named, debarred his son namely SHUBHAM S/O SH. MAHESH, from all his movable and immovable properties because they are out of control of my clients. My clients have severed all relation with them.

NAME CHANGE: I, YOGENDER MEHTA S/O Banshi Mehta R/O Part 31-A, Jwala Nagar, Ambedkar Park, Shahdara, Delhi-110032, have changed my name to JOGINDER MEHTA permanently.

NAME CHANGE: I, SACHIN KUMAR GUPTA S/O ANAND KUMAR GUPTA R/O HOUSE NO-298/8, JACUB PURA, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SACHIN GUPTA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

NAME CHANGE: I, MUTHU KUMAR Father of No-2617293V Rank-HAV Name-SATHEES KUMAR M residing at VILL-KODAPPARAI, PO-SIPPAPARAI, TEH-KOVIL PATTI, DIST-THOOTHUKUDI (TUTICORIN), TAMILNADU-627713, have changed my name from MUTHU KUMAR to MUTHUKUMAR S for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, SAKHIA YADAV D/o Jitender Kumar Yadav R/O 133-A DDA flats sunlight colony-2 Jungpura S.O. South Delhi, Delhi-110014 declare that in 10th class certificate my father name is wrongly mentioned as Jitendra Yadav. Now I have changed my father's name from Jitendra Yadav to Jitender Kumar Yadav for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE: I, USHA YADAV W/O BHUPENDER SINGH R/O H.NO.B-1, 34 FIRST FLOOR VIPUL WORLD SEC-48 SOUTH CITY, GURGAON HARYANA-122018 have changed my name to USHARANI.

NAME CHANGE: I, SACHIN KUMAR SAWANT S/O SUSHIL KUMAR SAWANT R/O 1/5790, GALI NO-13, NEAR ARWACHIN SACHOOL, OLD LABIR NAGAR CHOWK, SHAHDARA, EAST DELHI, DELHI-110032, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SACHIN SAWANT FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

NAME CHANGE: I, SACHIN KUMAR GUPTA S/O ANAND KUMAR GUPTA R/O HOUSE NO-298/8, JACUB PURA, GURGAON, HARYANA-122001, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SACHIN GUPTA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

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NAME CHANGE: I, SAHIL S/O MOHD IQBAL Residing at H No-A-19/A GALI NO-1/3 BHAGIRATHI VIHAR PHASE-1 GOKALPUR North East, Delhi-110094 have changed my name to MOHD SAHIL for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE: I, SAIFIKAN BEGUM W/O MOHD IQBAL Residing at H No-A-19 GALI NO-1/3 BHAGIRATHI VIHAR PHASE-1 GOKALPUR North East, Delhi-110094 have changed my name to SHAFIKAN for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE: I, SHANTIA PRADHAN Mother of JC-584497N Rank-NB/SUB, Name-SAROJ PRADHAN Residing at VILL-UPPER SIRISAY AMBOOTTA, PO-KURSEONG, DIST-DARJEELING, WEST BENGAL-734203, have changed my name from SHANTIA PRADHAN to SHANTANEBARANI for all future purposes and in my son's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 23/07/1949 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1952 vide Affidavit dated 09/04/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE: I, SHANTIA PRADHAN Mother of JC-584497N Rank-NB/SUB, Name-SAROJ PRADHAN Residing at VILL-UPPER SIRISAY AMBOOTTA, PO-KURSEONG, DIST-DARJEELING, WEST BENGAL-734203, have changed my name from SHANTIA PRADHAN to SHANTANEBARANI for all future purposes and in my son's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 23/07/1949 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1952 vide Affidavit dated 09/04/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE: I, SABITA LEPCHA Wife of JC-584497N Rank-NB/SUB, Name-SAROJ PRADHAN Residing at VILL-UPPER SIRISAY AMBOOTTA, PO-KURSEONG, DIST-DARJEELING, WEST BENGAL-734203, in my husband's service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 25/08/1985 instead of my correct date of birth as 28/08/1993 vide Affidavit dated 09/04/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE: I, SAKHIA YADAV D/o Jitender Kumar Yadav R/O 133-A DDA flats sunlight colony-2 Jungpura S.O. South Delhi, Delhi-110014 declare that in 10th class certificate my father name is wrongly mentioned as Jitendra Yadav. Now I have changed my father's name from Jitendra Yadav to Jitender Kumar Yadav for all future purpose.

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NAME CHANGE: I, Ajanay Kumar S/O Dhruva Narain R/O Kh. no. 643, 1st floor, EXTENDED LAL DORA, VILLAGE ALIPUR, ALI PUR, PO: Alipur, DIST: North West Delhi, Delhi-110036 have changed my name to Ajanay Kumar Singh for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE: This is to inform the general public that Mrs. Sanjiva Devi (Buyers) approached Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Ltd. branch Address:- Ground Floor Shop No 20, Basement Sec 14 Gurgaon, for sanctioned and disbursement of housing loan facility against Office Unit No G-248, UFG measuring superarea 237 sq ft. Situated at Sushant Shopping Arcade, G Block, 'Sushant Lok Phase - 1, Gurgaon 122009, Haryana hereafter called the 'minor son' Harkamaljit Singh Mahal (HUF) Thru its Karta Harkamaljit Singh Mahal (seller) Owned said property by virtue of Sale Deed/Conveyance Deed Doc. No 16738, Book No 1, Dated 09.03.2004 executed by M/s Ansal Properties & Industries Ltd. One of the parceres expired namely Sh. Simranjit Singh S/O Harkamaljit Singh Mahal. He was unmarried at the time of demise. And Now the said property intend to sell by Harkamaljit Singh Mahal (HUF) Thru its Karta Mr. Manoj Kumar Yadav. If any person(s) institution/ financier/ Bank, having any sort of right, claim, title or interest in the said property under or on the basis of the documents, or otherwise, may put forth his/her/its claim, along with the document(s) in support thereof, to the undersigned within 7 days from the publication of this notice, failing which no claim of any kind whatsoever, shall be entertained thereafter.

NAME CHANGE: I, SAKHIA YADAV D/o Jitender Kumar Yadav R/O 133-A DDA flats sunlight colony-2 Jungpura S.O. South Delhi, Delhi-110014 declare that in 10th class certificate my father name is wrongly mentioned as Jitendra Yadav. Now I have changed my father's name from Jitendra Yadav to Jitender Kumar Yadav for all future purpose.

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NAME CHANGE: I, Ajanay Kumar S/O Dhruva Narain R/O Kh. no. 643, 1st floor, EXTENDED LAL DORA, VILLAGE ALIPUR, ALI PUR, PO: Alipur, DIST: North West Delhi, Delhi-110036 have changed my name to Ajanay Kumar Singh for all future purposes.

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NAME CHANGE: I, SAKHIA YADAV D/o Jitender Kumar Yadav R/O 133-A DDA flats sunlight colony-2 Jungpura S.O. South Delhi, Delhi-110014 declare that in 10th class certificate my father name is wrongly mentioned as Jitendra Yadav. Now I have changed my father's name from Jitendra Yadav to Jitender Kumar Yadav for all future purpose.

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NAME CHANGE: I, SAKHIA YADAV D/o Jitender Kumar Yadav R/O 133-A DDA flats sunlight colony-2 Jungpura S.O. South Delhi, Delhi-110014 declare that in 10th class certificate my father name is wrongly mentioned as Jitendra Yadav. Now I have changed my father's name from Jitendra Yadav to Jitender Kumar Yadav for all future purpose.

PUBLIC NOTICE: It is for general information that I VIJENDER KUMAR S/O HIRALAL R/O House No-A-323/59 Raja Vihar, Badli, PO: Samai Pur, DIST: North West Delhi, Delhi-110042 declare that the name of mine has been wrongly written as VIJENDER KUMAR in my mind son namely SWARAJ aged 16 years in his 10th Class Marksheet and Certificate. The actual name of mine is VIJENDER KUMAR which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE: I, BHOSALE REKHA SURESH, is legally mother of Army No. 2817629P. Rank - Nk. Name - BHOSALE HEMANT SURESH, presently residing at Vill - Borgaon, Post - Borgaon, Teh - Koregaon, Dist - Satara, State - Maharashtra, Pin - 415511, have changed my name from BHOSALE REKHA SURESH to REKHA SURESH BHOSALE for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 09/04/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE: I, LALITABAI, is legally mother of Army No. 2814048M, Rank - Sep, Name - RAUT NILESH DINKAR, presently residing at Vill - Panaj, Post - Panaj, Teh - Akot, Dist - Akola, State - Maharashtra, Pin - 444101, have changed my name from LALITABAI to LALITA DINKARRAO RAUT for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 09/04/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE: I, GOURI SHANKAR legally father of Army no -2804657 H, Rank - HAV, Name - JIVANLAL BIJAPARI, Presently residing at Kanad, Post-kanad, Teh - agar malwa, Dist - agar Malwa, State - M P, Pin - 465230 have changed my name from GOURI SHANKAR to GORISHANKAR BIJAPARI and date of birth 31/03/1958 to 01/01/1956 for all future purposes Vide Affidavit Dated 09/04/2026 before Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE: I, KANTABAI legally mother of Army no -2804657H, Rank - Hav, Name - JIVANLAL BIJAPARI presently residing at Kanad, Post-kanad Teh - Agar Malwa, Dist - A P have changed my name from KANTABAI to KANTA BAI BIJAPARI and date of birth 31/03/1961 to 01/01/1966 for all future purposes Vide Affidavit dated 09/04/2026 before Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE: I, SHAFALI W/O Pallav Parmar R/O House No. 635, Ground Floor, Sector 5, Gurgaon - 122001 Haryana have changed my name to Shafali Parmar for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, KHAN MEHSHAR MISHRER W/O ASIF KHAN R/O B 167/1, GALI NO 8 MASIDWALLI FAZALPUR, B BLOCK EAST DELHI 110092, CHANGED MY NAME TO MESHAR.

NAME CHANGE: I, PRESANNA KUMARI Mother of No-15743959L Rank-NK Name-ANOOPI M Father of AVANI Presently residing at KULANGARA HOUSE, VILL-AYROOR, PO-AYROOR NORTH, DIST-PATHANAMTHITTA, KERALA-686612, have changed my name from PRESANNA KUMARI to PRASANNAKUMARIAMMA for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 09/04/2026 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE: I, Sushash Chander Sethi S/O Ram Bheja Mal Sethi, R/O 401, Starline Apartment, Sector-14 Extension Rohini, Rohini Sector-14, PO-Rohini Road, 7, DIST-North West Delhi, Delhi, 110085 have changed my name to Sushash Sethi for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE: I, VINOD KUMAR PATHAK S/O ANANNAT RAM PATHAK R/O 6202, Kucha Shiv Mandir Naya Bans Delhi - 110006 have changed the name of my minor son PRINSH KUMAR PATHAK aged 13 years and he shall hereafter be known as ABHAY PATHAK.

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE. The Sr. Divisional Engineer-II, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work: 1. NIT-02 Name of work:- Cess repair work at various locations under ADEEN/GZB in jurisdiction of Sr. DEN-II/DLL. Approx cost of work:- 24311156.11 Earnest Money to be deposited:- 486200.00. 2. Date & Time of opening of tender 05.05.2026 15:00 Hrs. 3. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen. www.ireps.gov.in. *The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system. For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. * No manual offers are acceptable. * Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be Rs. 100/- each. * Acceptance through net banking or payment gateway only. No. 128-W/280/E Tender Notice/NIT-02-26-27-W4I Dated: 08.04.2026. SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 1180/26

NEWS BOX

Trump Agreed To Pause Iran War. How Netanyahu's Lebanon Strikes May Resume It

Tehran. (Agency)

The ceasefire deal between Iran and the United States to pause the war in the Middle East appeared to be hanging by a thread after Tehran closed the vital Strait of Hormuz again in protest against massive Israeli bombardment in Lebanon. The Donald Trump administration in the United States has demanded that the waterway -- through which one-fifth of the world's oil usually passes -- be reopened, as it sought to keep peace talks on track. Both the US and Iran have portrayed the Pakistan-backed 2-week truce agreement as a victory, even as drones and missiles continue to hit Iran and Gulf Arab countries. But the situation became serious after Israel intensified its strikes on the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon, hitting commercial and residential areas across the country.

Destruction in Lebanon

On Wednesday afternoon, at least five consecutive strikes rocked residential areas in the capital, Beirut, as Israel's military said it had launched the largest coordinated strike of the war. Israel also targeted more than 100 Hezbollah command centres and military sites in Beirut, the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon within ten minutes.

A total of 254 people have been killed, and over 1,100 have been wounded across Lebanon, the country's civil defence service said. Most casualties were in Beirut, where 91 people were killed. Tel Aviv has accused Hezbollah of operating from civilian areas, a claim disputed by residents and local officials, particularly in areas where residential buildings were hit without warning.

Saudi Arabia's Hajj Ministry unveils discount initiative for pilgrims via Nusuk Card

World. (Agency)

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has introduced a new initiative offering deals and discounts for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims through the Nusuk Card, aiming to improve their overall experience during the pilgrimage.

The Nusuk Card serves as an official identification for pilgrims as well as individuals working within the Hajj system. It is required to be carried at all times, from arrival in the Kingdom to departure, including during movement between holy sites.

Under the new initiative, cardholders will be able to access special offers and services from a range of national businesses. These benefits cover multiple sectors, including retail, transportation, catering, hospitality, healthcare, and entertainment. Details of participating entities are available through the Nusuk platform. The ministry said the initiative is designed to make services more accessible and enhance comfort for pilgrims, while also raising the overall standard of service delivery during Hajj and Umrah. Officials also highlighted the role of chambers of commerce in supporting the programme, describing them as a link between the ministry and the private sector, helping bring more businesses into the initiative. Beyond its role in providing access to discounts, the Nusuk Card remains a key document for pilgrims, allowing entry to holy sites and ensuring smoother movement throughout the pilgrimage. The ministry has stressed that carrying the card is mandatory at all times during the Hajj period.

US says Iran closing Hormuz would be 'completely unacceptable'

World. (Agency)

The United States said Wednesday that Iran must open the Strait of Hormuz "immediately, quickly and safely" after reports that the strategic waterway was shut despite the US-Iran ceasefire. Any closure "is completely unacceptable," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters.

"I will reiterate the president's expectation and demand that the Strait of Hormuz is reopened immediately, quickly and safely." The ceasefire requires a "free" reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, which includes no tolls imposed by Iran, said Leavitt, describing Trump's thinking. A regional official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations, said the ceasefire plans included allowing both Iran and Oman to impose new fees on ships transiting through the strait. Leavitt referenced Trump's Truth Social post from Tuesday in which he said the agreement was conditional on the "COMPLETE, IMMEDIATE, and SAFE OPENING" of the strait. She added that "that's very plain language and it should be taken at face value."

Asked about Trump's threat to annihilate Iranian civilisation, Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt defended it as a "very strong threat that led to results." "I think it was a very, very strong threat from the president of the United States that led the Iranian regime to cave to their knees and ask for a ceasefire and agree to reopening the Strait of Hormuz," Leavitt said at a press briefing on Wednesday. Before a ceasefire was announced, Trump had threatened destruction in Iran if it did not reopen the strait, saying "a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again." The White House also said Trump will continue to discuss with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the idea of including Lebanon in an Iran war ceasefire deal. This will continue to be discussed, I am sure, between the president and Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu, the United States and Israel and all of the parties involved," Leavitt told reporters.

