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Gen Z effect? Raghav Chadha loses 1 million followers after BJP switch

The shock exit of Raghav Chadha from the AAP to join the BJP doesn't seem to have impressed Gen Z. The suave Rajya Sabha MP, who enjoyed considerable popularity among the youth, lost one million followers in under 24 hours.

In today's digital age, social media followers are often seen as a barometer of gauging one's popularity. Data shows that Chadha lost nearly one million followers on Instagram in under 24 hours after his shock switch to the BJP.



Political commentators suggested that the youth, particularly Gen Z, were driving the backlash against Chadha. Will the data-driven politician be able to digest the data and script a turnaround?

spokesperson Anish Gawande. "The internet can make you a hero overnight. The internet can also bring you down to zero overnight," he further said.

RAGHAV CHADHA'S POPULARITY HIT?

In fact, Chadha carved out a niche for himself among the youth after he constantly raised issues that directly affected people's daily lives - most of which get overlooked in political discourse.

It ranged from paternity leave, traffic crisis, daily data limits by telecom companies, to even "soft issues" like expensive samosas at airports and exploitation of gig workers through 10-minute delivery models.

It finally bore fruit after the Centre mandated delivery companies to remove the mandatory 10-minute delivery deadline. All these things cultivated Chadha's image as an accessible politician.

'We agreed to stop buying oil from Iran, Russia... tariffs': RSS's Madhav expresses surprise at strain in India-US ties

Invoking the "bonhomie" between the two governments during Trump 1.0, he said, "In 2020, there were people in India praying for Trump's victory. Go to those people today — what they will say will be totally different."



New Delhi.(Agency)

RSS leader and former BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav has expressed surprise at the strain in India-US relations despite what he described as New Delhi having agreed to a range of American demands — from tariffs to oil sourcing decisions.

Questioning where India had fallen short in meeting American expectations, Madhav, speaking at a panel discussion in the US on Thursday, said, "We agreed to stop buying oil from Iran and Russia, facing so much criticism from the Opposition. We agreed to 50% tariffs... In the new trade deal also, we agreed to 18% tariffs."

At the Hudson Institute in Washington, where RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale also delivered a lecture, Madhav flagged anxiety within the Indian diaspora over remarks such as "hell hole" and "laptop-wielding charlatans".

While cautioning against reading the current phase as a breakdown, Madhav warned against complacency. "One may say it is a passing phase. (But) Countries do not have the luxury to take four years as a passing phase," he said.

He argued that the three pillars underpinning the India-US relationship — geostrategic alignment, economic ties and people-to-people engagement — were all under stress. "We had a great understanding about our geostrategic priorities. There was a broad alignment on China and Islamic terrorism. Today, it does not seem so anymore," he said.

On the economic front, Madhav said the relationship had been hit, pointing to what he described as net negative FDI flows from the US and tensions over tariffs. "We have seen what happened on tariffs. How bad this relationship became in the last one year is very well before us. We are looking forward to the trade deal, which is expected to be closed in less than a month. We are hoping we will have a better tariff regime," he said.

'Gaddars...will vanish into political oblivion': Mann slams AAP MPs who jumped ship

Bhagwant Mann slams AAP MPs who joined BJP, calling them "gaddars" and accusing the party of using agencies to destabilise his government in Punjab.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday dubbed the AAP's seven Rajya Sabha members, who crossed over to the BJP, as "gaddars" (traitors), saying the party gave them so much even when they were not even fit for contesting sarpanch elections.

"These people have gone there to save their skin. They will not get anything from BJP. Punjabis have never forgotten acts of betrayal, and those who deceived them have vanished into political oblivion. "Leaders like Kamaalo, Mannshahian and others betrayed their ideology and have been erased from public memory.

In a democracy, the party is supreme, not individuals who come and go as per their whims and fancies," Mann said. AAP's Rajya Sabha



members Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak and Ashok Mittal, Friday announced that they are joining the BJP along with four other MPs of the party. The others include Swati Maliwal, Harbhajan Singh, Bikram Singh Sahney, and Rajinder Gupta. Mann, who reached Chandigarh

on Friday morning after abruptly canceling his Finland visit midway, accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of systematically trying to destabilise his government by engineering defections and misusing central agencies.

Addressing a press conference, Mann also claimed that ever since the strict law against 'beadbi' (sacrilege) was enacted, the BJP's uncase has been evident as it struggles to accept decisive action on an issue deeply tied to Punjab's sentiments.

He also accused the BJP of using central agencies to intimidate opponents, citing recent ED action against industrialist-turned-politician Ashok Mittal as an example.

"When they could not find anything against Bhagwant Mann, they started breaking his people," he said.

Bharatiya Jhootha Party: AAP hits back at BJP over 'Sheesh Mahal 2' claims

The BJP had earlier alleged that Arvind Kejriwal was living in luxury, displaying visuals claiming to be from his new Delhi residence in Lodhi Estate, a charge AAP leaders have strongly denied.

New Delhi (Agency)

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday sharpened its attack on the BJP, with Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh calling it the "Bharatiya Jhootha Party" (Indian Fake Party) and accusing



Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Parvesh Verma of spreading "fake" images in the 'Sheesh Mahal 2' controversy around party chief Arvind Kejriwal. Singh rejected the visuals shown by Verma as "completely fake, false and baseless" and warned that both the BJP leader and television

channels airing them would face defamation action.

"This is the 'Bharatiya Jootha Party' (Indian Fake Party). By publishing fake photos and spreading lies, they are using the same old methods," he said. He further alleged that the BJP was relying on propaganda tactics to target Kejriwal.

VERMA'S 'SHEESH MAHAL 2' ALLEGATION

Earlier in the day, Verma had launched a sharp attack on Kejriwal, calling him the "Rehman dacoit of Delhi" and alleging that he had built a second "Sheesh Mahal".

Addressing a press conference, Verma said the BJP would "show 'Sheesh Mahal 2'" and accused Kejriwal of living a luxurious life contrary to his earlier claims of simplicity.

He referred to Kejriwal's recent move into a government bungalow at 95 Lodhi Estate, saying, "He shifted yesterday — the same person who once said he would live like a common man."

In first disciplinary act, Haryana govt dismisses two officials

The case was initially investigated by the State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau before being handed over to the CBI.

Chandigarh.(Agency)

Amid the ongoing CBI investigation into the Rs 590-crore IDFC First Bank

fraud, the Nayab Singh Saini-led BJP government has dismissed Naresh Bhuwani, a superintendent in the state panchayat department. An official spokesperson said on Friday that the dismissal was carried out under Article 311(2)(b) of the Constitution

after a detailed probe into a criminal conspiracy and the emergence of substantial evidence. The government

has also dismissed a Chief Accounts Officer Randhir Singh in the same case. The dismissals mark one of the most significant disciplinary steps taken by the Haryana government in connection with the high-profile fraud case. The case was initially investigated by the State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau before being handed over to the CBI. During the vigilance inquiry, officials found that the fraud involved an organised,

multi-layered financial racket in which government funds were diverted to shell companies through fraudulent banking transactions.

According to the spokesperson, the investigation

revealed that "Naresh Bhuwani, in collusion with private individuals and other accused persons, had created a fake firm used for siphoning off government funds.

Bishnoi gang threatens Moosewala's father, Punjab DGP over Lawrence of Punjab halt

The Lawrence Bishnoi gang has threatened Sidhu Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh and several Punjab leaders after the 'Lawrence of Punjab' docuseries was halted, vowing to release it "at any cost" and warning of violence.



New Delhi.(Agency)

The Lawrence Bishnoi gang has issued threats to late singer Sidhu Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh and several political leaders and officials following the halt on the release of the docuseries 'Lawrence of Punjab'.

The gang has warned that the documentary "will be released at any cost" and told those named to "prepare their shrouds." The warning added that the group would no longer seek money and instead threatened violence through bullets and bombs.

Apart from Balkaur Singh, those named in the threat include Punjab Congress chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, senior leader Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Punjab DGP Gururav Yadav, Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer (referred to as Gurmeet Singh), Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Bahu Majithia, and Advocate General Maninderjit Singh Bedi. The threats came after ZEE5 informed the Delhi High Court that the Centre had advised it not to release the docuseries, which was scheduled to stream on April 27. Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav was hearing a petition filed by Lawrence Bishnoi against the release.

Counsel for the platform told the court that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued an advisory asking it not to proceed with the release. The court then deferred the hearing till Monday.

Rajya Sabha MP Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal calls on CM

The Sikh Times

CHANDIGARH, 25 April: With Punjab heading towards the monsoon season, Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Saturday ordered Deputy Commissioners to complete all flood protection works within deadline, warning officials of personal accountability for lapses. Chairing a high-level review meeting, he directed urgent desilting of drains and vulnerable points, fast-tracked anti-pollution measures, and pushed pending infrastructure projects as the state moves to prevent floods and strengthen water management before the rains arrive. CM Bhagwant Singh Mann, accompanied by Rajya Sabha MP Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal, battled for foolproof planning and execution of the master plan for carrying out flood protection works effectively across the state. He said, "The plan of drains and rivers should be prepared in sync with

the engineers of the irrigation department to ensure their regular de-silting, cleaning, and



strengthening of flood protection works." He emphasised, "This will be instrumental in saving people from the wrath of floods during the monsoon season, and every officer will be

personally accountable for this work. The desilting of Gidderpindi Railway Bridge and other places prone to floods should be done at the earliest to avert any flood-like situation." On the cleaning of Buddha Nullah, the Punjab CM added, "The water of the sacred Buddha Nullah has been cleaned up to the starting point of Ludhiana city, and cleaning work beyond this point is ongoing. Cow dung waste from dairies into Buddha Nullah should be checked with a heavy hand. The Municipal Corporation must ensure proper lifting of cow dung from the dairies, and dairy owners should cooperate." Reviewing pending infrastructure works, he said, "The CBG plant at Hebowal should be made operational at the earliest. The proposal for allotting 2.5 acre land for the proposed CBG plant at Tajpur

should be finalised at the earliest by the Municipal Corporation, PSIEC and PEDA within one week. Industrial effluents must be properly treated, and necessary action shall be taken by the Pollution Board in this regard. Accountability will be fixed in case of negligence leading to polluted water entering the drains across the state." On water flow and pollution control, CM Bhagwant Singh Mann stated, "The regulator at Simbli for releasing 200 cusecs of water into Chitti Bein should be made operational. The issue of culverts constructed on Jalandhar National Highway 44 that are obstructing water flow should be resolved at the earliest through technical correction. Likewise, 100 cusecs of water from Bist Doab Canal should be released to reduce pollution in Kala Sanghian Drain." He added, "Stone lining work has been completed."

Contd.....page-3

News box

Investor conned of 5cr in fake real estate projects; 2 directors held

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A businessman was defrauded of over 75 crore after being lured into investing in fake real estate projects through forged documents and false promises of selling rights. Two key accused have been arrested.

“Acting on leads, the accused — Ashok Chaudhary (60), of Gautam Nagar, Delhi, and Chandrakant Chaudhary (40), of Brij Vihar, Ghaziabad — were arrested Thursday from their company office in Sector 62, Noida,” said police spokesperson Sandeep Turan.

According to a complaint filed April 15 by Umed Singh, the accused — directors of CKC Infra Private Limited — along with associates, gained his trust and induced him to invest at different times in land linked to Apama Ashram Silokhera and a project in Vaishali.

Despite receiving payments, they executed no valid agreements, initiated no development work and delivered no selling rights. The complainant later discovered the land was disputed and under govt possession. The ashram was previously run by Dhirendra Brahmachari, yoga teacher to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The land spans roughly 30 acres, valued at around 73,000 crore at present, police said.

Police said the accused collected approximately 71 crore for the ashram project and 74.5 crore for the Vaishali project. About 71 crore was transferred to the company's bank account and subsequently distributed among them.

A case was registered at Sector 40 police station and taken up by Economic Offences Wing 1. The accused reportedly have over 30 years of real estate experience and have built several commercial and housing projects. Last year, a senior advocate was also arrested in a

No equipment in labs, no ACs in halls: MBBS students strike on campus

Noida.(Agency)

Students of the first MBBS batch at ESIC Medical College have gone on a strike over inadequate infrastructure and the lack of basic facilities on campus. They alleged that non-AC lecture halls, amid temperatures of around 40 degrees Celsius, have made learning conditions unbearable. They also pointed out the absence of basic amenities such as drinking water and equipment in the laboratories. “It feels like the college has been opened in a hurry without ensuring the essential arrangements,” said a student. The entire class strength of 50 students have launched the protest. One of the students said the lecture halls aren't air-conditioned and there are only five to six wall fans that barely function. “We started our classes in Sept and did not feel the heat until summer commenced. Now, in April, when the temperature is above 40 degrees Celsius, it has become suffocating for us. We start feeling dizzy and claustrophobic within an hour,” she said. “Sitting continuously for seven to eight hours in such conditions is simply not possible. Some of us have even felt on the verge of fainting during lectures.” Students also pointed to the absence of clean drinking water facilities on campus, calling it a basic necessity that has been overlooked. “We have to buy water from outside every day. It costs at least Rs 100 daily. This is something that should be provided in any educational institution, especially a medical college,” another student said.