Insider Leak? Betting Accounts Earn Big On Trump's Ceasefire Post

Such bets have repeatedly raised questions from the public as well as members of Congress about whether some traders are using inside information

New York. (Agency)

A group of new accounts on the prediction market Polymarket made highly specific, well-timed bets on whether the US and Iran would reach a ceasefire on April 7, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in profits for these new customers.

These bets were made even though, in the hours before a two-week ceasefire was announced on Tuesday, President Donald Trump's rhetoric had escalated sharply and there were few signals that a ceasefire deal was imminent. Early in the day Trump had

issued a warning on social media that "a whole civilization will die tonight" if Iran did not meet his demand to open the Strait of Hormuz by his 8 pm ET deadline. Follow Live Updates

An analysis of publicly available blockchain data from Polymarket, using the crypto analytics platform Dune, shows that at least 50 accounts, or wallets, placed substantial "Yes" bets Tuesday before Trump announced the ceasefire in a Truth Social post at around 6:30 pm ET. These were the first bets made by these particular wallets.

One of these wallets, created Tuesday around 10 am ET, placed roughly \$72,000 in bets at an average price of 8.8 cents. The buy-in for each betting event ranges from \$0 to \$1 each, reflecting a 0 per cent to 100 per cent chance of what users think could happen. This Polymarket user then cashed out for a profit of \$200,000. Another, which joined the platform on April 6 and traded on this exact

event, shows a win of \$125,500.

Another wallet, created 12 minutes before Trump's post, made \$31,908 of "Yes" bets



at 33.7 cents, and is estimated to have earned a profit of \$48,500. The higher price for "Yes" at that time may have reflected the efforts late Tuesday by the government of Pakistan to get Trump to extend his deadline by two weeks. There is also the possibility that these individual

Polymarket users placed their bets expecting Trump to back down, given his habit during his second term to make bold threats only to retreat - a phenomenon his critics have derided as "Trump Always Chickens Out," or TACO.

While some users took handsome profits, others must wait for payouts because Polymarket has labeled the April 7 Iran-U.S. ceasefire contract as "disputed," given that Iran was still placing restrictions on ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz and missile attacks in the region continued. That dispute could take 48 hours to resolve.

Public blockchain data cannot identify who controls the new wallets. Polymarket uses proxy smart contract wallets, meaning a single user can create multiple accounts. Only Polymarket has the internal data needed to determine whether these were new users or existing users opening additional accounts.

Afghanistan, Pakistan agree to explore a solution after weeks of fighting and hundreds of deaths

BEIJING. (Agency)

Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed not to escalate their conflict and to "explore a comprehensive solution" after several weeks of cross-border fighting that has killed hundreds of people, China's government said Wednesday after mediating talks. All the parties also agreed to keep the dialogue after seven days of peace talks mediated by China in the western Chinese city of Urumqi under China mediation, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said. "The three parties agreed to explore a comprehensive solution to the issues in the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and clarified the core and priority issues that need to be addressed," Mao said during the daily briefing in Beijing.

She said that they acknowledged that "terrorism is the core issue affecting the relationship." Afghanistan and Pakistan said that they won't "take actions that would escalate or

complicate the situation." There was no comment from Islamabad about the weeklong talks. But Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Abdul Qahar Balkhi, said on Wednesday that the talks between the Afghan and Pakistani delegations, hosted and mediated by China in Urumqi, have concluded. In a post on X, he said that the talks were held in a "constructive atmosphere," with discussions focusing on bilateral relations, security issues and regional stability. Balkhi thanked Beijing for hosting the talks and expressed hope that the process would help strengthen trust, deepen relations and promote effective cooperation in the region.

The talks began last week in Urumqi at the invitation of China, in an effort to stop the conflict that began between the two countries in February.

Pakistan, which declared it was in "open war" with its neighbor, has also carried out airstrikes inside Afghanistan,

including in the capital Kabul.

Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that the talks had been constructive. The United Nations' office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs in Afghanistan said on Tuesday that the conflict had displaced 94,000 people overall, while 100,000 people in two Afghan districts near the border have been completely cut off by the fighting since February.

Even during the talks, Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of carrying out shelling across its border on several occasions. Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of providing a safe haven to militants who carry out deadly attacks inside Pakistan, especially the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP. The group is separate from but allied with the Afghan Taliban, which took over Afghanistan in 2021 following the chaotic withdrawal of U.S.-led troops. Kabul denies the charge.

In One Of China's Biggest Cyber Heist, Hacker Steals Over 10 Petabytes Of Data From Supercomputer

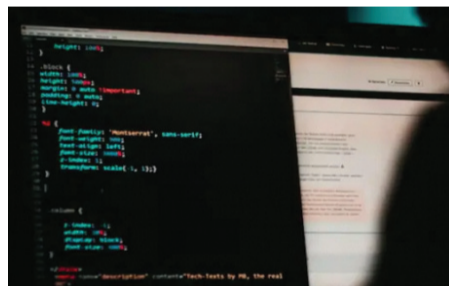
HANOI. (Agency)

A hacker has reportedly obtained an enormous cache of highly sensitive data from a state-run Chinese supercomputing facility, in what could be one of the most significant data breaches the country has ever faced, CNN reported. The alleged leak includes more than 10 petabytes of information, ranging from classified defense documents to detailed missile schematics, raising serious concerns about national security and cybersecurity resilience.

To put the scale in perspective: One petabyte equals 1,000 terabytes, and a high-specification laptop typically holds around one terabyte.

Experts believe the data may have been extracted from the National Supercomputing Center in Tianjin (NSCC), a key facility that provides computing infrastructure to over 6,000 clients across China. These include institutions involved in advanced scientific research as well as defense-

related work. Established in 2009 as China's first supercomputing hub, the Tianjin center is part of a broader network of similar facilities located in major cities such as Guangzhou,



Shenzhen, and Chengdu.

Cybersecurity researchers who have examined portions of the leaked material and communicated with the alleged hacker suggest that the breach may have occurred over several months without detection. The attacker, operating under the name "FlamingChina," shared samples of

the purported dataset on an anonymous Telegram channel in early February.

According to the claims, the data spans multiple fields, including aerospace engineering, military research, bioinformatics, and fusion simulation. It is also said to be linked to prominent organisations such as the Aviation Industry Corporation of China, the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China, and the National University of Defense Technology. While the full dataset is reportedly being offered for sale at a high price, potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars, smaller previews have allegedly been made available for thousands, with transactions requested in cryptocurrency. Independent verification of these claims, though, remains challenging. However, several experts who reviewed the sample data noted the presence of documents labelled.

Analysis: Trump's Iran U-Turn Exposes Limits Of His Leverage

Trump abruptly reversed his threats - which experts say could have amounted to war crimes - and announced a Pakistani-mediated truce agreement just two hours before a deadline he had set for Iran to open the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.

HOUSTON. (Agency)

Donald Trump's dramatic climbdown from his chilling threat to wipe out Iran's civilization has exposed the limits - and the rising risks - of the US president's typically unpredictable negotiating style. His decision on Tuesday to back down and agree to a two-week ceasefire - which

critics mockingly called another example of "TACO," or "Trump always chickens out" - marked the biggest step so far toward de-escalating a 40-day-old war that has shaken the Middle East and disrupted global energy markets.

But Trump's claims of victory over Iran overlooked questions about the effectiveness of mixing maximalist demands, erratic rhetoric and increasingly extreme threats.

Trump went further than ever before on Tuesday morning when he issued a stark warning to Iran via social media that unless it reached a deal "a whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again." After a day on the brink, Trump abruptly reversed his threats - which experts say could have amounted to war crimes - and announced a Pakistani-mediated truce agreement just two hours before a deadline he had set for Iran to open the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.

He claimed in his post that the US had "already met and exceeded all Military

objectives." Despite Trump's triumphalist language, analysts say Iran is likely to emerge from the conflict as a continuing problem for Washington: militarily weakened but with a more headline



leadership, de facto control over the vital oil-shipping waterway and a buried stockpile of highly enriched uranium.

Trump has touted himself as a master negotiator since his real estate developer days, but some analysts say he can box himself in with his negotiating style and undermine US credibility on the world stage. "The president was trapped by his

own hyperbole," said Jon Alterman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington. "He could not have destroyed Iranian civilization, and the costs of even appearing to try would have been massive." The approach has an added risk - that adversaries including China and Russia become wise to the strategy.

"The surprise value is wearing off," said a Republican lawmaker who had been in contact with the White House on Tuesday night, referring to Trump's habit of making reversals after tough-sounding threats. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt denied that Trump had backed down, telling reporters on Wednesday that his language was part of his "tough negotiating style" and that the world should "take his word very seriously."

EXTREME NEGOTIATING POSITIONS
Trump has a pattern of taking extreme negotiating positions, only to backpedal. At times, analysts said.

"Political Disaster": Israel Opposition Blasts Netanyahu Over Iran Ceasefire

World. (Agency)

Israel's opposition leaders swiftly criticised the ceasefire with Iran on Wednesday, accusing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of failing to achieve the war's objectives. The United States and Iran agreed to a two-week ceasefire in an 11th-hour bid to avert all-out destruction of Iran threatened by US President Donald Trump. Netanyahu's office said Israel supported Trump's decision to suspend the bombing of Iran, but maintained the ceasefire "does not include Lebanon" where Israeli forces are fighting Iran-backed Hezbollah. "There has never been a political disaster like this in our entire history. Israel was not even close to the table when decisions were made concerning the core of our national security," the country's main opposition leader Yair Lapid wrote on X.

"The army carried out everything that was asked of it, and the public showed remarkable resilience, but Netanyahu failed politically, failed strategically, and did not achieve any of the goals he himself set."

Netanyahu had set the elimination or at least severe degradation of Iran's nuclear programme as a central goal of the war, describing it as an "existential threat" to Israel. He also called for the neutralising of Iran's ballistic missile capabilities, the weakening or potentially toppling of the Iranian regime and the curbing of Tehran's regional influence by targeting its network of allied groups. "It will take us years to repair the political and strategic damage that Netanyahu caused due to arrogance, negligence, and lack of strategic planning," Lapid said. Former premier and right-wing Netanyahu opponent, Naftali Bennett, echoed similar views. "The leadership sold us illusions... Tonight all their empty promises have blown up in our faces," he said on X. "Unfortunately, every one of us can see with our own eyes that Hamas is growing stronger, and Hezbollah and Iran are still standing on their feet." The head of the left-wing Democrats party, Yair Golan, called the ceasefire a "strategic failure" by Netanyahu. He promised a historic victory and security for generations, and in practice, we got one of the most severe strategic failures Israel has ever known," Golan said on X. "It's a total failure that endangers Israel's security for years to come." Member of parliament and opposition figure Avigdor Liberman also denounced the truce, saying it gave the Iranian regime "an opportunity to regroup." Any agreement with Iran that does not include renouncing the destruction of Israel, uranium enrichment, the production of ballistic missiles, and support for terrorist organisations in the region means that we will have to return to another campaign under more difficult conditions and pay a heavier price," Liberman said on X.

Short news

6 arrested over sexual harassment of women employees of Nashik MNC

Mumbai.(Agency)

The Nashik city police arrested six persons on charges of mental and sexual harassment of women employees at a multi-national company. Police have registered nine FIRs in the matter which include charges of sexual harassment and hurting religious sentiments.

A senior officer said, "We have registered FIRs based on complaints we have received and so far not all the allegations have been proved. We will see what evidence is found following which further course of action will be decided." The officer refused to provide details of the specific allegations saying that it was a sensitive matter.

Five of the accused, arrested on Tuesday, were produced in a local court on Wednesday and the court remanded them in police custody till April 10. One of the accused is already in judicial custody, said an official.

Based on instructions of Nashik City Police Commissioner Sandeep Karnik, the police have also established an Special Investigation Team (SIT) led by ACP (Crime) Sandeep Mitke to probe the cases.

The development follows the arrest of self-styled godman Ashok Kharat on rape and sexual exploitation charges by Nashik Police last month.

The police commissioner, meanwhile, has issued an appeal stating that if any woman has any complaint about molestation or sexual assault, she can send a message on WhatsApp number 9923323311, or contact control room on 112. The identity of the complainant woman and institution will be kept confidential, he assured.

'MAVIGUN costs just 10% of Amaravati': YSRCP leader Jagan Mohan



VIJAYAWADA. (Agency)

YSRCP chief and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has placed the MAVIGUN Corridor proposal at the centre of his political narrative, describing it as the most practical solution to Andhra Pradesh's long-pending capital issue.

Addressing YSRCP leaders from Tadepalligudem constituency on Wednesday, Jagan accused Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of leaving the State without a capital even after 12 years, while highlighting MAVIGUN as a ready-made alternative that could function from day one.

Jagan explained that the corridor — MA (Machilipatnam), VI (Vijayawada), GUN (Guntur) — spans 110 km, connecting Machilipatnam port, Vijayawada international airport, and Guntur via a national highway. He argued that this stretch could be declared a capital corridor, with administrative buildings constructed along it. "They are wasting Rs 2 lakh crore on Amaravati, and just 10% of that is enough to build a magnificent capital here. From day one, it will be functional and serve as a growth engine, creating jobs for future generations," he contended.

Andhra totally free from Left-Wing Extremism now: DGP Harish Kumar

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

Director General of Police Harish Kumar Gupta has announced that Andhra Pradesh is now free from Left-Wing Extremism. The significant milestone has been achieved a day ahead of the March 31 deadline set by the Union government under Operation Kagar, he said.

Expressing satisfaction over the achievement, the DGP said the sustained and intelligence-driven combing operations over the past few years had effectively dismantled the CPI (Maoist) leadership and its network in the State. Several top Maoist leaders, including Madvi Hidma and Nambala Keshava Rao were neutralised in security operations.

Others such as Tippiri Tirupati and Papa Rao surrendered before police. Meanwhile, senior ideologue Ganapathi is believed to have fled to Nepal, and strategist Misir Besra is said to be hiding in Jharkhand.

According to police data, Maoist influence in Andhra Pradesh has sharply declined, with dozens of cadres surrendering in the past few years. Over 100 Maoists have laid down their arms in Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring regions after the launch of intensive combing operations, reflecting weakening organisational strength and declining recruitment. Speaking to the press, the DGP said the Maoist strongholds hardly witnessed development over the years. He opined that there is a need to focus on development of those areas and upbringing of tribals.

Maharashtra mandates verification for gig workers amid row over illegal immigrants

The move follows allegations by BJP leader Kirit Somaiya, who claimed that undocumented Bangladeshi and Rohingya immigrants were entering the delivery workforce using forged documents.

Mumbai .(Agency)

The Maharashtra government has ordered a stricter, mandatory verification process for lakhs of gig and delivery workers across Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), amid a political row over alleged infiltration by undocumented



migrants. Labour Minister Akash Fundkar issued the directive after a joint meeting with the Home Department at Mantralaya on April 7, asking platforms to move beyond "faceless" onboarding and take full legal responsibility for verifying worker credentials.

POLITICAL FLASHPOINT OVER 'INFILTRATION' CLAIMS

The move follows allegations by BJP leader Kirit Somaiya, who claimed that undocumented Bangladeshi and Rohingya immigrants were entering the delivery workforce using forged documents.

The issue has quickly taken on political overtones, with illegal immigration emerging as a key talking point ahead of assembly elections in West Bengal and Assam.

OPPOSITION ALLEGES 'POLITICS OF POLARISATION'

Opposition leaders have strongly criticised the claims. Samajwadi Party's Abu Azmi accused Somaiya of engaging in "politics of polarisation".

Azmi argued that if illegal infiltration was indeed taking place, it pointed to a failure of border security under the Centre, and said the issue should be raised with Union Home Minister Amit Shah rather than targeting low-income workers in Mumbai.

INDUSTRY FLAGS LOOPHOLES IN VERIFICATION

Concerns have also been raised within the gig economy about gaps in the onboarding process. Delivery worker Umesh Gupta said third-party agencies often bypass physical checks, allowing individuals to work using rented or shared IDs.

Officials said the proposed framework will require aggregators to register with cyber authorities, issue QR code-based identification to workers, and submit quarterly audit reports to the police.

Ahmedabad police on their toes as mystery over death of girl children deepens, parents' still in hospital

Postmortem reports of both the children, toxicology reports of their parents and the FSL reports of food samples collected from the family's home and the dairy are yet to be received

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Primary investigation into the circumstances that led to the death of two girls while their parents are in hospital under treatment, has almost ruled out the possibility of the dosa batter they consumed, having led to this as the younger child who was two and a half months old was too young to consume solid food. This has deepened the mystery surrounding their deaths.

On Wednesday morning, a prayer meeting was held at the building complex in Chandkheda in memory of two-and-a-half-month old Raha and her elder sibling, 3-year-old Mishri, both of whom died in two days under mysterious circumstances.

While Raha died on April 4, Mishri died on April 5, and their parents, Vimal and Bhavna Prajapati, are currently admitted to KD Hospital. They had told the police that they



suspect their children had died "by food poisoning" after consuming dosas made from readymade batter purchased from a dairy on IOCL road in Chandkheda, less than 500 metres from their home.

Dosa batter angle The police after conducting a preliminary probe almost ruled out the possibility, asking how a

2.5-month old infant will be given dosa.

Raha's body had been exhumed by the Chandkheda police on April 7 and sent for a panel postmortem as she was buried on April 4 by the family, without informing the authorities. The family had approached the police only after their second child, Mishri, died on April 5. On Wednesday (April 8) evening, at Maruti Plaza Residency, the society which houses the Prajapati family, at least two teams of plainclothes cops, one from Chandkheda police station and the other from the Detection of Crime Branch (DCB), kept a watch, spoke to neighbours and collected details.

The postmortem reports of both the children, toxicology reports of their parents and the FSL reports of food samples collected from the family's home and the dairy are yet to be received.

Woman makes a song and dance for site title deed in Karnataka's Sira town

TUMAKURU.(Agency)

A woman who was up against a wall of official apathy, decided to open her throat and sing. With laggard revenue officials failing to issue the title deed of a housing site under a government scheme, Rabiya Aslam Pasha from Sira town attempted to expose their apathy at a Janaspandana programme held by Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara at the District Central Library auditorium here on Wednesday.

Rabiya had composed a satirical song about CM Siddaramaiah, suggesting that he give her a house instead of the five guarantees. Even during the CM's visit here in 2024, she had created a similar scene, following which then DC Subha Kalyan had instructed officials to resolve the issue. Rabiya claimed that since then, officials have made her run from pillar to post. This

time, she and her two children came up on to the dais and shouted and sang, only to be taken away by police. Meanwhile, police took Karnataka



Rashtra Samithi members into custody for allegedly trying to disturb the programme. Around 2,500 grievances concerning various departments were received from Janaspandana attendees, with the highest number of about 450

related to the revenue department. "It is evident that the assistant commissioner and tahsildars are not responding properly. Most of the complaints

received pertain to tahsildars. These people have been roaming around for a year just to change the name on the ration card," said Parameshwara, warning officials of action if the trend continued. He clarified that if there were court orders, they should be executed promptly to deliver justice to the people. The RDPR department received 40 grievances and municipal administration got 33. Later, at the review of the

CM's Infrastructure Development Programme at the DC's office, Parameshwara took officials to task as the programme had not taken off as yet, and gave them a month's time to launch the programme or face the music.

Bagalkot Assembly constituency in Karnataka sees a battle between veteran & novice

BAGALKOT.(Agency)

The bypoll to the Bagalkot Assembly constituency to be held on April 9, has emerged as a direct contest between the Congress and the BJP, and also between a veteran and a novice. The BJP has fielded seasoned politician Veeranna Charantimath, while the Congress has nominated newcomer Umesh Meti. Political observers say the result will depend on how effectively the candidates influence voters and mobilise party support. BJP's Charantimath has contested from the constituency five times and served as MLA thrice.

Known for his administrative experience, he enjoys a reputation for simplicity, discipline, and punctuality. His determination to complete development works has earned him admiration among supporters. However, his blunt style of communication has also drawn criticism, with some perceiving it as offensive, leading to a section of former associates distancing themselves.

He has also served as chairman of the Bagalkot Town Development Authority and is regarded as an influential figure in the constituency.

In contrast, Congress candidate Umesh Meti is a first-time candidate without prior experience as a public representative. He, however, benefits from the political legacy of his father, HY Meti, and has maintained close contact with voters at the grassroots level. Umesh's soft-spoken nature and approachable personality have helped him build goodwill, especially in rural areas.

'Perpetrator of a shameful act': HC upholds removal of RPF man for molesting railway commuter in 2018

A bench of Justices Bharati H Dangre and Manjusha A Deshpande on March 26 examined CCTV footage, the circulated video, and observed "the manner in which he moved his hand clearly reveals to us his intention".

Mumbai . (Agency)

Refusing to set aside removal of a constable from service by Railway Protection Force (RPF) authorities for allegedly touching a woman commuter inappropriately in 2018 at Kalyan railway station in Thane district, the Bombay High Court recently found his act to be "truly deplorable" and said he had "dared to indulge" in such an act "despite being in uniform".

"Therefore, we find complete justification in the Railway initiating an inquiry against him, finding him guilty and imposing a punishment of removal from service, which is a lesser penalty than dismissal from service," the HC held as removal may not disqualify the personnel from being employed elsewhere. "He is a member of the Protection Force, but he himself became the perpetrator of a shameful act," it added. The alleged incident took place on platform number 4 of Kalyan railway station on June 18, 2018, when constable Rajesh Jangid (petitioner) allegedly

pretended to be dozing, touched a woman sitting next to him inappropriately, after which another woman objected. The passenger then slapped Jangid.

The petitioner, through advocate Samir Vaidya, said he felt unwell after duty, sat on a bench beside a woman who was on a phone call. A person on his right abused and slapped him suddenly. A woman on his left made noise, drawing a crowd, which he dispersed. The woman for whom ruckus occurred disappeared and no complaint was registered against him.

A widely circulated social media video led the RPF Assistant Security Commissioner to remove the petitioner from service. The order was upheld by the appellate authority, Principal Chief Security Commissioner, RPF Mumbai CSMT, which prompted him to approach the HC. A bench of Justices Bharati H Dangre and Manjusha A Deshpande on March 26

examined CCTV footage, the circulated video, and observed "the manner in which he moved his hand clearly reveals to us his intention". "It can also be seen that he is



not asleep or he was not in a state of being unconscious of the surrounding circumstances, as we have noticed that he was conscious of the lady sitting next to

him and, taking advantage that she had her back towards him, he indulged himself in a despicable act which amounted to outraging the modesty of a woman," the HC added.

Termining the act to be "disparaging, reprehensible, disgraceful and definitely immoral", the HC said there were witnesses to the "unpardonable" act of the petitioner, "who himself was supposed to protect the passengers on the railway platform as he was recruited in a disciplined force, i.e., RPF". The HC further said a railway platform is a "transitory place" for people to come and go and the woman who faced "ignominy" immediately left the platform and "did not deem it appropriate to lodge a complaint and take the issue ahead". The bench held the railway's action was not arbitrary and dismissed the plea as meritless.

IPS officer Manoj Ninama gets VRS; sparks talks of poll debut

Vadodara.(Agency)

Gujarat-cadre IPS officer Manoj Ninama seeking voluntary retirement from service or VRS just weeks ahead of his superannuation on May 31, has fueled speculation that he might be contesting the upcoming local body polls from his native district of Aravalli. Ninama, who was to retire on May 31, was relieved from service at the end of the working day of April 7. A DIG-rank officer, Ninama, 59, who hails from Shamlaji in Aravalli, and belongs to the Scheduled Tribes community, is known to be close to former IPS officer and Gujarat minister PC Baranda. Sources in the BJP say Ninama is likely to contest the district panchayat polls in Aravalli district. Although Ninama, in his statements since his VRS, has maintained that he decided for "personal reasons", he has also not ruled out the possibility of entering electoral politics in the upcoming polls.

Baranda, currently the minister of state for Tribal Development, Food and Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs, had also sought voluntary retirement in 2017 before the Assembly polls and unsuccessfully contested on a BJP ticket. He won the 2022 Assembly polls from the B h i l o d a A s s e m b l y Constituency on a BJP ticket.

Meanwhile, Ninama has a career spanning four decades. He started as a deputy superintendent of police in the Gujarat Police Service with one of his early postings being in Bhuj in 2001. He was promoted to the IPS rank in 2007. During his tenure, Ninama has held several top posts in the Gujarat police department, including the superintendent of Lajpore Jail in Surat as well as the Vadodara joint commissioner of police. He was last posted as the inspector general of the Traffic Branch at the time of his retirement. Ninama has also served as the commandant of Group 2 of the State Reserve Police Force in Vadodara and was also posted in the State Intelligence Bureau.

Elections playbook: Your money, Politicians' mandate

State elections, especially when five units move together—Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry—invite inflated claims. Each verdict is billed as a turning point in history. But look closer and the pattern is less dramatic: these are contests over distribution rather than direction. The grammar is, by now, standardised—promise, transfer, consolidate. Call it welfare, a word with fashionable compassionate pretensions, or something closer to inducement. The scale is no longer incidental. Tamil Nadu's welfare architecture runs into tens of thousands of crores annually; West Bengal's Lakshmi Bhandar absorbs roughly ₹12,000-15,000 crore a year; Assam's Orunodoi crosses ₹3,500 crore; Kerala's social security pensions exceed ₹10,000 crore. These are not episodic gestures. They are embedded fiscal commitments. The parties hand out the fish; they do not teach angling. And the fish was originally your catch.

At times, this instinct slips down the ladder of responsibility. Rahul Gandhi has promised free public transport for women in Kerala—on a system that is already perennially loss-making. The obvious question is sidestepped: why universalise by gender, rather than target by need? Why exclude the male daily-wage worker? The segmentation is not accidental. It is electoral arithmetic. The larger ethical problem is harder to evade. What parties promise with flourish is not their money; it is public revenue. When benefits are timed to elections, the line between welfare and inducement thins to a technicality. The liberal defence—equity, empowerment, consumption support—is not wrong. It is incomplete. The taxpayer funds the pool; the political class allocates it; the gratitude accrues to the allocator. It is your money; it becomes their mandate. Which leads to the question: could even a fraction of this fiscal energy be redirected towards employment generation, towards building capacity rather than easing consumption? The answers are uniformly vague. Tamil Nadu speaks of industrial corridors and investor summits; Assam of infrastructure-led growth; Kerala of startups and knowledge parks; West Bengal of periodic industrial revival. All of it sounds plausible. None of it is specified with the precision of a cash transfer: ₹500, ₹1,000, ₹1,250 a month—the voter can count these. The money is promised, but the method of generating it is left unsaid. The silence is louder in areas that determine long-term resilience. With volatility rippling through energy markets, India's vulnerability is not theoretical. Fuel-linked inflation quietly alters the cost of living. A cup of tea from a wayside shop is now ₹15, not ₹12. Solar is an obvious hedge in a country rich in sunlight. Yet manifestos speak of capacity, not capability—installation, not research. Storage, grid innovation, manufacturing ecosystems remain largely unarticulated. There is promise, but little by way of plan. Even the basics of civic modernity—waste management, sewage treatment—rarely enter the electoral centre. No party wins votes by promising that garbage will be recycled or that effluents will not flow into the nearest river. Nowhere is the tension between change and continuity clearer than in West Bengal. The shift from the Left Front to Mamata Banerjee's regime was framed as rupture. In political style, certainly; in administrative instinct, less so. The Marxist era, shaped by leaders like Jyoti Basu and Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, built a system rooted in rural mobilisation, land reform and dense organisational presence. The current dispensation has not dismantled that architecture; it has retooled it. Where the Left relied on cadre networks and class idiom, the present regime prefers cash—clearly branded, directly received.

Back to the Moon, with a new tune

NASA's Artemis programme is transforming Earth's satellite into a contested marketplace

AFTER the launch of Artemis II last week, NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman told mediapersons, "After a brief 54-year intermission, NASA is back in the business of sending astronauts to the Moon." The Artemis II crew successfully looped around the Moon on April 6, marking a historic milestone in human spaceflight. NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, along with Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen, passed behind the far side of the Moon. During this dramatic flyby, the crew captured striking photographs and made live observations of the lunar surface from distances no humans had reached in more than five decades. The journey has been remarkably smooth so far. Orion, the spacecraft carrying humans into deep space, performed flawlessly despite minor early glitches with the toilet and communication systems. The astronauts have now begun their return journey to Earth. They are expected to splash down in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of California on April 10. With this loop around the Moon, the four astronauts have set a new record as the farthest humans have ever travelled from Earth. Artemis II will be followed by a crewed Moon landing mission targeted for 2028. Over the next decade, NASA dreams of gradually building a permanent outpost, 'Artemis Base Camp', on the lunar surface, using more than 40-50 robotic and cargo landers and around 6-10 crewed landings between 2028 and 2036. The base will eventually include living habitats for four astronauts on four-week missions, advanced power systems, multiple rovers, and the first elements of an "industrial neighbourhood" for on-site manufacturing. For the first time, it will also allow the return of hundreds of kilograms of lunar samples, hardware and materials to Earth. Why is NASA going back to the Moon when we have already been there? When Apollo 8 first sent humans towards the Moon in December 1968, America was a deeply divided nation, torn apart by the unpopular Vietnam War, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr and Robert Kennedy, and waves of protests across cities and campuses. In those dark times, beating the Soviet Union to the Moon offered a powerful symbol of national pride and geopolitical victory. Apollo became a rare moment

of unity for a troubled country. As Karl Marx famously observed, history repeats itself, "first as tragedy, second as farce." Astronauts are now heading to the Moon amid a US-led unpopular war (in West Asia) and domestic divisions in America. The optics are not working this time. So far, Artemis II has failed to generate the global excitement that Apollo had done. This time, the main driving force is not Cold War rivalry but growing competition with China, which is rapidly advancing its own lunar programme, and the US is determined to maintain its leadership in space. Yet the parallels end there. Unlike Apollo's bold, exploratory spirit, famously captured in Neil Armstrong's words, "one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind", Artemis is increasingly shaped by



strong commercial interests. Private corporations such as SpaceX and Blue Origin view the programme as the foundation for a future lunar economy built around resource mining and industrial activity. For many private investors, NASA's Artemis programme is far more than a government exploration project. It is being seen as crucial seed capital for an emerging lunar economy. With a long-term NASA commitment in place, rather than chasing quick profits, investors see the Moon base as a long-term platform for investment and profit. By dramatically expanding the Commercial Lunar Payload Services programme and committing to dozens of landings over the next decade, NASA is creating the

demand for aerospace infrastructure. This provides the right ecosystem for private companies to make large investments in lunar technology. Water ice at the lunar south pole could one day be turned into rocket fuel and oxygen. The lunar soil could be processed into building materials or solar cells. The planned 'industrial neighbourhood' in the final phase is expected to test on-site manufacturing and return capabilities for lunar production. In effect, government funding is de-risking the Moon for commerce. As industry observers point out, Artemis is laying the tracks for a viable and self-sustaining cislunar economy, from propellant depots and habitats to mining operations. While aerospace corporations are optimistic, scholars and space lawyers are sounding a note of caution. They increasingly compare the commercial rush towards the Moon to America's 19th-century Wild West expansion, a scramble for resources with weak rules, powerful players and uncertain outcomes for those who arrive late.