Concerns have also been raised over the lack of proper equipment in physiology and biochemistry laboratories, which are crucial for first-year medical training. “Our practical learning is getting affected. We are being taught theoretically, but without functioning labs, it defeats the purpose of a medical education,” a student added. Some students regret choosing the college for their undergraduate education. “We pay Rs 1.25 lakh per year, which makes it one of the costliest government medical colleges in Uttar Pradesh. I chose this college over other options because it is in Noida and was expected to have better facilities,” said a student. “But the reality is completely different. It feels like we made the wrong choice.”

Road deaths fall 13% in first 3 months in Noida, accidents drop 23%

Noida.(Agency)

The city recorded a sharp improvement in road safety in the first quarter of 2026, even as Ghaziabad moved in the opposite direction — with more accidents, deaths and injuries than the same period last year, according to district-wise data released by the UP transport department on Thursday.

In Noida, road accident deaths decreased by 13.2% — from 121 to 105 — between Jan and March. Accidents dropped sharply by 23%, from 300 to 231, while the number of injured fell 17.4%, from 219 to 181.

In Ghaziabad, road accident deaths rose 16.7% — from 90 in Jan-March 2025 to 105 in the same period in 2026. Accidents climbed 1.6%, from 248 to 252, over the same period. The only silver lining was a 4.3% decline in the number of injured persons, from 188 to 180.

GB Nagar ARTO (enforcement) Udit Narayan attributed Noida's gains to sustained awareness and enforcement drives. “We conducted awareness and enforcement drives due to which road accidents and related deaths dropped this year compared to the previous year. We are further expediting enforcement to cut fatalities by 50% as decided by the govt,” he said. The data was shared as part of a broader push by the UP transport department, which asked all regional transport officials to prepare fresh action plans to reduce road accident deaths. The measures include better road engineering, faster accident response, improved trauma care within the golden hour, stricter enforcement and wider public awareness. Deputy transport commissioner Mayank Jyoti, in a letter to transport officials across UP, said the state road safety council set a target last year to reduce road accidents and fatalities by 50%. “The district-level committees have been directed to prepare a fresh action plan and undertake all possible efforts — improved road engineering, rapid response to accidents and better trauma care within the golden hour — to achieve at least a 50% reduction in deaths from road accidents compared to the previous year,” he said.

Heatwave alert: Hospitals across Haryana told to open ORS booths, track heatstroke cases daily

Gurgaon.(Agency)

With temperatures crossing 40 degrees Celsius across Haryana and a heatwave alert in place, the state health department has directed hospitals and health centres to prepare for a rise in heat-related illnesses. Facilities have been asked to set up dedicated heatstroke wards and ORS booths, while residents have been advised to ensure proper ventilation at home, especially in the absence of cooling systems such as air conditioners or coolers. Officials said surveillance of heat-related illnesses and deaths will be conducted daily under the National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH). Data will be uploaded to an integrated health information portal, with weekly reports submitted every Monday. Officials said this real-time monitoring will allow rapid interventions and accountability.

“All health centres have been asked to ensure adequate logistics and stock of ORS, intravenous fluids and essential



medicines,” said Gurgaon's chief medical officer, Lokveer Singh. Community and primary health centres have also been directed to keep ice and cold water available and earmark beds in well-ventilated areas. Cooling equipment, such as air conditioners and coolers, will be deployed in such facilities where available.

At Sector 10 Civil Hospital, a three-bed heatstroke ward has been set up. “Medical officers and paramedical staff have been sensitised, and mobile health units are being trained for rapid response,” said deputy medical officer of the hospital, Dr Manish Rathee.

A mobile alert system involving ASHA and ANM workers has also been activated to

report suspected heatstroke cases in real time. Control rooms are being strengthened to provide prompt assistance to the public, doctors said.

The state disaster management department has instructed all district authorities to spread awareness about heat-related illnesses, identify high-risk populations and establish cooling centres. Temporary shelters and water kiosks are also being set up, while alerts will be disseminated through media platforms. Doctors said there has been a noticeable rise in heat-related cases. “Hospitals in Delhi-NCR and nearby areas have seen over a 20% rise in such cases in the past week, with patients reporting dehydration, exhaustion, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness and other symptoms of heat stress,” said Dr Shivanshu Raj Goyal of Max Hospital, Gurgaon. He advised people to avoid going outdoors during the hottest time of the day, usually between 11am and 4pm and to wear light cotton clothing.

Rapido rider robs 12L from passenger on Delhi-Mumbai away, arrested with 3 others

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A Rapido rider who conspired with four of his associates to rob Rs 12 lakh from a passenger was arrested from Faridabad.

Three of his aides have also been arrested while one, Harish, is on the run, an officer said. According to police, the rider, Manoj, had driven the victim, Prahlad, to Delhi several times.

“Manoj built a rapport with the victim and gained his trust,” said ACP (crime) Varun Kumar Dahiya. It was during these trips that Manoj got to know Prahlad would be taking Rs 12 lakh to Delhi and passed the information to his friends, Nitesh, Harish, Gautam and Ravi.

Ravi hatched the plan to loot the money.



The complainant, Ankit, a resident of Chawla Colony, stated he sent Rs 12 lakh to Delhi on April 12 through a man identified as Prahlad who worked for him. While riding on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, Manoj and Prahlad were intercepted by three ‘unidentified’

motorcycle-borne men near Sector 9.

“Ravi arrived on another motorcycle along with Harish and Gautam, and at knife-point, robbed Prahlad of Rs 12 lakh before fleeing the scene. After the robbery, he called another associate, Nitesh, and all of them went to Ravi's village in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. Ravi owns a motorcycle repair shop in Parvatiya Colony,” ACP added. Police arrested Nitesh, Manoj, Harish and Ravi on Thursday. “A total of Rs 12 lakh was looted from the spot, out of which Rs 11,03,000 has been recovered so far. Other individuals are also involved in this case, about whom we are investigating,” the officer further added.

Home guard posted in Nuh smokes wearing SI uniform for reels, suspended

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A home guard posted in Nuh has been suspended for alleged indiscipline after videos of him smoking and making social media reels in uniform surfaced online.

The case has also raised questions about his uniform, as some videos showed him wearing a police uniform with two stars typically associated with a sub-inspector rank. Police have sought clarification from the home guards department on whether he was authorised to wear the insignia or if there was any procedural lapse. The action was initiated by Nuh SP Arpit Jain after the videos were flagged by the police's social media cell. The home guard, identified as Shekhawat, was active on social media under the name “Sakhawat SI.” In several clips, he was seen smoking with civilians while in uniform, triggering scrutiny within the department. An official order issued by the SP's office stated that such conduct “tarnished the image of the

police among the general public” and amounted to “gross negligence and indiscipline.”

An inquiry was initiated after the matter came to light. During the preliminary



probe, the allegations were found to be substantiated, following which the home guard was placed under suspension.