At the heart of the debate lies the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which declares the Moon the "province of all mankind" and strictly bans national appropriation. The 1979 Moon Agreement takes a step further, designating lunar resources as the "common heritage of mankind" and demanding equitable sharing among all nations. But, predictably, major space powers, including the US, Russia and China, never ratified it. Instead, the US has pushed forward with domestic laws such as the 2015 Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act and the Artemis Accords, now signed by more than 50 nations, including India. These allow private companies to own extracted resources. The US claims that this principle does not violate the non-appropriation doctrine of the Outer Space Treaty. Critics, however, warn that "safety zones" around bases could gradually become de facto territorial claims. Scholars warn that these developments could marginalise Global South nations. The lack of clear rules on jurisdiction, criminal law and labour rights in isolated lunar settlements, and the potential for environmental damage from large-scale mining could generate a 'Wild West' situation. Many pundits fear that without stronger multilateral governance, the Moon could become another arena of unequal enclosure rather than a shared human heritage—and yet another site of global conflict.

Punjab's fiscal shortcut: old withdrawals shadow new 'loan'

The shadow of earlier withdrawals from the GMADA, cumulatively estimated at around Rs 6,500 cr, looms large over the present move to take a Rs 2,500-cr

PUNJAB's decision to tap urban development authorities for a Rs 2,500-crore "loan" would have been easier to accept as a temporary fiscal measure had past experience inspired confidence. It does not. The shadow of earlier withdrawals from the Greater Mohali Area Development Authority (GMADA), cumulatively estimated at around Rs 6,500 crore, looms large over the present move. Those withdrawals, spread over years and different governments, were similarly justified as short-term adjustments. But there is little clarity on their restoration. No transparent timelines, no clear accounting, no convincing evidence that the funds have been fully returned to the authority meant to build Punjab's urban backbone. The inevitable question follows: if yesterday's "loans" remain opaque, why should today's be seen differently? Officially, the current borrowing is meant for development and land acquisition. But with welfare commitments expanding and elections never



too far away, the timing suggests a familiar shift that most ruling parties across the country have embraced

in recent years: prioritising immediate political returns over long-term urban investment. When development bodies become convenient reservoirs, the distinction between a loan and a one-way transfer begins to blur. This has consequences beyond bookkeeping. Authorities like GMADA finance roads, housing and urban infrastructure through land monetisation. Repeated drawdowns weaken their capacity, delay projects and may even push them towards costlier borrowing. In effect, the state risks funding present consumption by eroding future growth.

More troubling is the opacity such practices breed. Internal borrowing masks the true extent of fiscal strain, shifting liabilities off the books while hollowing out institutions within. Punjab's finances need repair. Without credible assurances of repayment, this "loan" risks being seen as a continuation of a familiar, and flawed, fiscal habit.

Portal raj hinders Haryana farmers' MSP access

When a farmer has no functional access to MSP purchase due to registration barriers and the intimidation of a system designed to exhaust him, he will sell to the trader at below MSP.

THERE is a particular kind of cruelty that hides behind the portal and paperwork. It does not announce itself with a loud decree. It does not openly cancel the minimum support price (MSP) to farmers. Instead, it builds — layer upon layer of procedure — a wall so high, so bureaucratically intricate, that the farmer cannot climb it. By the time he gives up and sells his crop at whatever price is offered in mandis, the government washes its hands. That is precisely what the Haryana government is doing in the current wheat procurement season, which started on April 1. We must call it what it is: a back-door, brick-by-brick dismantling of MSP — not through legislation, but through administrative suffocation. Consider what the government has euphemistically called vehicle identification. Every farmer bringing wheat to a mandi must display the tractor-trolley's vehicle number, have it photographed at the mandi gate, upload that photo to the government portal and only then receive a gate pass to proceed.

On the surface, this sounds like reasonable digitalisation. In practice, it is a trap built on a single false assumption — that every Haryana farmer owns a tractor-trolley. Over 85% of India's farmers are small and marginal, holding less than two hectares. In Haryana, where land fragmentation is accelerating, the vast majority do not own tractors, let alone trolleys. They hire them — from neighbours, from contractors — season after season, at market rates they can barely afford. Now ask the question the government refuses to answer: if a farmer hires different tractor-trolleys at different times, as most farmers must and do, will the portal accept the same farmer appearing with different vehicle numbers on each visit? It will not. It has not been designed to do so. And

there is a reason for that design choice.

There is, moreover, a second and even deeper contradiction. The Haryana government itself does not permit tractor-trolleys for commercial operations — meaning hiring them out for crop transportation is technically illegal under existing state regulations.

So the farmer who hires a trolley is arriving at the mandi gate in a "commercially operated" vehicle that the law does not recognise. The hired trolley cannot get a transport permit. Without a transport permit, the vehicle number cannot be verified. Without verification, no gate pass. Without a gate pass, no entry. The farmer goes home. The trader waits outside the gate, cash in hand, ready to buy at Rs 400-500/quintal below MSP.

The complications do not stop at the vehicle gate. Farmers must first register on the 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' portal — a prerequisite that excludes the tens of thousands of elderly, marginalised and digitally illiterate farmers who lack smartphone access. Gate passes must be generated via the e-Kharid mobile app, which requires an unreliable Internet connection in the villages of Haryana's farming belt. The mandis are geo-fenced, so any GPS discrepancy, network glitch, or server outage can prevent a farmer from entering, with no offline fallback or appeal. Biometric verification of the farmer or an authorised representative is mandatory at the time of bidding — a step that routinely fails when the fingerprints of farmers, worn by years of field work, do not register cleanly on scanners. Each of these requirements, individually, might pass as a modernisation measure. Together, they form a deliberate gauntlet, and the farmer at the end of it is not a beneficiary; he is the target. urement has received some

attention; the government's abandonment of mustard farmers is the quieter, and in some ways more complete, betrayal. Mustard growers across Mahendargarh, Rewari, Bhiwani, Hisar and Fatehabad are being forced to sell their crop to private traders at prices well below the MSP of Rs 5,950 per quintal. Procurement by government agencies under NAFED and state bodies



has been either absent or tokenistic at most mandis this season. When a farmer has no functional access to MSP procurement — due to registration barriers, lack of a trolley, the simple intimidation of a system designed to exhaust him — he will sell to whoever is standing in front of him. He times his arrival to coincide with the government's absence. The most damning evidence of intent, however, is numerical and undeniable. The Haryana government has quietly revised its wheat

procurement target downward — from 80 lakh metric tonnes to 72 lakh metric tonnes for the 2026-27 season.

That reduction of 8 lakh tonnes, at the current MSP of Rs 2,585 per quintal, amounts to approximately Rs 2,068 crore in MSP income that Haryana's farmers will not receive from government procurement. That money does not evaporate. It transfers, as it does every year when procurement falls short, to private traders who absorb the surplus at prices Rs 400 to Rs 500 below MSP. This is not an administrative calibration. It is a state-engineered transfer of wealth — from the farmer to the trader — executed quietly, without announcement, by a state government. The Central government has, for over a decade, refused to translate the Swaminathan Commission's landmark recommendation into law — that MSP be set at C2+50%, meaning a guaranteed 50% profit over the comprehensive cost of cultivation, including land rental. Even the current MSP of Rs 2,585 per quintal for wheat falls short of this benchmark in most Haryana districts when input costs, labour, diesel and irrigation are accurately accounted. Even within this already limited framework, procurement targets are being cut. The farmer who grows this country's food does not have the luxury of a portal, a gate pass timeline or a biometric scanner. The farmer has a field, a family, a loan and the harvest ripening right now under the April sun. Governance is not about building systems that protect the government itself from accountability, transparency and efficiency.

Punjab govt's Adarsh school mixes up parents' names, teachers to pay

Rs 2.82 lakh to CBSE to correct error

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The teachers of a government-run school in Punjab will contribute Rs 2.82 lakh from their pockets within two days to pay the Central Board of Secondary School (CBSE) the requisite fee to make corrections after the school staff, in a goof-up, allegedly swapped the names of father and mother in the the Class 10 registration forms of 113 students. If not corrected, the students of Edustar Adarsh Senior Secondary School, Kalewal will get marksheets with their father's name written in the column meant for mother and vice-versa.

With the CBSE charging Rs 2,500 per child for the correction, the school has to pay Rs 2.82 lakh by April 10 (Friday).

The Punjab government in 2008 had set up Punjab Education Development Board (PEDB) to set up and run Adarsh schools in the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode to provide free education to the poor and

needy children. However, in some cases, such as in Kalewal, the private partners abandoned the project, bringing schools under the direct administration of state government. On Tuesday, parents received a message from the school asking them to pay the correction fee of Rs 2,500. However, after several parents gathered in school premises on Wednesday to object, the authorities said that "not a penny will be taken from them."

Ginni Duggal, district education officer (secondary), Mohali and the administrator of the Edustar Adarsh School, said: "We are trying to find how this discrepancy happened, or if it was a technical error. The priority is to submit the correction fee to the CBSE so that the children receive error-free marksheets." "Not a single penny will be taken from any parent. We will submit the fee from our own sources and ensure that it is paid before the deadline ends," said Duggal. Earlier, the school authorities



in the message to the parents had sought "support" saying that an "unexpected and urgent situation" has arisen. Stating that the names of mother and father "were

exchanged" in the registration forms, the message further said, "We have received a mail from CBSE. The board has imposed processing fee of Rs 2,500 per student for

correction. We need your support so that correction information is printed and our students can receive correct DMC from CBSE... As we have no time, you are requested to submit Rs 2,500 in school tomorrow (April 8) so that we can submit fee by April 9". Duggal said that the messages were sent to the parents "without taking her into the loop." "Once I got to know and intervened, the matter was sorted and the principal has been instructed that not a penny will be taken from parents. Teachers and other staff have decided to contribute on their own," Duggal told.

Principal Suman Lata said it was decided to take help from the parents as it was an emergency situation. "Later the idea was dropped. We have decided not to take government help and the school staff will contribute from their pockets to collect the amount. Teachers have decided to take responsibility of the clerical mistake," she said.

Short news

Sister and lover arrested for brother's murder in Farrukhabad

Farrukhabad. (Agency)

A shocking case of betrayal within a family has come to light. A 25-year-old man, Karan Mishra, who aspired to join the police force and had recently appeared for a sub-inspector recruitment exam, was murdered by his own sister and her lover, police disclosed on Thursday.

Karan had visited his sister Pooja's house to drop her off and stayed overnight on Tuesday.

During the night, he discovered her long-running relationship with her lover, Jitendra alias Jeetu. Fearing exposure, Pooja and her lover allegedly conspired to kill him. Jitendra shot Karan in the head in Pooja's presence. They later disposed of the body near a riverside and cleaned the house to destroy evidence.

The crime was eventually exposed when Pooja's 10-year-old son, Ritik, revealed the truth to the police. Suspicion had already arisen when Pooja herself went to file a missing person complaint.

After interrogation, both accused confessed, and the body was recovered. Police have taken them into custody and further legal action is underway.

Lt Gen Pratik Sharma chairs security review to boost J&K counter-terror grid

Srinagar. (Agency)

To strengthen counter-terrorism efforts in Jammu and Kashmir, Army's Northern Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, chaired a high-level meeting of Joint Control Centres to review the evolving security situation in the union Territory.

Army said the meeting focused on assessing the dynamic security landscape and enhancing the effectiveness of the counter-terrorism grid.

"Focused and deliberate discussions were held with all stakeholders on strengthening the intelligence grid and ensuring optimum utilisation of resources for a stronger Counter Terrorism grid," the Army's Northern Command said on X.

Officials said security forces in Jammu and Kashmir have institutionalised weekly joint security review meetings to boost coordination and operational synergy among multiple agencies. These meetings are attended by senior officials from both Jammu and Kashmir regions, bringing various forces under a unified framework.

They added that deliberations during these sessions include intelligence sharing, improving joint operational readiness, refining inter-agency coordination, and strengthening the overall counter-terrorism mechanism. Importantly these meeting gather structured feedback and inputs from officers on ground zero

Five buses damaged in late-night fire at Kupwara

Srinagar. (Agency)

At least five buses were damaged in a late-night fire incident in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The blaze broke out at the main bus stand Kupwara during the night and quickly spread, engulfing several parked vehicles.

Officials said three buses were completely gutted, while two others sustained partial damage. Fire and Emergency Services personnel rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after hectic efforts, preventing further damage. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

Yogi orders immediate compensation to farmers for damage to rabi crops hit by rain, hailstorm

Officials asked to conduct accurate surveys, ensuring every affected farmer and sharecropper is covered, govt says

Lucknow. (Agency)

Expressing concern over the reported damage to rabi crops due to unseasonal rain, hailstorms and fire incidents in some areas, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday directed officials to ensure time-bound assessment of losses and immediate compensation to affected farmers and sharecroppers.

Chairing a review meeting, Adityanath said the government must act "swiftly, transparently and with sensitivity", stressing that delays in relief distribution would not be tolerated. "It is natural for farmers to feel worried in such adverse circumstances, and the state government stands firmly with them," he said. Officials have been asked to carry out accurate and fair surveys at the village level, ensuring that every affected farmer and sharecropper is covered. The Chief Minister

directed district administrations to complete assessments quickly and send reports without delay so that compensation is not held up. He also called for a close



coordination between the Revenue, Agriculture and other departments at the district level. In addition, officials were asked to work with insurance companies to

expedite settlement of crop insurance claims and ensure that farmers receive benefits under existing schemes.

Directing the Revenue Department, the CM said funds from the State Disaster Relief Fund should be released immediately to districts. The district magistrates have been tasked with ensuring prompt and transparent distribution of relief, while relief camps should be set up wherever required, the government said.

Mandi committees have also been asked to extend support to affected farmers. Taking note of fire incidents reported from some areas, the Chief Minister directed that compensation in cases of loss of life and livestock be provided within 24 hours. He also asked officials to ensure that eligible beneficiaries are covered under the Krishak Durgatna Bima Yojana.