The SP also wrote to the centre commandant of the home guards department in Nuh, directing that the personnel be removed from duty and replaced to ensure smooth functioning of

law and order duties. Officials said such behaviour in uniform amounts to serious indiscipline and undermines the credibility of the force. “Personnel are expected to maintain decorum and professionalism both on duty and in public spaces,” a senior officer said.

Officials added that monitoring of personnel's social media activity is being strengthened, and any instance of inappropriate conduct will invite strict disciplinary action. “The move is part of a broader effort to ensure discipline within the force while maintaining public trust and accountability,” an officer said.

The incident also triggered reactions on social media, with users questioning the conduct of security personnel and stressing that those in uniform must act responsibly. Several users pointed out that law enforcement personnel serve as role models and must adhere to higher standards of behaviour.

Haryana Boards: Nuh leads cheating list as state reports 441 cases

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Haryana recorded 441 cases of cheating during the recently held Class 10 and 12 state board examinations, with district-wise data showing Nuh at the top with 74 cases. In second position is Palwal, with 61 cases, followed by Sonapat (50), Panipat (41), Rohtak (38) and Gurgaon (37). In contrast, Yamunanagar and Ambala reported zero cases, while Kurukshetra and Faridabad saw just one case each, and Sirsa, Hisar, Fatehabad and Rewari recorded two cases apiece. Nuh also logged two impersonation cases while Gurgaon reported one. The data include 106 regular and 15 open school cases at the secondary level, along with 286 regular and 34 open school cases at the senior secondary level. Around 5,71,767 candidates appeared across 1,433 centres — including 2,95,748 for Class 10, 2,70,663 for Class 12 and 5,356 for D.El.Ed (Diploma in Elementary Education). Authorities said that nearly 144 cases, largely linked to mass copying, remain under review. “We have a three-tier disciplinary mechanism: cancellation of the candidate's exam, reporting govt school staff to the Directorate of School Education if found



involved, and penalising private institutions through fines or debarment from hosting future examinations,” said Haryana Board of School Education chairman Dr Pawan Kumar.

Authorities pointed out that incidents of mass copying were particularly evident in districts such as Sonapat and Panipat, and action against up to 34 students was recommended for disrupting the examination process. On Feb 26, an elder brother appeared in place of his younger brother for the Class 10 mathematics exam at RK International Senior

Secondary School, Salamba. The impersonation was discovered after investigators found the accused had used a forged Aadhaar card printout to gain entry into the centre. A Common Service Centre (CSC) operator has also been accused of being involved in the crime.

In another incident in Nuh, authorities caught two impersonators at Govt Senior Secondary School, Salahedi, attempting to write the English paper on behalf of the original students.

The fraud was detected during a surprise inspection when discrepancies were

found in admit cards and roll numbers. Based on the complaint by centre superintendent Amit Kumar, police registered a case and arrested.

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Manusmriti will not be taught in any course

New Delhi: Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh has reiterated that Manusmriti will not be taught in any course at the university, following criticism over its mention in a Sanskrit department paper.

Haryana Emerges as the 7th Largest State in India for Startups

Chandigarh: Haryana has made significant strides in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship, emerging as the seventh-largest state in India in terms of the number of startups recognised with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

private-sector-run incubators and 10 government-supported incubators are currently operational, offering a wide range of services including mentorship, networking opportunities and infrastructural support.

for the creation of Mobile Application Development Centres. To further ease the operational burden, the schemes offer a 50 percent reimbursement on lease rent (up to ₹5 lakh per year for three years) and a 100 percent reimbursement on stamp duty and registration charges.

Panipat's Hali Lake lies in ruins despite Rs 24-cr makeover

The Sikh Times Sonepat: Once envisioned as a flagship urban beautification project, Panipat's historical Hali Lake — revived at a staggering cost of Rs 24 crore — now lies in a state of utter neglect.

many are calling a major scam. Constructed just three years ago, the lake and its adjoining 28-acre park were part of a grand redevelopment initiative announced by former Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar in December 2014.

way into the lake, filling the air with a foul stench. The once-glorified infrastructure now lies in ruins: broken walking tracks, abandoned and vandalised buildings,



stolen fixtures and overgrown vegetation choking every structure from the lake to the theatre. "Crores have been spent, but look at the state of it. The café, auditorium and open gym are crumbling.

nance. "If IOCL can bring crude oil from Bombay High through pipelines running 1,500 km, it should not be difficult to bring water from the Delhi Parallel Canal, just 2 km away."

Vehicle thief held in Panchkula, stolen two-wheelers recovered

The Sikh Times Panchkula: The police have arrested an alleged vehicle thief and recovered four stolen two-wheelers from him. The accused, identified as Bilal, a resident of Mori Gate, Manimajra, was apprehended following a detailed investigation led by ACP Crime Arvind Kamboj and Inspector Nirmal Singh, incharge of Sector 19 Crime Branch.

vehicles. Legal proceedings are underway to return them to their rightful owners. "Efforts are ongoing to determine whether the accused is part of a larger organised vehicle theft ring or involved in other criminal activities. The investigation is progressing well, and we expect more revelations soon.

to initiate an inquiry and take action against those responsible for the misuse of public funds. Chauhan also suggested that the project be handed over to the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) for long-term maintenance.

Chandigarh residents at receiving end of civic apathy

Chandigarh: After the early morning rain on Saturday, waterlogged roads were a common sight across the city. The civic body had claimed that all road gullies in the city would be cleaned before the monsoon to ensure there was no waterlogging.

and prompt action of our team demonstrates Panchkula Police's firm commitment to crime control," the ACP said.

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Rajya Sabha MP Sant Balbir Singh Seechwal calls on CM

The Punjab CM concluded by instructing, "Dairy waste into drains must be checked strictly, and strict enforcement is required for this purpose. The matter of the Dhussi Bundh Road Project (Satluj River) will be taken up with the Union Rural Development Minister. The project conceived at a cost of ₹117.75 crore will be accomplished with the help of NABARD support."

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to ensure the immediate completion of the STP projects for Buddha Nallah. Significant improvements will be visible in the coming days. A government of the people stands firmly with the people," the post concluded.

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NEWS BOX

Ukrainians Thought They Had Reduced Risks At Chernobyl. Then Russia Invaded

Kyiv. (Agency)

The two explosions at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant came decades apart in the dead of night. The first, at 1:23 a.m. on April 26, 1986, spread a cloud of deadly radiation that raised fears across Europe and shook the very foundations of the Soviet Union. Some say it led to its eventual collapse.

The second, at 1:59 a.m. on Feb. 14, 2025, was blamed by Ukrainian officials on a Russian drone with an explosive warhead. While not as catastrophic, it sparked new anxieties about Moscow's invasion of its neighbor, striking the site that symbolized so much suffering for Ukraine. "What once seemed unthinkable — strikes on nuclear facilities and other hazardous sites — has now become reality," said Oleh Solonenko, head of a radiation safety shift at Chernobyl, which Ukrainians transliterate as Chornobyl. The drone hit the outer layer of what is known as the New Safe Confinement structure, or NSC, the vast, \$2.1 billion archlike shell that was completed in 2019 to enclose the original, hastily built concrete "sarcophagus" to keep the damaged Reactor No. 4 and its deadly debris from leaking radiation. Moscow denied targeting the plant, alleging Kyiv staged the attack. It sparked a fire on the structure — which is tall enough to cover the Statue of Liberty — but did not penetrate it, damaging an area with low contamination. Monitors detected no rise in radiation levels outside the arch, and no one was injured. Still, the International Atomic Energy Agency warned that the damage could significantly shorten the arch's 100-year lifespan, upending its core safety function. For Klavdiia Omelchenko, who works with over 2,200 engineers, scientists and others at the defunct plant, it rekindled memories of a horrible spring day 40 years ago.

Omelchenko was a 19-year-old textile factory worker in 1986, asleep in her home in Pripyat, where most of Chernobyl's workers lived. She didn't hear the explosion at Reactor No. 4 during a routine test.

She woke to rumors of an accident, but only understood its scale weeks later — after being evacuated with a small bag holding her documents and some cosmetics. Her former home was now inside Chernobyl's "exclusion zone," a 2,600-square-kilometer (1,000-square-mile) area that remains uninhabited.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's Jhumka Selfie Goes Viral, Wins Hearts Online

WORLD. (Agency)

A recent social media post by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has sparked wide attention online, blending politics with an unexpected cultural touch that caught the interest of many users, especially in India. In a selfie shared on X, the Italian Prime Minister was seen dressed in a winter outfit, wearing a charcoal blazer paired with a beige knit. However, what stood out was her choice of accessories. She wore traditional Indian jhumka, which quickly drew reactions across Indian social media. Along with the image, Meloni also shared a strong statement. She wrote, "By his nature, a solerte propagandist of regimes cannot teach lessons neither in coherence nor in freedom. But these caricatures will certainly not change our way. Unlike others, we have no wires, no masters and we don't take orders. Our compass remains only one: Italy's interest. And we will continue to follow it proudly, with good peace from propagandists of all latitudes."

Social Media Reaction

While the post carried a clear political message, much of the attention online focused on her earrings. Social media users responded with curiosity and admiration. Some asked whether the earrings were from India, while others expressed their appreciation, calling the jhumkas beautiful and praising her choice of accessory.

US Mistakenly Puts Australian Flags Near White House For King Charles' Visit

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

The District of Columbia mistakenly placed several Australian flags instead of British flags near the White House ahead of King Charles' U.S. visit, although the error was quickly corrected, a D.C. Department of Transportation official said on Friday. Charles is also the head of state for Australia, but the role is largely ceremonial. Fifteen Australian flags were briefly included among more than 230 flags put on display to welcome the British king when he

H-1B Visas To Be Paused For 3 Years? Trump's Aides Introduce New Bill

The bill proposes sweeping changes. It would cut the annual H-1B cap from 65,000 to 25,000 and eliminate exemptions. It would replace the lottery system with a wage-based selection process and set a minimum salary of \$200,000 per year

KYIV. (Agency)

A group of Republican lawmakers has introduced legislation to pause the issuance of H-1B visas for three years and overhaul the programme, arguing it has disadvantaged American workers.

The proposed "End H-1B Visa Abuse Act of

2026", introduced by Eli Crane, seeks to reset the visa system before resuming it with stricter rules. "The federal government should work for hardworking citizens, not the profit margins of massive corporations. We owe it to the American people to prevent the broken H-1B system from boxing them out of jobs they are qualified to perform," Crane said. He added the bill "would provide greater access to employment, strengthen protocols in the visa process, and prioritise the livelihoods of Americans." The legislation has drawn support from several Republican lawmakers, including Brandon Gill, Paul Gosar and Andy Ogles. "I am proud to cosponsor Rep. Eli Crane's efforts to reform and tighten our H-1B visa system, ensuring that our immigration system serves American workers first before foreigners," Gill said.

The bill proposes sweeping changes. It would cut the annual H-1B cap from 65,000 to 25,000 and eliminate exemptions. It would replace the lottery system with a wage-based selection process and set a

minimum salary of \$200,000 per year. Employers would be required to certify they cannot find a qualified American worker and confirm they have



not carried out layoffs. The bill would also bar H-1B workers from holding multiple jobs and prohibit third-party staffing agencies from employing them.

Further provisions include banning H-1B workers from bringing dependents, ending the Optional Practical Training (OPT) programme, and preventing visa holders from transitioning to permanent residency.

"The H-1B programme has been hijacked to replace American workers with cheaper foreign labor—plain and simple. This bill slams the brakes on a system that's rigged against our own people and puts American jobs first again," Gosar said. Ogles struck a sharper tone, saying: "American workers are being replaced, and cheap foreign labor is the cause. We will not bow down to the corporations, and we will not let Americans become strangers in their own country. End the H-1B scam." The proposal also seeks to ensure nonimmigrant visas remain temporary by requiring holders to leave the United States before changing to another visa status and prohibiting federal agencies from sponsoring such workers.

Rosemary Jenks, cofounder of the Immigration Accountability Project, described it as "the strongest H-1B bill that has ever been introduced in Congress".

"H-1B visas were sold to the American people as a short-term visa to fill temporary labor gaps while Americans are trained to take those jobs."

US rules out extending waivers for Russian and Iranian oil

Treasury Secretary says no further sanctions relief will be given, warning Iranian production could be forced to shut as markets react to Strait of Hormuz disruption and ongoing West Asia conflict

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Friday that the US does not plan to renew a waiver allowing the purchase of Russian oil and petroleum products that are currently at sea. And, he said, a renewal of the one-time waiver for Iranian oil at sea is totally off the table. "Not the Iranians," Bessent told The Associated Press. "We have the blockade, and there's no oil coming

out." "And we think in the next two, three days, they're going to have to start shuttering production, which will be very bad for their



wells." Bessent's statements come as the world is on edge over the US-Israeli war in Iran, and global energy markets have been ensnared by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The US originally issued a waiver for Russian oil sales and petroleum products in March with the intent of stabilising global energy markets after

crude oil prices surged above USD 100 per barrel. The Treasury Department renewed the waiver two days after Bessent said at the White House that he had no plans to extend the sanctions relief.

In an AP interview about the impact of the US-Israeli war on the global energy market and other topics, the US treasury secretary explained his previous change of heart and ruled out the notion of renewing sanctions waivers for both Russia and Iran. Bessent said during the World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings last week, "More than 10 of the most vulnerable and poorest countries came to me and said, 'Can you help?'" It was for those vulnerable and poor countries. But I wouldn't imagine that we'd have another extension. I think the Russian oil on the water has been largely sucked up."