'Coordinate with organisers' UP DGP at security review meeting for upcoming festivals & events

Orders to remove incharges of five police stations from field duty over non-compliance to Zero Fatality District scheme

Lucknow. (Agency)

Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Rajeev Krishna on Wednesday held a security review meeting, and asked senior police officials to coordinate with organisers at the district level in view of upcoming festivals, birth anniversaries of icons, and other events to ensure timely necessary arrangements are made.

At the meeting joined through video conferencing by all ADGs of zones, IGS/DIGs of ranges, police commissioners and SSPs, Krishna also took stock of the disposal of IGRS (Integrated Grievance Redressal System) cases, Zero Fatality District (ZFD) and City Reducing Traffic Congestion (C-RTC) campaign, Yaksh App, e-evidence, and other law and order-related matters.

On the Zero Fatality District scheme, the DGP directed to initiate action against the police officials not adhering to

instructions and not performing as required. Of the 487 police stations selected for the implementation of the scheme, 46 witnessed an increase in the



number of accidents, with a significant spike in five.

Orders were issued to remove the incharges of the five police stations — one each from Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Kannauj, Barabanki

and Jaunpur — from field duty. Also, a preliminary inquiry was ordered against the traffic circle officers of Barabanki and Jaunpur.

In a special emphasis on effective coordination with media, the DGP asked the officials to provide factual and updated information regarding any incident immediately to print and electronic media. Also, correct information should be updated on social media in time and replies should be given to important posts, he added. After reviewing implementation of e-evidence, he issued instructions to provide proper training to all investigating officers, stressing on ensuring timely disposal of investigations. According to the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), he said, general investigations should be completed within 60 days and serious cases within 90 days, ensuring quality and timely filing of charge sheets.

Goyal inaugurates north India's first central pivot irrigation system at PAU

Goyal reiterated the Punjab government's strong commitment to groundwater preservation and applauded the significant strides made in increasing the use of surface water in agriculture.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Soil & Water Conservation, Mines & Geology, and Water Resources Minister Barinder Kumar Goyal on Wednesday inaugurated Punjab's first Central Pivot Irrigation System at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) in Ludhiana, marking north India's first installation of this modern, automated irrigation technology, the Punjab government said in a statement. Describing the technology, the minister said the central pivot irrigation system offers a one-time, fully automated irrigation solution, particularly beneficial for Punjab's farms facing acute labour shortages. "The system requires no

manual intervention — precision irrigation for a three-acre field can be achieved simply by entering the required data, allowing the entire operation to be completed in a single cycle," he said.

Appreciating the world-class irrigation facility installed at PAU, he noted that it would serve as an excellent demonstration model of precision and automated irrigation for the farming community. Chief Conservator of Soils Mohinder Singh Saini provided technical details of the NABARD-assisted project. "Inverted sprinkler systems are mounted on a 60-metre-long arm that revolves around a central pivot point, irrigating a



three-acre circular area without any manual labour. The system significantly improves water use efficiency, enhances crop yields, and will act as a model for modern irrigation practices across the

state," he added.

Goyal urged scientists, officers and students to focus on innovation and adopt cutting-edge farming technologies, especially in the emerging era of Artificial Intelligence (AI). He highlighted the critical groundwater situation in Punjab and emphasised the urgent need to promote modern irrigation methods for water conservation. Goyal reiterated the Punjab government's strong commitment to groundwater preservation and applauded the significant strides made in increasing the use of surface water in agriculture.

Cyber café owner among 7 booked for minor girl's gangrape in Bareilly

No arrests yet, accused committed the crime by threatening to circulate a video of the girl, say police.



Lucknow. (Agency)

An FIR has been registered against seven persons, including the owner of a cyber café, for allegedly gangraping a minor girl in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly district by threatening to circulate an objectionable video of her, police said. The alleged incident took place in the cyber café on April 2 when the teenaged victim was called to meet a youth she was acquainted with, they added.

She was previously assaulted by the youth, but had not lodged a complaint at the time due to fear of social stigma, it was claimed in the police complaint. The youth had allegedly recorded a video of the incident and used it to threaten and coerce the victim, it was alleged.

The incident came to light after the victim's condition deteriorated days after the alleged gangrape. She disclosed the purported episode when questioned by her family who then approached the police to file a case, officials said. "The case has been registered against seven persons, including six by name. All the accused are in their twenties," a police official said.

No one has been arrested so far and they are collecting evidence in the case, the official said, adding that raids were on to trace the accused named in the FIR. The first alleged assault took place in a room near the café on March 19 when the accused who knew the victim recorded the act. He later threatened to circulate the video if she disclosed the incident to anyone, and continued to intimidate her thereafter, police said.

On April 2, the girl was intercepted by another youth who insisted she meet the person she knew, police said, adding he threatened that the video would be uploaded online if she refused to comply. Fearing the threat, the girl accompanied him on a motorcycle to the café, where she was gangraped by the accused, police added. The case has been registered under charges of gangrape, and provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO).

The nuclear stunner India pulled off US, France invested billions but failed

New Delhi.(Agency)

India has pulled off what some of the world's biggest nuclear powers — the United States and France — could not, despite pumping in billions of dollars. On April 6, the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu achieved first criticality, which means the reactor started a self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction for the first time. We reported on the scientific achievement at Kalpakkam earlier, but here we will tell you why this feat is stunning, and why every Indian should be proud of it. We will also tell you how millions of Indians will benefit from it.

It is not just another reactor attaining criticality. With the development, India gained a capability that even the US, France and Japan failed to sustain. They surrendered. Only Russia currently operates fast breeder reactors at commercial scale. China is still taking baby steps to operationalise the technology at a commercial scale.



China does have the small experimental CEFR reactor and the CFR-600 prototype."Once fully operational, India will become only the second country in the world after Russia to

operate a commercial fast breeder reactor," a statement by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) noted. The achievement is crucial because India has little uranium, which is an

essential fuel for nuclear reactors. However, the self-sustaining technology will help India use thorium. The country has some of the world's largest thorium reserves, found on the sandy shores of Odisha, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh.

The Kalpakkam reactor beautifully blends the two realities of little uranium and abundant thorium reserves. The reactor, powered by uranium in the first stage, can be sustained by thorium-blended fuel in the later stages. This will end India's dependency on uranium imports. The reactors at Kalpakkam can produce more nuclear fuel than they consume. They can also help India eventually tap thorium to power the country for centuries. That makes it a strategic win as much as a scientific one. "India has officially entered the second stage of its three-stage nuclear power programme, a vision first conceived by Dr Homi Jehangir Bhabha, the architect of India's nuclear programme," added the PIB statement.

India achieved stunning success at the Kalpakkam nuclear plant, which even the US and France failed to. Only Russia has a commercially running Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR). The Kalpakkam FBR will use India's huge reserves of Thorium to power millions of households, and reduce the country's energy imports.

'Don't know why he went into the water': Shock and grief in family of student

New Delhi.(Agency)

The grieving family of Amity University student Harshit Bhatt said on Wednesday that he knew how to swim, but they failed to understand why he had chosen to go into the water. At the District Government Multi Speciality Hospital in Noida's Sector 39 where the body was kept in the mortuary, Harshit's mother stood crying amid relatives who held her tightly.

"He knew how to swim, but I don't know why he went into such deep water. His friends said that Harshit had said he wanted to go for a swim," a relative who was present at the hospital told.

According to this relative, the students' exam had gone well, and they had wanted to celebrate. However, there were still some papers left to be taken in the examination — "I don't know why they wanted to celebrate today itself," the relative said. A police officer said several bottles of beer had



been found at the site of the tragedy. "We are investigating," the officer said.

According to the family and police, Harshit and his three friends were all studying for the same degree. One of his friends lives in Noida, while the other two are residents of Delhi. Harshit has a younger sister, and his father is a retired defence officer. He was in Jammu on Wednesday, and had not been contacted till the evening, relatives said. The family lives in Indirapuram in Ghaziabad.

Woman's body found stuffed inside bed box, 3 arrested

New Delhi.(Agency)

The body of a 32-year-old woman was found stuffed inside a double bed box at a paying guest (PG) accommodation in Outer Delhi's Mangol Puri on Tuesday, leading to the arrest of her boyfriend, who allegedly smothered her to death on Tuesday. Along with the boyfriend, Deepak (22), two of his friends — Surendra alias Bobby and Joginder — all residents of Mangol Puri, were also arrested, police said.

A senior officer said both the woman and Deepak were married and had been in a relationship for the last six months. "She got married about 9 months ago. After three months of the wedding, she came in contact with Deepak and became very good friends," the officer said. However, the friendship turned sour, possibly due to some financial issues, said the officer, adding that the two used to have frequent arguments off late.

"The woman had called Deepak to her friend's PG in Mangolpuri to resolve their dispute. Deepak came with Surinder and Joginder. Deepak and the woman went to a room on the



third floor and had an argument. Following this, Deepak's friends entered the room," the officer said. "Deepak, enraged, smothered the woman. He then put her body inside the bed box and left with his friends."

Police said a PCR call was received by Mangolpuri police station regarding a woman found lying under suspicious circumstances at a building in Patthar Market. The PG facility was being run on the third floor of the building by one Amarjeet, they added.

Police said that on Tuesday, the woman and the accused met at the PG around 4.30 pm. After the accused left, Amarjeet grew suspicious and alerted the police, they added.

Protests erupt in Manipur after bomb attack kills 2 children, police fire tear gas

In the aftermath of the blasts, the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) held a protest rally in Imphal on Wednesday. The protestors gathered at Wangkhei Andro Parking area around 3 pm, holding placards and banners demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh and State Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam over the incident.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Tension prevailed across Manipur on Wednesday (April 8) as widespread protests erupted in the valley after two minors died in Bishnupur district on April 7 in a bomb attack. Normalcy was severely disrupted, with markets, educational institutions, banks, and offices remaining closed. Roads were deserted as residents stayed indoors amid strict enforcement by security personnel.

In the aftermath of the blasts, the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) held a protest rally in Imphal on Wednesday. The protestors gathered at Wangkhei Andro Parking area around 3 pm, holding placards and banners demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh and State Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam over the incident.

The protestors were met with tear gas shells by the local police as they allegedly defied curfew restrictions, which were imposed after the explosion occurred. The police also prevented the rally from proceeding further.



Speaking to the Press, COCOMI executive member Nahakpam Shanta held the government accountable for the recent law and order disruption in the valley. He said that the administration failed to ensure the safety of civilians.

In addition to this, Shanta referred to an incident near a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp, where three young individuals were allegedly killed in a

firing by security personnel. He described the alleged killings as indicative of serious lapses in governance and security arrangements. Other than Imphal, a sit-in protest was also witnessed in the Kakching district, where members of the Keirak Apunba Meira Paibi condemned the attack and also raised concerns over the alleged use of force by CRPF personnel on civilians protesting the incident.

Racket that hired students to write exams for entrance examination candidates busted

New Delhi.(Agency)

Two applications to remotely access systems at exam centers, a bunch of students from universities like IIT and DTU hired as "problem solvers" and a flat in Dwarka. That's all it took for a racket to allegedly write exams on behalf of candidates fraudulently, police said.

One Harsh Vardhan (28) has been apprehended in connection with the case, they said.

Harsh, a resident of Patna in Bihar, was running the show from Dwarka's Happy Homes apartment, police said. He allegedly "hired" students from prestigious universities, telling them that they had to play the role of "problem-solvers" for various coaching centre examinations and test papers. Based on the repute of their colleges and skillset, they were offered fees ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000, per question. Police said that on Tuesday, the racket was allegedly helping candidates appearing for an IT lab test in Jodhpur — part of the entrance exam of Mumbai's prestigious Narsee Monjee Institute of Management

Studies. Police said at least 27 students, including five from IIT-Roorkee, were bound down. "Harsh had admit cards of the candidates and his associate Pranjal arranged students who they hired on the pretext of making them solve questions for platforms like Byju's and DoubtNut," DCP (Dwaraka) Kushal Pal said.

The accused would use applications like Any Admin and Ammy Desk to access the systems of the original candidates, police said. "Prima facie, an organised racket involved in impersonation, remote system access and outsourcing of answers has been unearthed," a senior officer said, adding that an FIR has been registered under relevant sections of the BNS. The operation began after officers received a tip-off regarding some alleged suspicious activities inside the building in Dwarka. A team conducted a raid at the premises, where several youths were found, they said, adding that their identities were verified and sustained questioning led investigators to the core of the operation.

Panic spreads as 3,700 names deleted in Bengal village after SIR adjudication

New Delhi.(Agency)

The fate of nearly 4,000 voters in a village in West Bengal's Malda hangs in the balance, with the voter list for the first phase already frozen, leaving them -- like lakhs of others across the state -- unable to cast their vote on April 23.

Their future as voters now remains uncertain, as the Supreme Court-mandated Appellate Tribunal will decide their status if they choose to appeal. Whether they will be able to vote in the next elections -- the 2029 Lok Sabha polls -- will be decided by the tribunal once it begins functioning in full capacity. Tension is palpable among residents of Malda's Mahisbathani village, where 3,700 names out of 27,000 voters have been struck off in the post-SIR

adjudication process. As per Election Commission rules, voters whose names have been deleted can approach



the appellate tribunal, but they will not be able to participate in the first phase of voting. As a result, those whose names have been removed are uncertain about the future of their voter

cards. There is also confusion among many residents in the area about how to apply in the next stage of the process.

Notably, the panchayat includes several villages such as Kadamtali, Rahutgram, Baluatola, and Sugabathan. In the run-up to previous elections, these villages would come alive -- party offices would open, walls would be painted with slogans, and the area would be filled with symbols, with candidates campaigning amid drums and fanfare. But this time, that vibrancy is missing, leaving residents disheartened. Residents of Kadamtala expressed disappointment, saying that elections usually bring a festive atmosphere to the village, but that is absent this time.

Another water-filled construction pit, another drowning in Noida: Less than 3 months after techie's car fell into ditch, Amity student drowns

New Delhi.(Agency)

A 23-year-old student of Amity University who was allegedly out to celebrate the end of examinations with three friends drowned in a waterlogged construction pit close to the university's campus in Noida on Wednesday afternoon.

The tragedy occurred in Sector 94 off the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway, less than three months after a software professional drowned in his car that plunged into a similar construction pit filled with drain water in Sector 150 at the other end of the same expressway. Amity University identified the deceased student as Harshit Bhatt. Police said the other three students who had entered the water to try to save Harshit were pulled out safely.

"Harshit Bhatt was a final year student of Amity School of Physical Education. Exams are going on...and he left the campus today after writing his exam in the afternoon. We were informed by the police about his death," Savita Mehta, Vice President, Communications at the university, said in a statement.

"We are fully cooperating with the police. We express our deepest condolences to the bereaved family members," the university said. Police said the incident took place around 3.15 pm, when the students had gathered by the pit, resembling a small lake. Noida DCP Saad Miya Khan said police rushed to the spot after the Sector 126 police station received information about a possible drowning.