Palestinians To Vote In 1st Elections In 20 Years

Palestinian Territories. (Agency)

Palestinians in the West Bank and a central area of Gaza head to the polls Saturday for municipal elections in a first vote since the Gaza war, marked by a narrow political field and widespread disillusionment. Nearly 1.5 million people are registered to vote in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, as well as 70,000 people in Gaza's Deir el-Balah area, according to the Ramallah-based Central Elections Commission. Most electoral lists are aligned with president Mahmud Abbas's secular-nationalist Fatah party or running as independents. There are no lists affiliated with Fatah's archrival Hamas, which controls nearly half of the Gaza Strip.

In most cities, Fatah-backed tickets will run against independent lists headed by candidates from factions such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Marxist-Leninist). Mahmud Bader, a businessman from the northern West Bank city of Tulkarem, where two adjacent refugee camps have been under Israeli military control for over a year, said he would vote despite having little hope for

meaningful change. Whether candidates are independent or partisan, it has no effect and will have no effect or benefit for the city," he told AFP.

"The (Israeli) occupation is the one that rules Tulkarem. It would only be an image shown to the international media -- as if we have elections, a state



or independence." In many cities, including Nablus and Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority, only one list has been submitted, meaning it wins automatically without needing a vote. Polling stations in the West Bank will be open from 7:00 am (0400 GMT) to 7:00 pm, while in Deir al-Balah, polls will close at 5:00 pm to facilitate counting in daylight due to the lack of electricity in the war

devastated strip, the elections commission told AFP. UN coordinator Ramiz Alakbarov commended the commission for organising a "credible process".

"Saturday's elections represent an important opportunity for Palestinians to exercise their democratic rights during an exceptionally challenging period", Alakbarov said in a statement.

'Confirmation of existence'

Gaza, which has been under Hamas control since 2007, will see its first vote since the legislative elections of 2006 that the Islamist movement won.

Abbas's Palestinian Authority is holding elections only in Deir el-Balah "as an experiment (to test its own) success or failure, since there are no post-war opinion polls", Jamal al-Fadi, a political scientist at Cairo's Al-Azhar University, told AFP.

Abbas, who is now 90 and has remained in power for more than 20 years without ever being re-elected, frequently promises legislative and presidential elections that have never taken place.

US pushes for direct talks in Islamabad as Iran demands indirect mediation

ISLAMABAD. (Agency)

Iran's foreign minister arrived in Islamabad on Friday and US envoys headed to the Pakistani capital in a bid to kickstart a new round of peace negotiations amid a fragile ceasefire. The White House said emissaries Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner would engage in an "in-person conversation" with Iranian representatives, but Iranian state media said that direct talks were not in the cards. Despite President Donald Trump's announcement on Thursday of a three-week ceasefire extension in Lebanon, Israeli strikes in the south of the country killed six people on Friday, the Lebanese health ministry said. While Trump expressed confidence at the prospect of a lasting peace in Lebanon, sealing a deal to end the wider Middle East war is a thornier proposition, even as urgency mounts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a vital conduit for the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG). White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said Witkoff and Kushner would head to Pakistan on Saturday "to engage in talks...with representatives from

the Iranian delegation." The Iranians reached out, as the president called on them to do, and asked for this in-person conversation," Leavitt said, adding that the talks would "hopefully move the ball forward towards a deal." Leavitt said Vice President JD Vance, who led a first round of negotiations in Islamabad two weeks ago that concluded without a deal, would not be joining for the time being, but was on "standby to fly to Pakistan if necessary."

It remained unclear late Friday whether the Iranian side would meet directly with the US envoys. Iranian state television said Araghchi has no plans to meet with the Americans and Islamabad would serve as a bridge to "convey" Iranian proposals to end the conflict. Pakistan's foreign ministry said Araghchi had arrived in Islamabad to discuss "ongoing efforts for regional peace and stability" with Pakistani officials, without directly referencing talks with Witkoff and Kushner. An Iranian spokesman said Araghchi would visit Oman and Russia after the Pakistan stop to

discuss efforts to end the war launched against the Islamic Republic by Israel and the United States on February 28. EU says opening Hormuz 'vital'



Since the last round of talks, efforts to bring the two sides back to the table have hit an impasse, with Iran refusing to participate as long as a US naval blockade on its ports remained in place.

Iran has imposed a de facto blockade of its own on the Strait of Hormuz, allowing only a trickle of ships to pass through the vital waterway, throwing global energy markets

into turmoil. Oil prices slid on Friday amid hopes that fresh peace talks would see an end to Tehran's disruption of trade through the strait. European Council President Antonio Costa said Friday that the strait "must immediately reopen without restrictions and without tolling."

"This is vital for the entire world," Costa said. Major Wall Street indices closed at fresh records on Friday as markets cheered the latest batch of earnings reports and US and Iranian officials headed to Pakistan. The United States continued meanwhile to build up its forces in the Middle East with the arrival of its third aircraft carrier in the region, the USS George H.W. Bush.

Destroyed! Trump spoke in glowing terms on Thursday of peace prospects for Lebanon after meeting with Israeli and Lebanese envoys, voicing hope for a three-way meeting with the Lebanese and Israeli leaders.

The two countries have been officially at war for decades and until last week had not met so directly since 1993.

Microsoft Launches First-Ever Voluntary Buyout Programme: Here's What Employees Could Get

DALLAS. (Agency)

Microsoft has started offering voluntary buyouts to a section of its employees, marking a major shift in how the company is managing its workforce. The move is aimed at thousands of workers, with many expected to receive significant payouts as part of their exit packages, reported Forbes.

The buyout programme, launched on Thursday by Microsoft, is the company's first-ever employee buyout initiative. According to an internal memo obtained by CNBC and Bloomberg, around 7% of its US workforce has been offered the option.

As of June 2025, Microsoft had about 228,000 employees globally, including nearly 125,000 in the United States, as per a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. This means roughly 8,750 US-based employees could be eligible under the current offer. The buyouts are being extended to employees at the senior director level and below, as well as those whose combined age and years of



service at the company equal 70 or more. Following this development, Microsoft shares fell more than 4% on Thursday afternoon, reflecting broader weakness in the software sector.