Teams from the NDRF (National Disaster Response Force), SDRF (State Disaster Response Force), and Fire department also reached the spot. "While three of the students were rescued, one drowned," Khan said.

"The body has been sent for a post mortem examination. We are trying to ascertain what exactly happened and what led to the drowning," he said. The nature and depth of the pit were also being investigated, police officers said. In January, 27-year-old Yuvraj Mehta's car had fallen in a construction pit in Sector 150 while he was on way home in dense fog.

NEWS BOX

David Miller hero or villain? Costly call is IPL 2026 Play of the Day in Delhi

New Delhi. (Agency)

There are games you win from hopeless positions, and then there are games you lose from winning ones, and at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Wednesday, Delhi Capitals managed to experience both in the space of a few overs as David Miller produced a breathtaking rescue act only to be left distraught at the finish when Gujarat Titans sealed a one-run win to open their account in IPL 2026. In a game of fluctuating fortunes, David Miller did the hard work, only to falter in a familiar fashion with a brain fade of his own at the end as Gujarat Titans opened their account by beating Delhi Capitals by the barest of margins, and if that felt like a script seen before, it is because Miller has a history in last-over chases, and it is not of a happy kind, with this latest Indian Premier League defeat he can add to that tally. KL Rahul and Patum Nissanka had done the hard work upfront, putting Delhi Capitals in control with a 76-run stand off 49 balls, with Rahul anchoring the chase through a fluent 92 off 52



and Nissanka providing early momentum with a brisk 41 off 24, but just when the game seemed to be slipping away, Rashid Khan produced a spell that turned it on its head, removing Nitish Rana, the in-form Sameer Rizvi and Axar Patel in the middle overs to drag Gujarat Titans back into the contest and shift the momentum decisively. The slide continued when Tristan Stubbs was run out, leaving Delhi Capitals suddenly staring at a familiar squeeze heading into the final two overs with 36 still needed, a target that looked steep once again despite the nature of the surface and the shorter boundary on one side, and just when the chase seemed to be slipping away, the pressure firmly sat with the hosts. It was a tough ask, but there was still hope when David Miller returned to the crease after getting his finger treated in the dressing room. He had earlier retired hurt when Delhi needed 81 runs off 42 balls. While he had initially been expected to play around KL Rahul, that plan did not last long, as Rahul nicked behind off a full delivery from Mohammed Siraj two balls later, leaving Miller with the entire chase on his shoulders.

IPL 2026: Shubman Gill fined for slow over rate in Delhi Capitals vs Gujarat Titans

New Delhi. (Agency)

Shubman Gill has been penalised after the Gujarat Titans maintained a slow over rate in the IPL 2026 match against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday, April 8 at Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. As this was his team's first over-rate offence of the season under Article 2.22 of the IPL Code of Conduct, Gill was fined INR 12 lakh.

"Gujarat Titans (GT) Captain Shubman Gill has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during Match No. 14 of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 against Delhi Capitals (DC) at Arun Jaitley Stadium, Delhi," said an IPL media advisory. "As this was his team's first offence of the season under Article 2.22 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, which pertains to minimum over-rate offences, Gill was fined INR 12 lakh," it added.



Gill became the second captain to be fined this season after Punjab Kings skipper Shreyas Iyer, who has already been penalised twice for the same over-rate offence. Gill also led from the front with a 45-ball 70, hitting four fours and five sixes, as the Titans edged the Capitals by one run. As per the IPL Code of Conduct, teams must complete their bowling innings within 90 minutes. For a first over-rate offence, only the captain is fined Rs 12 lakh. For a second offence, the captain is fined Rs 24 lakh, while the rest of the playing XI are penalised Rs 6 lakh or 25 per cent of their match fee, whichever is lower. For a third and every subsequent offence in a season, the captain is fined Rs 30 lakh, while the rest of the playing XI are fined the lesser of Rs 12 lakh or 50 per cent of their match fee.

When common sense prevailed in PSL: Iftikhar didn't repeat David Miller's mistake

David Miller's refusal to take a single proved costly as Delhi Capitals missed out on a golden chance to beat Gujarat Titans. The moment drew comparisons with Iftikhar Ahmed, whose smarter call in a similar situation helped Peshawar Zalmi win.

LISBON. (Agency)

David Miller made a costly error, denying Delhi Capitals a well-deserved victory in their IPL 2026 clash against Gujarat Titans on Wednesday, April 8, at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. With DC needing two runs off the last two balls, Miller refused a single after Kuldeep Yadav nudged Prasad Krishna's delivery. Needing two off the final ball, Miller then missed a slower delivery from Prasad, and Kuldeep was run out at the striker's end as Miller attempted to steal a bye. DC lost by one run and that immediately sparked debate over whether Miller should have taken the single on the penultimate ball, at the very least ensuring his team did not



lose within the allotted 40 overs. A similar incident unfolded in the Pakistan Super League (PSL), but there, better game awareness prevailed. During the match between Hyderabad Kingsmen and Peshawar Zalmi on Wednesday at the National Stadium in Karachi, Iftikhar Ahmed found himself in an almost identical situation, with Zalmi needing two runs off the last two balls. Unlike Miller, Iftikhar took the single, allowing Aamer Jamal to finish

the job with another run and seal a four-wicket win for Zalmi. Iftikhar was named Player of the Match for his all-round effort, having scored a crucial 15 runs and picked up four wickets. Had Miller taken the single against GT, DC would have had a far better chance of winning, and he too might have entered the Player of the Match conversation.

GAVASKAR DEFENDS MILLER

Former India batter Sunil Gavaskar defended

PV Sindhu exits in Round of 16, loses to World No. 2 at Badminton Asia Championships

CHENNAI. (Agency)

PV Sindhu's campaign at the Badminton Asia Championships ended in the Round of 16 at the Ningbo Olympic Sports Center on Thursday, April 9. The Indian shuttler was beaten 21-18, 21-8 in straight games by World No. 2 Wang Zhi Yi, bringing her run in the tournament to a close. Sindhu showed signs of resistance in the opening game, staying in touch through much of the contest and pushing Wang during the mid-phase. However, the Chinese player managed to pull away at crucial moments, stringing together points to close out the first game 21-18. While Sindhu remained competitive early on, she was unable to convert key rallies when it mattered most. The second game, however, saw a clear shift in momentum. Wang took control from the outset, dictating the pace and building a steady lead. Sindhu struggled to find answers as the gap

widened, with Wang maintaining pressure through consistent shot-making and control



in rallies. The Indian could not recover, eventually going down 21-8 to concede the match in straight games. The result mirrors Sindhu's performance at the 2025 edition of the tournament, where she had also exited in the Round of 16 after a three-game loss to Akane Yamaguchi. For Wang Zhi Yi, the win marks an improvement from last year, when she was knocked out at the same stage

following a three-game defeat to Sim Yu Jin.

Sindhu's exit also adds to a difficult outing for India in the singles events. Earlier in the tournament, Lakshya Sen suffered a first-round defeat to Lee Cheuk Yiu, losing in straight games despite coming into the competition on the back of a strong showing at the All England Badminton Championships. The early exits of both Sindhu and Lakshya have dented India's hopes in the singles categories. However, India still has representation in the Round of 16 across other categories. HS Prannoy is set to take on Weng Hong Yang in men's singles, while in mixed doubles, the pair of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto will face Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei. In women's doubles, Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand are scheduled to go up against Yuki Fukushima and Mayu Matsumoto later in the day, with Aakarshi Kashyap also in action in women's singles.

IPL 2026: Can KKR spark a revival vs LSG or will rain spoil party in Kolkata again?

New Delhi. (Agency)

Some were left to wonder if Ajinkya Rahane was a madman or a sorcerer. His decision to bat first against the Punjab Kings raised eyebrows, but some were left wondering what would have been the case after seeing RR thrash MI in Guwahati. Guess we will never know. However, the batting performance from KKR against PBKS kind of showed what their season has been all about. The promise with the bat hasn't truly delivered despite some big names in their lineup and the bowling still remains a work in progress. To add to this all the noise around Ajinkya Rahane and his form and the failure of Cameron Green as their big-money buy, the three-time champions are in a bit of a panic state already. Kolkata were saved in the end by the rain last time around against Punjab, as their batting seemed to be in a bit of disarray and were reeling at 25 for two. The combination hasn't worked out, especially with Green not being able to bowl till now. There is some good news ahead of Thursday as the all-rounder is reportedly set to roll his arm over against Lucknow. LSG have kind of started off in the

manner that has defined them in the last few



seasons. There is a lot to cheer about on the bowling front but inconsistency with the bat continues. Against SRH, they almost made a meal out of the contest before skipper Rishabh Pant bailed them out. But the bowling led by Mohammed Shami will have their tails up at the Eden Gardens given the veteran pacer is coming back home. He seemed to be confident of having the edge in the contest, which will not be good news for KKR fans. LSG have emerged as the standout powerplay bowling unit in IPL 2026, striking seven times in the

opening six overs across two matches while conceding at an exceptional economy rate of just 4.58 — the best in the competition so far. But adding to the excitement will be KKR's powerplay batting run-rate, which stands at 11.29, but they have lost six wickets during this phase.

Add to this the return of former Kolkata bowling coach Bharat Arun and spin bowling coach Carl Crowe, Lucknow could have some tricks up their sleeves to get the second win. But with the weather in Kolkata being in prime focus, both teams will be hoping that the rain stays away and they can battle it out for two points. For some teams in the IPL, the issue becomes about having an abundance of talent. But when it comes to KKR, the problem is about getting the right combination in place.

Adding to this are the injury woes that they have suffered this season, even before the first delivery was bowled. It was compounded by the absence of Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy during the PBKS game.

IPL 2026: KKR mystery spinner Daksh ready for big delivery

New Delhi. (Agency)

When he started playing cricket, Sandeep Kharub, a left-arm pacer from Haryana, like any aspiring cricketer, wanted to represent India. He went on to play for his state in the age-group tournaments and was trying hard to get into the senior Haryana team when a road accident cut short his cricketing career. Riding on a bike, Sandeep lost control as an Army truck took a U-turn on that fateful day. He skidded and fell down with a tyre of the truck crushing his fingers on his left hand.

Sandeep returned to the field after a few months but could not hold the ball and hurl it towards the batters as he used to do in the past. That made Sandeep, now 43, to foray into coaching, develop players and live his dream of representing the country through them. Daksh Kamra, one of the latest recruits of Kolkata Knight Riders, is one among them. Bought at his base price of Rs 30 lakh at the mini-auction, Daksh is a right-arm mystery spinner. The 23-year-old from Hisar, Haryana has many variations like carrom ball

and googly but bowls the latter at a speed of 95-97kmph making the batters rush.

With his role model Varun Chakravarthy struggling at the moment, Daksh might get a game sooner rather than later and his coach strongly believes his ward will grab the opportunity with both hands. "That road mishap might have ended my dream but I am quite sure my pupils like Daksh will help me realise it," Sandeep, who runs Elite Cricket Academy in Hisar, told The New Indian Express. Sandeep saw Daksh playing cricket around 14 years ago and soon the association began as he decided to coach upcoming talents from the area. "He is a good batter and can hit long sixes. As far as his bowling is concerned, he used to be a leg spinner but around four years ago, we decided to do something different. The game, especially the shortest format, has evolved a lot. So I told him to use the crease and add more variations. He is around six feet tall and that helps him a lot. It helps him generate a lot of bounce. His googlies are good and as they

are bowled at a pace of around 95-96kmph, they rush the batters. Besides, it is also difficult to read his fingers when he bowls the



carrom ball," the coach added. Training with sprinters, hurdlers Cricketers at the Elite Academy do fitness training with track and field athletes. The pacers train with javelin throwers while spinners including Daksh join 100m sprinters and hurdlers for their morning

David Miller's decision, saying the South African backed himself to finish the chase. Gavaskar admitted Miller perhaps should have given Kuldeep Yadav the strike, but stressed his confidence was justified and that he was undone only by Prasad Krishna's superb final delivery. "Yes, he was backing himself to hit the winning runs, but having seen the way Kuldeep Yadav nudged that ball for a single off the first ball maybe he should have given Kuldeep the strike," Gavaskar said. "He should have given the strike. This is all being wise after the event, but the fact remains that the way he had been hitting the previous over and that over as well, he believed that he could do it, simple as that. So you can't fault him for that. He had the confidence that he could do it, but it didn't come off because the ball that Prasad Krishna bowled was an absolutely superb delivery," Gavaskar added. Having suffered their first defeat of IPL 2026, Delhi Capitals will look to bounce back when they take on Chennai Super Kings on Saturday, April 11, at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.

Rashid Khan may step away from Test cricket, doubtful for India clash in June

BARCELONA. (Agency)

Afghanistan's premier spin bowler, Rashid Khan, is pessimistic about playing many Test matches for his country in the coming years, citing workload concerns following back surgery.

The Gujarat Titans star, speaking to the press after his match-winning spell in an IPL 2026 fixture against the Delhi Capitals in Delhi on Wednesday, revealed that his doctor has strongly advised him against playing red-ball cricket. Afghanistan are scheduled to play a Test against India national cricket team in June in New Chandigarh, but Rashid admitted he is unlikely to feature. Notably, he was part of Afghanistan's historic first-ever Test match, which came against India in 2018. Red-ball cricket is a little difficult because that was the first thing my doctor told me — 'stay away from red-ball cricket,' Rashid said.



IPL 2026, DC vs GT: Highlights | Scorecard

"I still went ahead and played. After the surgery, I played a game against Zimbabwe and bowled 67 overs, which was crazy. The doctor told me, 'if you don't want to play cricket, you can keep playing red-ball cricket'. He said it's not going to help me and that I won't be able to play for long. 'I still went ahead and played, but when he found out I had bowled 67 overs across two innings, he was shocked. He said, 'you can't do that to yourself'." he added. Since gaining Test status in 2017, Afghanistan have played 12 Tests and Rashid has played in only six of them.

TARGET: 2027 ODI WORLD CUP

Rashid also said he intends to prioritise white-ball cricket, particularly One Day Internationals, as he sets his sights on the 2027 ODI World Cup. India are also set to host Afghanistan for a three-match ODI series in June, and Rashid is expected to be part of that squad. "So yes, I will think about it. But ODI cricket — I really enjoy that format. I am in good shape to play ODIs for a longer period for Afghanistan. However, I want to be careful about how much I play and not put too much load on myself if I want to have a longer career.

fitness regime. "Training with track and field athletes helps them gain more fitness. Physiotherapist Dr Sumit Ranjan prepares a 10-day schedule for each of them keeping their specific skill sets in mind. The fitness training is followed by gym sessions a few hours later with cricket practice at the nets, which is usually held in the evening. A lot of emphasis is paid on fitness in our academy and that is helping them."

Daksh came under radar with his good show while playing for the U23 Haryana team. Scouts from Rajasthan Royals and KKR took note of those performances and he received calls from both the franchises for the selection trials ahead of the 2026 mini auction. "RR head coach Kumar Sangakkara was impressed with him and so was Abhishek Nayar, who is chief coach of KKR. Nayar in fact asked him to bowl different variations and was visibly satisfied with what he saw. Daksh was then asked to represent Mumbai Customs at the DY Patil T20 Cup.