According to a CNBC report, details regarding the buyout package will be shared with eligible employees and their managers on May 7th. Previously, Microsoft's severance package has included 12 weeks of base pay and an additional two weeks' pay for each year of service, although the final amount may vary depending on the employee's length of service and position. When Microsoft laid off 10,000 employees in 2023, CEO Satya Nadella stated that the company would provide eligible employees with severance pay, including six months of healthcare, stock vesting, and 60 days notice. For example, an employee with 20 years of experience and an annual salary of \$180,000 could receive a severance package of \$180,000, although higher-level employees are likely to receive more. The buyout decision comes as Microsoft plans to increase its investment in data centers and artificial intelligence products.



arrives in the U.S. capital on Monday. They were later replaced with the British flag, the official said. Charles' state visit, to mark the 225th anniversary of the U.S. Declaration of Independence from British rule, is widely seen as the most high-profile trip of his reign so far. The trip will aim to shore up the two allies' "special relationship," which has sunk to its lowest point in 70 years amid strains surrounding the Iran war.

Short news

Gurugram Man Invites Fiancee, Takes 'Sex-Enhancing' Drugs, Dies Of Overdose

Gurugram.(Agency)

A 29-year-old man living in a rented PG flat in Sector 53 area died allegedly after an overdose of a sex-enhancing drug, with police recovering wrappers of some medicines and health supplements from the room, police said on Friday.

According to the police, the man, Rohit Lal, was a native of Nagpur, and worked in the office of the Quality Council of India, New Delhi and lived in a rented flat in Gurugram.

Police handed over the body to the family after a postmortem. The incident came to light on Thursday morning when Lal's co-worker informed the police. According to the co-worker, the two often went to the office together, but that day Lal was neither answering his phone nor opening his room door, they added.

After receiving information, police arrived at the scene and broke down the door, where they found the young man lying dead on the bed. Wrappers of some medicines and health supplements were also recovered from the room, said police.

A senior investigating officer said that the preliminary investigations revealed that Lal had invited his fiancée to meet him, but he died before.

Police suspect that he had taken a sex-enhancing drug, a possible overdose of which may have led to the heart attack.

"We sent viscera and the recovered medicines to FSL for testing. The exact cause of death will be revealed only after the viscera report is received. We are investigating all aspects," Sector 53 SHO Satender Rawal said.

Karnataka college staff ask three students to remove janivara

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Despite training college authorities frequently about dos and don'ts, warning them and issuing guidelines about frisking students during the Common Entrance Test (CET) 2026, three students were forced to remove their janivara (sacred thread) by the staff of a college in Koramangala on Thursday, the first day of CET. The college has suspended three staffers in connection with the incident. The parents of the three students filed a complaint at the Madiwala police station on April 24 morning.

Anand S Theertha, Nakul H and Anirudh R Rao are the three students who were forced to remove their 'janivara', despite refusing and arguing with the college authorities.

It violates religious freedom, say parents

Anirudh's father Raghu Bhima Rao stated in his police complaint, "My son was forced to remove the thread with the warning that he would not be allowed into the exam hall otherwise. This is unacceptable and against KEA (Karnataka Examination Authority) guidelines. It violates personal choice, religious freedom and has caused significant emotional distress to my son. Either K-CET or the college authorities must be held responsible." He also urged the authorities to bar the college from conducting exams in the future.

Nakul's father Harish told TNIE, "What college authorities did was not right. It happened on the first day of CET on Thursday (April 23).

SC internal quota implemented within 15 per cent in Karnataka

BENGALURU.(Agency)

Claiming it to be a historic decision, the state government on Friday decided to implement internal reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs) with a quota matrix of 5.25% each to SC (left)-A and SC (right)-B and 4.5% for Bhovi, Lambani, Koracha, Korama, 59 nomadic castes and others - C, splitting up the 15% quota in recruitment.

Facing a severe backlash from the communities as some were against internal quota, except SC left, the Congress government ultimately took a decision as any further delay could have cost the ruling party dear.

A special cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, decided to throw the 15% quota open to all the three (A, B and C) categories, allowing them to compete with each other for posts.

This means all the 101 SC castes have a free run at jobs, especially Group A and B posts, like assistant professors, assistant engineers etc.

The government move will spark a debate as internal quota will now become irrelevant, said experts. The cabinet seems to have taken note of objections raised by organisations of certain communities, arguing that it would be injustice to them if the internal quota is implemented for SCs for few jobs. But Social Welfare Minister Dr HC Mahadevappa defended the move, saying it will create the SC general option on the model adopted by the Andhra government.

Fuel shortage hits Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool; officials say no need to panic

Meanwhile, State Civil Supplies Commissioner K Kanna Babu clarified that there is no actual shortage of fuel and urged the public not to panic.

KURNOOL/VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

Fuel stations across the erstwhile undivided Kurnool district witnessed panic buying on Thursday as several outlets displayed 'No Stock' boards, triggering long queues and anxiety among vehicle owners.

With supplies from oil companies dipping sharply in recent days, many outlets either shut down temporarily or rationed fuel, forcing vehicle owners to wait for hours. In Kurnool, more than 30 fuel stations remained closed, while official data showed fuel reserves of 8.35 lakh litres of petrol and 11.38 lakh litres of diesel across 202 outlets. HPCL held the largest fuel stock with 2.69 lakh litres of petrol and 2.94 lakh litres of diesel, followed by Nayara with 2.03 lakh litres of petrol and 3.69 lakh litres of diesel.

In Nandyal district, however, stocks were



comparatively healthier, with 11.50 lakh litres of petrol and 9.71 lakh litres of diesel across 166 outlets. IOCL held more petrol stock with 4.43 lakh litres, while HPCL accounted for 3.57 lakh litres.

Despite assurances from District Collectors A Siri (Kurnool) and G Rajakumari (Nandyal) that the fuel shortage was temporary, vehicle

owners continued to crowd filling stations, fearing a prolonged crisis.

The disruption was particularly severe in towns such as Yemmiganur, Pathikonda, Alur and Adoni, where diesel scarcity even led to the reappearance of horse-drawn carts for transporting goods and passengers.

Meanwhile, State Civil Supplies Commissioner K Kanna Babu clarified that there is no actual shortage of fuel and urged the public not to panic.

The government is closely monitoring the situation and held a meeting with oil companies (IOCL, HPCL and BPCL) and the Andhra Pradesh Federation of Petroleum Traders, he said. "Oil companies have agreed to supply 10% more fuel than April 2025 levels," he said, adding that Joint Collectors have been directed to keep a watch and report any signs of fuel crisis.