Sensex, Nifty pare some losses as Iran-US ceasefire holds

Mumbai.(Agency)

Domestic equity benchmarks opened on a weak note on Thursday, retreating after the previous session's sharp rally, as investors grappled with renewed volatility and persistent geopolitical uncertainty.

The BSE Sensex declined 354.93 points, or 0.46%, to 77,207.97 in early trade. The Nifty 50 slipped 78.45 points, or 0.33%, to 23,918.90, falling below the psychologically important 24,000 level around 9:20 am. Despite the weak opening, both indices attempted a modest recovery, although intraday swings remained sharp, signalling a cautious undertone in the market. Among stocks, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone dropped around 2%, emerging as one of the key laggards and adding pressure on the benchmarks. The decline comes a day after a strong rebound in equities, when markets surged on the back of easing crude oil prices following a temporary two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran. The rally was also aided by short-covering and renewed buying interest in beaten-down financial stocks. However, the sustainability of that uptrend is now being questioned as fresh tensions in West Asia—particularly concerns around a potential Israeli strike on Lebanon—cloud the outlook. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, said the previous session's rally reflected both valuation comfort and technical factors like short covering.

He noted that while the Reserve Bank of India's recent monetary policy decision was largely on expected lines, the central bank's commentary on growth remains a supportive factor for equities. "The RBI's assessment that growth impulses remain strong, supported by robust private consumption and sustained investment demand, augurs well for the market," he said. With GDP growth projected at 6.9% and inflation at 4.6% for FY27, nominal GDP growth could reach around 11.5%, potentially translating into nearly 12% earnings growth.

That said, Vijayakumar warned that crude oil remains the key variable to watch. Any sharp spike in oil prices due to escalating geopolitical tensions could quickly reverse recent gains and weigh on market sentiment.

Crude oil prices jump up to 4% on Hormuz tensions, ceasefire doubts

Kolkata.(Agency)

Global crude oil prices surged sharply on Thursday amid fears that supply from West Asia may not fully resume, as doubts persist over whether the two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran will hold, with the crucial Strait of Hormuz reportedly remaining restricted.

Brent crude futures jumped as much as 3.31 per cent to \$97.89 per barrel at 9:06 am. The US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude traded at \$98.38, up 4.2 per cent from the previous close. Crude oil benchmarks had slipped up to 20 per cent below the \$100-per-barrel mark on Wednesday -- a level they had been averaging since February 28. In that session, US WTI recorded its biggest fall since April 2020 on expectations that the ceasefire involving the US and Iran would ease tensions and lead to the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. The waterway -- a key route for oil supplies from Gulf producers including Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar to global markets -- remains at the centre of the conflict. Reports of Israeli strikes on Lebanon's Hezbollah have further escalated tensions, while Kuwait, Bahrain and the UAE have also reported missile and drone strikes.

According to reports, Iran has once again closed the Strait of Hormuz following the latest developments. Shippers said they require greater clarity on the terms of the ceasefire before resuming transit through the waterway. Iran has issued maps to guide ships around mines in the Strait and designated safe passage routes in coordination with the country's Revolutionary Guards, Iranian media reported.

Om Power Transmission IPO: Check bid level on Day 1, price band; GMP positive

New Delhi.(Agency)

Om Power Transmission IPO was subscribed 0.19 times overall by 11 am. The public issue was subscribed 0.13 times in the retail category, 0.40 times in QIB (Ex Anchor), and 0.02 times in the NII category. The subscription process opened on Thursday, April 9. The GMP (Grey Market Premium) of Om Power Transmission IPO is also in the positive territory. Let's have a look at the details of the issue. Om Power Transmission IPO raised Rs 45.01 crore from anchor investors. Om Power Transmission is in the business of power transmission infrastructure engineering, procurement, and construction. Om Power Transmission IPO is a book build issue of Rs 150.06 crore which is a combination of fresh issue of 0.76 crore shares amounting to Rs 132.56 crore and OFS part consisting of 0.10 crore shares aggregating to Rs 17.50 crores. Sebi has recently approved several IPOs which can trigger activity in the primary market.

Om Power Transmission IPO GMP

According to investorgain, Om Power Transmission IPO GMP stood at Rs 7 on April 9 morning. Considering a price band of Rs 175, the estimated listing price will be Rs 182 and the listing gain will be 4.00%. The GMP has risen from Rs 1.5 on April 6. However, one has to remember that GMP is an unofficial indicator that is volatile and cannot guarantee any listing gain.

Om Power Transmission IPO price band, lot size

The Om Power Transmission IPO price band is Rs 166-175. For a retail investor, the minimum investible lot size is 85 shares for which he/she has to invest Rs 14,875 based on the upper end of the price band. The lot size investment for sNII is 14 lots or 1,190 shares and that for bNII investors is 68 lots or 5,780 shares.

High Court quashes petition against Mukesh Ambani, RIL; fines complainant

Court calls complaint a gross abuse of legal process, sets aside summons issued against Reliance and Mukesh Ambani, and imposes a fine on the complainant

Bhubaneswar.(Agency)

In a strong rebuke against the repetitive misuse of criminal proceedings, the Orissa High Court has dismissed a complaint filed against Reliance

Industries Limited and its chairman Mukesh Ambani over a defective mobile handset purchased more than 23 years ago. Censuring a lower court, which had issued summons, for lack of judicial scrutiny, the court has ruled that the case was a clear instance of harassment through the legal process. It has also imposed a fine of Rs 1,000 on the complainant, directing that the amount be deposited with the Juvenile Justice Fund of the Odisha State Legal Services Authority within four weeks. In a detailed judgment, Justice Sanjeeb K Panigrahi set aside the complaint pending before the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM) court in Panposh, Rourkela, terming it a 'gross abuse of the process of law'. The case traces back to 2003, when a Rourkela resident subscribed to a telecom scheme of Reliance Infocomm - popularly marketed as 'Kar Lo Duniya Mutthi Mein' by paying Rs 501 and agreeing to monthly payments. He alleged that the handset supplied by a

local dealer was defective and that telecom services were not properly provided. Over the years, the



complainant initiated multiple criminal proceedings against Ambani and associated entities. The first two complaints filed in 2003 and 2004 were quashed by the high court, and the Supreme Court of India dismissed special leave petitions against those orders in 2007, effectively affirming that no

criminal case was made out. A third round of proceedings in 2016 resulted in cognisance only against a local dealer, with courts consistently refusing to summon Ambani due to lack of evidence linking him to the transaction. Subsequent attempts, including an application to add him as an accused, were also rejected by both the trial court and the high court. Despite this, the complainant filed a fresh complaint in 2025, leading to summons being issued again in January 2026, prompting Reliance Industries and Ambani to approach the high court. Quashing the proceedings, the high court underscored that the dispute involved a 'trivial' transaction value of Rs 501 but had led to an 'almost unrelenting pursuit' of criminal litigation spanning over two decades. In a strongly worded remark, the court pointed out the 'incongruity' of summoning the head of a major corporate conglomerate over a low-value consumer dispute handled by a local dealer.

PFRDA introduces NPS Swasthya Pension Scheme PoC 2; Check minimum initial contribution

NPS Swasthya Pension Scheme- Proof of Concept (PoC 2) has come into effect from 7 April 2026. Check contribution limit, premature exit and other details.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has launched the second "Proof of Concept (POC) of NPS Swasthya", that aims to provide healthcare funding along with retirement planning.

PFRDA has launched the NPS Swasthya Pension Scheme- Proof of Concept (PoC 2) under the Regulatory Sandbox Framework, the Pension fund regulator said in its latest circular. The changes have come into effect from 7 April 2026. The conditions for schemes launched and presently operational under earlier PoC continue without any change. As part of PoC, "ICICI PF NPS Swasthya Equity Plus" scheme has been launched under the aforesaid framework and is currently in the PoC phase. Based on the experience and feedback from the ongoing PoC and

subsequent consultations with stakeholders, it has been decided to permit introduction of a modified Proof of Concept (PoC 2) with certain changes in operational and product



features, with a view to enable enhanced flexibility for subscribers and to test the scheme under varied scenarios," PFRDA circular said. For the purpose of PoC 2, following revised provisions shall be applicable

a. Health Insurance benefit

Health Insurance benefit offered under NPS Swasthya PoC 2 shall be mandatory and be governed by the terms and conditions of the respective insurance company and applicable IRDAI regulations. Complete and transparent disclosures of policy terms, including coverage, exclusions, claim process and grievance redressal mechanism, shall be provided to subscribers. The premium for such insurance top up shall be deducted as a partial withdrawal from the subscriber's NPS Swasthya Scheme account.

b. Minimum initial contribution

The minimum initial contribution for onboarding shall be Rs. 25,000. A subscriber shall become eligible to avail benefits under NPS Swasthya Pension Scheme upon such contribution.

Sri Lotus to launch 8,000 crore luxury coastal projects in Mumbai

Mumbai.(Agency)

Mumbai-based Sri Lotus Developers & Realty has announced the launch of its luxury coastline collection of 11 sea-facing residential projects, with a combined gross development value (GDV) of ₹8,000 crore. The company plans to invest ₹800 crore in developing these projects. The developments are spread across premium coastal locations in Mumbai, including Versova, Juhu, Carter Road, Prabhadevi, Nepean Sea Road and Bandstand. All the projects are redevelopment or joint development ventures. Residences across the projects will be priced between ₹10 crore and ₹50 crore, depending on location and configuration. The developer is targeting pricing in the range of ₹80,000 to ₹1,70,000 per square foot, positioning the portfolio firmly in the

luxury segment. The company will fund the planned investment through internal accruals, supported by a cash balance of around ₹1,000 crore,



according to chairman and managing director Anand Pandit. Pandit said the company remains bullish on demand and has received a strong initial response. There is maybe a 10 per cent impact (of the West Asia war) on the market. Not more than that. Rather,

all those high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) who were thinking about investing in Gulf countries, particularly the UAE, have started rethinking about deploying that money in real estate in Mumbai. We are getting good inquiries even from overseas, including Gulf countries," he said.

Mumbai, India's largest residential market, saw housing sales decline 7 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, according to Knight Frank India. The decline has been attributed to a natural consolidation after strong growth and affordability pressures amid rising prices.

The company said it will look to expand the coastline collection further by adding more projects in the future, as it continues to focus on premium redevelopment opportunities in Mumbai's coastal micro-markets.

Gold steady near Rs 1.5 lakh mark: Should you wait or invest now?

There is little movement in gold prices at the moment, but that does not mean the market is settled. Uncertainty around global developments is keeping investors cautious, raising a simple question, i.e., invest now or wait?

New Delhi.(Agency)

Gold prices barely moved on Thursday, reflecting a market that is unsure about its next direction. Investors are keeping a close watch on the progress of US-Iran ceasefire talks, while also waiting for an important US inflation report that could influence interest rate decisions. At the time of writing, MCX Gold was at Rs 1,51,113, down Rs 676. Silver saw a sharper decline, falling Rs 3,310 to Rs 2,36,608.

CAUTIOUS MOOD KEEPS PRICES RANGE-BOUND

Right now, the market is caught between hope and hesitation. Geopolitical tensions are offering some support to gold, but traders are not making big moves ahead of the US inflation data. This has kept prices moving in a narrow range. Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, said, "MCX Gold opened with a mild gap down and is trading in the Rs 1,50,500-Rs 1,51,500 range with improving buying interest at

lower levels, though momentum remains gradual and requires confirmation." is comment reflects the current situation well — there is some buying at lower levels, but not enough confidence to push prices sharply higher.

GOLD NEEDS A CLEAR BREAKOUT

According to Ponmudi, the next move in gold will depend on whether it can cross key levels. "A sustained move above Rs 1,52,000, momentum can revive toward Rs 1,53,000-Rs 1,55,000. A decisive break below Rs 1,50,000, the downside can extend toward Rs 1,48,000-Rs 1,47,000," he said. He added that while the overall bias remains slightly positive due to supportive macro factors, the trend is still not strong enough. "Momentum requires confirmation, and a decisive breakout above key resistance levels is needed to sustain the uptrend," he noted.

SILVER REMAINS VOLATILE

DESPITE SUPPORT

Silver is seeing more swings compared to gold. It also opened lower but is getting some support from safe-haven demand



and strength in industrial metals.

Ponmudi explained, "MCX Silver opened with a mild gap down, supported by safe-haven demand and strength in industrial metals, with prices now hovering around Rs 2,36,000 amid elevated volatility,



employees globally, with several workers receiving early-morning emails informing them of their termination.

Employees across regions said on social media that they received emails from the company stating that their employment had been terminated, with some messages arriving around 6 a.m. local time in the US.

Reports indicate that Oracle may be laying off between 20,000 and 30,000 employees, or roughly 18 per cent of its global workforce.

Meanwhile, another report said that global banking major HSBC is also considering job cuts over the coming years, as Chief Executive Officer Georges Elhedery looks to deploy artificial intelligence (AI) to streamline operations, particularly in middle and back-office functions.

though the overall tone remains cautious." He pointed out that silver needs to cross the Rs 2,40,000-Rs 2,43,000 range to gain strength. "A breakout can push prices toward Rs 2,45,000-Rs 2,47,000," he said, adding that a fall below Rs 2,36,000 could lead to sharper selling towards Rs 2,33,000-Rs 2,30,000. WHAT INVESTORS SHOULD DO NOW

For now, this is a market where patience matters more than action. Prices are not showing a strong trend, and much will depend on global developments, especially the US inflation data and geopolitical updates.

Investors may consider waiting for clearer signals before taking fresh positions. Those with a long-term view can still look at gold on dips, as there is some support at lower levels. At the same time, it is important to stay cautious, particularly in silver, where price swings are sharper.



Zareen Khan's

Mother, Parveen Khan, Passes Away After Battling Prolonged Illness

Actor Zareen Khan's mother, Parveen Khan, passed away on April 8, 2026. She was battling a prolonged illness and finally breathed her last on Wednesday. The news of Parveen Khan's passing was confirmed by a statement from the actor's team. "This is to inform that our beloved Ms Parveen Khan, mother of Zareen Khan and Sana Khan, has departed peacefully to her heavenly abode on the 8th of April (sic)," the statement read. Zareen Khan's mother's funeral will be held at 10 am on April 8, 2026, in Mumbai's Versova. Zareen had been vocal about her mother's illness and had often taken to social media to ask fans to pray for Parveen's speedy recovery.

In 2016, after Zareen Khan's mother underwent heart surgery, the actress had reportedly decided to take a break from shoots to look after her. As per reports, Zareen was the sole earner of her family and was responsible for everyone at home.

Zareen had once opened up about how she took up a job right after school to look after her mother and her sister. Zareen Khan said, "There was that one evening that changed our lives completely. My dad had walked out on us and left us. We didn't have any money because we didn't come from a space of inherited wealth."

"There was this one night where we were all there together as a family, and suddenly my mother broke down completely.

I tried calming her and explained that she doesn't have to worry, I'll take care of everything. Ab maine bol toh diya tha (I said it), but here I was, with over 100 kilos, not knowing what I want to do," she told Pinkvilla. "Then, I started a job at a call centre. My sister was still studying, and I had just completed my 12th. I also wanted to get a job in airline. I lost over 52 kilos weight and I almost removed an entire person off my body. But I'm happy that today, my mother feels we have sailed through it," she said.

Zareen Khan's mother was incredibly proud of her, and the two shared a close bond. News18 sends its condolences to the actor in her time of grief.



Vivek Dahiya To Romance Shiny Doshi In New Show 'Ishk Dum Aur Idli Rasam'?



A new show announcement is one thing, but when casting whispers start getting louder than the announcement itself, you know something exciting is brewing. Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Digital recently announced its upcoming show *Ishk Dum Aur Idli Rasam* and it's already stirring buzz across the industry. While preparations are moving at a fast pace, it's the casting that have quickly become the biggest talking point.

Set against the backdrop of a heritage South Indian restaurant, the show promises an emotional narrative rooted in family, legacy and relationships. The makers, keen on bringing strong and popular names on board, have reportedly been reaching out to several well-known actors. Amid this buzz, one thing is certain — actress Shiny Doshi has been finalised as the female lead. However, the big question still remains: who will be paired opposite her?

Interestingly, multiple names have been doing the rounds, but one that's currently grabbing attention is Vivek Dahiya. As per sources, the actor has been approached for the role, though there is no official confirmation yet.

Vivek, best known for his role in *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein*, has carved a niche for himself with his selective and impactful choices. Known for bringing depth and sincerity to his characters, he continues to remain a sought-after name for roles that demand both charm and emotional weight.

At present, discussions are said to be ongoing, with the makers focused on locking in a face that perfectly complements the narrative as well as the already finalised female lead. The project also marks a new milestone for Surbhi Chandna, who makes her debut as a producer with the show.

With speculation around the male lead only getting stronger, *Ishk Dum Aur Idli Rasam* has already managed to capture attention well before its release. Now, all eyes are on that one final reveal, who will ultimately be paired opposite Shiny Doshi?

Shahid Kapoor 'Upset' Over Kriti, Rashmika's Screen Time In Cocktail 2? Bipasha Basu's Post Sparks Buzz



Shahid Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, and Kriti Sanon have teamed up for the most-awaited film, *Cocktail 2*. The first look has already upped the excitement among the audience. While everyone is looking forward to watching the fresh chemistry of Shahid and Rashmika on the big screen, a news post recently grabbed attention after Bipasha Basu reposted it on social media. The post about Shahid and his alleged reaction to his role in the upcoming film *Cocktail 2* is going viral on the internet.

What did Bipasha Basu repost?

The post, initially shared by a news portal and later reposted by Bipasha Basu on Instagram, cited a Reddit discussion that claimed Shahid Kapoor was reportedly "upset" over the screen time distribution in *Cocktail 2*.

The report further suggested that Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna have comparatively more prominent roles in the sequel. Soon after the Raaz actress reposted the post, screenshots started going viral online. It has become a talking point on Reddit.

Several social media users reacted to the same. One user commented, "I think she was going to the comment section, but insta page being weird af, had her reposting it." Another user wrote, "Lol... Galti se ho gaya... But Shahid being insecure of his costars is constant... Pehle sirf heroes se hota tha ab heroines se bhi hone lag gaya."

One of the comments also read, "she was probably trying to read the comments or something and accidentally pressed repost. happens a lot with the new insta update." Another comment also read, "This is a pattern with Shahid. Always insecure about his co stars."

Shahid and Bipasha have previously worked in the 2005 Hindi drama *Shikhar*, directed by John Matthew Matthan, also starring Ajay Devgn and Amrita Rao. Meanwhile, *Cocktail 2*, directed by Homi Adajania, will hit theatres on June 19.

Aneet Padda

To Play Dual Role In Maddock's Shakti Shalini? Deets Inside



The announcement of Aneet Padda in *Shakti Shalini* had moviegoers excited, and since then, fans have been awaiting updates about her role in the horror comedy. Now, it has been reported that Aditya Sarpotdar's directorial venture will see Padda in double roles.

As per a Mid-Day report, Aditya has etched two powerful roles for Aneet Padda. As the title suggests, Aneet will star in two roles in the film, *Shakti* (the protector) and *Shalini* (the evil force).

"Rooted in Bengali folklore and mythology, the movie revolves around the eternal battle between good and evil. The story is about a vengeful female ghost dwelling in trees and water bodies, who punishes

men, as she was betrayed and killed in a brutal manner. In Bengal, the goddess invoked to destroy evil spirits is Goddess Kali. She is recognised as the ultimate form of *Shakti*. Here, the character *Shakti* is pitted against the spirit," a source told the portal.

About Shakti Shalini

Last year, Aneet Padda was confirmed as the lead of *Shakti Shalini*, the next big chapter in the Maddock Horror Comedy Universe. Her character was officially introduced in the post-credits scene of *Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer Thamma*, which was released in theatres on October 21, 2025. Her character was described as "the creator, the destroyer,

and the mother of all" in the teaser.

The film was officially announced for release on December 24, 2026.

However, the producers are reportedly weighing the option of shifting the date, as Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone's *King* is slated to hit theatres on the same day.

About Aneet Padda

Aneet had her big break with Mohit Suri's *Saiyaara*. The film follows the love story of Krish Kapur (played by Ahaan Panday), a short-tempered musician, and Vaani (played by Aneet Padda), a shy, aspiring journalist-cum-poet. They meet, fall in love, and together build a successful career for Krish.

Make your Kids COOL This summer



Interestingly, they are also encouraged to step in their shoes by actually performing their duties. **Cooking with shapes Age group: Upto 5 years** Want to teach your tot different shapes as well as hone his/her culinary skills? Through an hour long weekend summer workshop, kids learn about four different shapes and are also asked to create goodies

other considerations, summer workshops are designed in such a way that kids are provided with an overall development. These themes are out of the box and encourage a three-dimensional physical, audiovisual and mental learning experience. Here's looking at some creative activities for you kids.

Graphic novel workshop Age group: 14-18 years

Writing comic books is a serious art. If your child shows a keen interest in sketching, a graphic novel workshop would be a good way to refine his/her skills. At this week-long workshop, using different illustrating styles, the children are supposed to form their own novel's first chapter. These work form their own novel's first chapter. T shops are designed for young adults. Its aim is to introduce students to the art of the graphic novel, and provide them with the tools to create their own works of visualised fiction.

Forensic Science workshop Age group: 7-12 years

If your kid is hooked on to mysteries or loves Sherlock Holmes, get him/her enrolled in this workshop. From searching for the evidence to gathering clues, dusting for fingerprints and analysing handwriting this three-hour workshop is a great way to discover how science can help mystery-solving.

Animation workshop Age group: 10-14 years

If you thought animation films could only be created using digital softwares, think again. At a workshops, children are asked to use paint, clay, paper cutouts etc to create animated characters. Besides, they also get a chance to watch short animated films around the world.

Community helpers' workshop Age group: 3-6 years

Want your child to know about the duties of a newspaper vendor or a postman? Get him/her enrolled in one of the day-long workshops where kids are introduced to four community helpers and understand their job patterns.

using those shapes. Meanwhile, weekly workshops where kids are taught about basic nutrition and age appropriate culinary skills through activities like bean snapping, corn husking and melon balling are also finding takers.

Aeromodelling workshop Age group: 4-14 years A new-age fun activity are aeromodelling work shops are also conducted. Here, children learn the art of designing, developing and flying small aeroplane models. While beginners can start with static models and paper planes, the advanced learners are provided materials to create rubber powered flying models.

Dos and don'ts before you enroll your kid in a summer camp:

The summer camp should include many activities so the child has a choice and you eventually know what interests him best. Do not decide the hobby, sports or activities that you think would be fun or beneficial. Keep your child's interests in mind.

If you're a working mother, get your friend's kids to join as well.

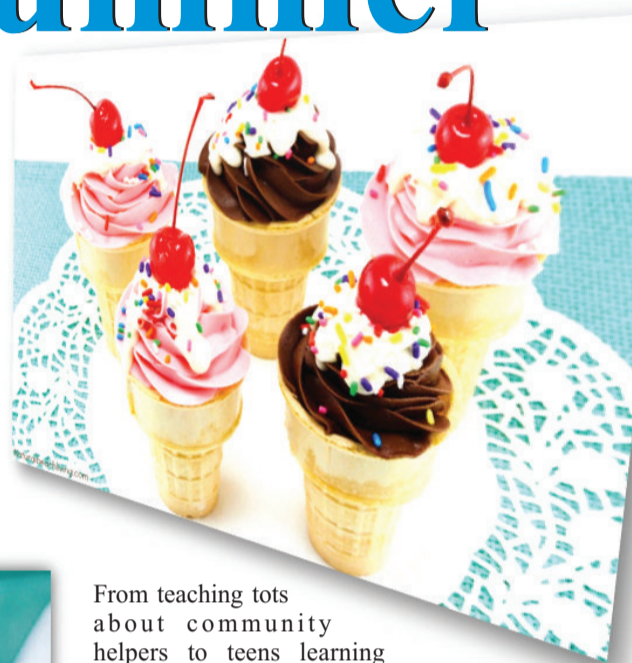
That way your friends can take care of picking up and dropping off your kid to the camp.

Sports week: Get your kid's friends together every evening and organise a sports week camp at a nearby park. You can start off the week by making a team jersey and enjoy a wide variety of non-competitive sport themed activities including soccer, football, golf, basketball and gymnastics.

Make musical instruments: Using materials available at home, encourage your child to make instruments that he/she can use through the week.

Ask him/her to play different tunes and record them on simple recording devices like a phone.

Aquatic life theme: Start off the week by painting a T-shirt with the sea creatures that your child loves. You can go for activities like making penguins out of water bottles that is sure to take up most of your kid's afternoon. For younger kids, fill a bathtub with water and let them enjoy playing with boats and floatable animals under your supervision.



From teaching tots about community helpers to teens learning about aeromodelling and graphic novel writing, summer camps get more creative. Gone are the days when summer vacations only meant playing out in the sun. These days, parents believe that children should continue the learning process during the vacations as well. And while earlier, summer camps and workshops would only involve basic art, craft and outdoor game activities, these days, they involve innovative as well as fun-oriented ones. With a range of age groups, interests and

9 things never to say to Your child

Being a parent is difficult and so is coming off as a proud child. It's only human to give vent to your rage by using harsh words. However, when the recipient of your outrage is your own child, it might have uncertain and unmanageable repercussions.

We list 9 insensitive things that you should avoid saying to your child.

1. I was much more responsible when I was your age

Comparing your child and giving him an example of what all you were capable of when you were a kid is the first big mistake parents make. Their irritation stems from 'expectations' - expectations of bringing up the 'perfect' kid. Try and recall your shortcomings as a child and what all troubles you bothered your parents with. You are the elder one in the relationship hence you ought to know more. A statement such as this will break your child's confidence.

2. You always end up taking wrong decisions

Don't penalise your kid for being immature. Everyone is allowed to make mistakes and it is in fact a part of the learning process. He might have taken up a field of study that doesn't interest you or perhaps working with a company that you're not very proud of, but that doesn't mean you accuse him of the decisions. Your job as a parent is to guide him, not force him to obey your opinions.

3. Why can't you be more like your brother/sister?

This is once again an unreasonable comparison and a common one at that. Avoid seeding in animosity between your children by comparing their abilities. Doing so may create a fissure between the siblings. You don't want your kid to harbour negative feelings for you, hence avoid assessing your kids.

4. Leave me alone!

Adults have huge responsibilities to take care of, responsibilities that children are innocently oblivious of. And there are times when we want to be left alone too. Kids are incapable of understanding the gravity of such situations. An impatient outburst of 'Leave me alone!' can make your child feel neglected, unwanted and depressed at the same time. Show some patience and avoid saying something bad to him.

5. You should be ashamed of yourself

This statement is outright harsh and saying such an awful thing to any child is simply 'bad'. Yes, there are mischievous kids who go about pestering people with a devil-may-care attitude but that does not mean you reprimand him like this. There are better and milder ways to make the child understand the difference between good and bad.

6. You're just like your father/mother

Not all married couples are happy living together and the bitterness in their relationship often translates into exchange of unkind words against each other. Some relationships end in separation too. Either ways, kids are a

witness to this mutual hostility and criticism. So when you shower your partner's animosity on your kid, that's when he begins to lose respect.

7. You always find ways to hurt me

There are times when children hurt their parents' sentiments by going against their wishes. Most times it is unintentional but there are kids who do so on purpose. However, saying something like the above statement would make your child feel guilty about his/her decision. He might comply with your demands to make you happy but you'd be taking away his right to happiness in the long run. Let your children take their own decisions and let them live a guilt-free life.

8. It's better to be childless than have a kid like you

The above statement is mostly an extreme emotional outburst but can have grave consequences on the kid. Unquestionably, it is the most hurtful thing you can ever say to your child. No matter what the crisis is, saying something like this could make you regret for life.

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How to make the most of your holiday with kids

Outings can be stressful if you are travelling with children, as their expectations differ from that of adults. The stress of finding right activities for each age group and food needs leaves you with no time to relax. Here's how you can keep your brood happy while you enjoy your 'me' time...

According to Girish Shenoy, a banker and a father of two daughters (aged eight and three), a vacation with kids is a sure way to get post-vacation stress. "You not only blow your budget with extra add-ons, with each kid demanding something other than what is provided in terms of food and amenities, but also come back tired instead of refreshed," he says. The story is more or less similar for every couple with children. Shubhra Jaiswal (39) too, came back stressed from her recent holiday as there was nothing much to do for her two kids at the place chosen by her for the family's vacation. "I realised that finding beforehand what activities or fun things are there for your kids is of supreme importance," says Shubhra. She suggests going for holidays which are all-inclusive, so that needs of each and every person of the family is taken care of.

What to do when you are there

- Attend to the needs of the kids first so that they don't complain about being bored. Once they are happy, it is easier for you to take time out for yourself and indulge in your favourite activity, like reading a book on the beach.
- Give a break to the rules that you have made for kids while on vacation. But make sure that they get enough rest in between activities. You don't want to go back home with an ill child as that would really be a downer.
- Many resorts offer in-room babysitting or kids' activities. Make use of the service so that you can have a relaxed evening. If that's not available, order room service when the children are asleep.
- Most all-inclusive resorts have, at least, one buffet restaurant. This makes things easy for

the parents, as kids can eat quickly — without waiting for an order to come — try new foods and serve themselves. But do keep an eye so that they don't waste food.

- Even though resorts offer games at the kids zone, you should carry those that your children enjoy playing at home. Remember, there will be extra charges levied on you at such places. So, having your own game with you will help you save some money.

- Plan your days in such a way that more exciting and tiring activities are done in the beginning of the schedule and restful activities are taken up towards the end, leaving you less



exhausted. Do some pre-planning before you book

- Inquire about the activities, operational hours and what ages are eligible for admission at kids' clubs in the resort. Also find out about the charges.
- Find out if there are 'adult only' areas and restrictions on certain sites in the hotel or resort. While it can be advantageous as you can have your peace and quiet in those areas, this also eliminates certain restaurants and activities you were looking forward to try with your little ones.
- Try to draw up a rough schedule of things you'd like to do with the kids. It eliminates incessant questions like 'When are we taking a boat ride?' or 'Can I go to the fun zone now?' It is good to have a schedule even on holidays when you have to deal with children.