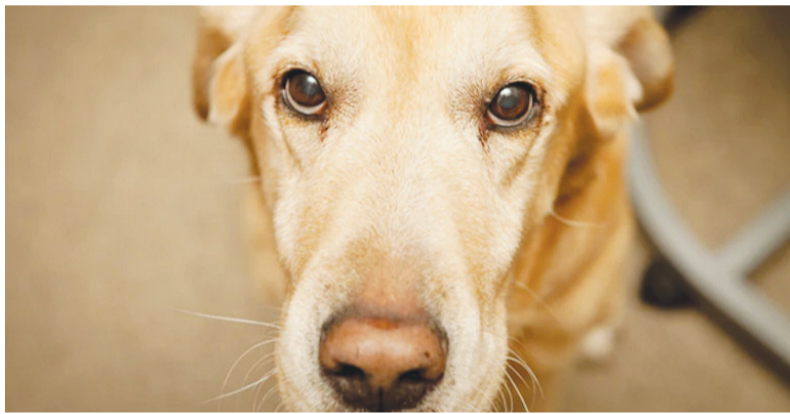
Faridabad Man Fined Rs 1,000 For Tying Dog In Scorching Sun

The court imposed a fine of Rs 50 under Section 11 of Cruelty to Animal Act and a fine of Rs 1,000 under Section 429 of IPC.

Faridabad.(Agency)

A court here sentenced a man who was found guilty of tying his dog in the sun during scorching heat outside to a fine of Rs 1,050 after a long 15-month hearing, police said. According to the police, the case pertains to Puri Pranayam Society in Sector 82, Faridabad. On June 20, 2024, the BPTP police station registered a case based on a complaint from Vrinda Sharma of the People for Animals Unit.

The allegation was that Deepak Sharma had tied his dog to a small balcony in the scorching sun. The team, responding to the information, rescued the dog with the help of



the police. He was also accused of misbehaving with the team, they added.

Following an investigation, police arrested the accused and presented a chargesheet in court.

Initially, the case was filed under Section 11 of the Cruelty to Animals Act. The court later added Section 429 of the Indian Penal Code, which provides for a fine of Rs 1,000 for causing harm to an animal worth more than Rs 50, police said.

The case came up for hearing in the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Jitendra Singh on January 22, 2025. The trial lasted six hearings and approximately 15 months. During the trial, Deepak Sharma admitted his guilt and the court convicted him.

Now, on Thursday after hearing both sides, the court imposed a fine of Rs 50 under Section 11 of Cruelty to Animal Act and a fine of Rs 1,000 under Section 429 of IPC.

Dalit girl case probe: Andhra Pradesh HC raps police

VIJAYAWADA.(Agency)

The Andhra Pradesh High Court has come down heavily on the police for allegedly attempting to shield ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders accused of sexually harassing a minor Dalit girl in West Godavari district on Friday.

Expressing serious concern, the court criticised the police for failing to support the victim and instead allegedly pressuring her family to withdraw the criminal case.

The case pertains to a complaint filed by a 13-year-old girl on February 18 in Bhimavaram, accusing local political leader Chennu Chanti and his son of sexual harassment and caste-based abuse. Based on her complaint, a case was registered under relevant provisions, including the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. However, the victim's family later approached the High Court, alleging that police officials were threatening them to withdraw the case



and were not conducting a fair investigation.

During the hearing, Justice Yadavalli Lakshmana Rao strongly reprimanded the police, questioning their conduct and impartiality. The court observed that it is the duty of the police to investigate the complaint thoroughly and file a charge sheet, rather than speculate about alleged political motives behind the complaint. The judge expressed displeasure over statements made by Bhimavaram DSP Raghuvir Vishnu, who reportedly suggested political involvement in the case. "Do you have divine insight to claim political motives?" the court

asked, adding that such determinations fall within the jurisdiction of the judiciary, not the police.

The judge further criticised the delay in arresting the accused, noting that the incident occurred in February but no significant progress had been made.

The court also expressed shock after reviewing parts of the victim's complaint, stating that the allegations reflected disturbing and shameful conduct that would make any civilised society 'bow its head in shame.' It accused the police of derailing the investigation and acting under external pressure.

In strong remarks, the court told the officials to resign from the service if they were unable to withstand political pressure. It also questioned the alleged intimidation of the victim's mother and emphasised that the police must act lawfully and independently.

Finding the DSP's explanation unsatisfactory, the court directed the West Godavari Superintendent of Police to appear in person with all case records.

Kerala may see early monsoon onset despite heatwave, likely by May

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.(Agency)

Even as Kerala reels under scorching sun with heatwave warnings issued in various districts, several international weather models indicate an early arrival of the southwest monsoon in the state.

According to the forecast from the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), the monsoon could arrive in South India by the end of May. Meanwhile, weather experts said Kerala may fare better despite below-normal southwest monsoon outlook by India Meteorological Department (IMD).

M G Manoj, scientist at Advanced Centre for Atmospheric Radar Research, Cusat, told the TNIE that long-range forecasts have not yet specified the exact date of monsoon onset. "We can only comment on whether the monsoon will arrive early or late, usually by the first or second week of May," he said.

'Clearer signs of monsoon expected around mid-May'

In response to the ECMWF forecast suggesting an early onset, Manoj said clearer signals of monsoon are expected only around mid-May. "Typically, the monsoon sets in over Kerala around June 1, with a variation of about a week on either side. There is no strict requirement that it must begin only in June," he said. He said Kerala and parts of the west coast are expected to be in a relatively better position. "The distribution is likely to be heterogeneous. It does not mean all regions will receive uniformly deficient rainfall.

6 Pakistanis Get 20-Year Jail Term In Rs 384-Crore Heroin Bust

Bhuj.(Agency)

A special court in Gujarat's Bhuj has sentenced six Pakistani nationals to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment in a case involving the attempted smuggling of heroin worth around Rs 384.68 crore into Indian waters. The judgment, delivered on Friday, brings to a close a high-profile case dating back to December 20, 2021, when the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Indian Coast Guard carried out a joint mid-sea operation.

Acting on specific intelligence provided by Deputy Superintendent of Police Bhavesh Rozia, authorities intercepted a suspicious vessel about 35 nautical

miles off the Jakhau coast.

During a search of the boat, officials recovered 76.936 kg of heroin concealed in five large bags. The six individuals on board, all residents of Karachi in Pakistan, were arrested on the spot.

The investigation was led by ATS Police Sub-Inspector RR Rathore, based on a complaint filed by Police Inspector MC Nayak. The accused were charged under multiple provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, including Sections 8(c), 22(c), 25 and 29.



During the trial at the Sixth Additional Sessions and Special NDPS Court, the prosecution presented 203 documentary exhibits and examined 13 key witnesses. Arguments were led

2 UP Teens Were Filmed While Bathing In Yamuna. They Consume Poison

Banda, Uttar Pradesh.(Agency)

Two teenage girls allegedly attempted suicide by consuming poison in Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh on Friday after they were filmed by some individuals while bathing in the Yamuna river, police said.

The incident took place in the Pahari police station area.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Arun Kumar Singh said a memo was received from the Pahari community health centre (CHC) stating that two girls, aged 16 and 17, had consumed poison.

By the time police reached the CHC, the two had been referred to the district hospital in Karwi.

They were subsequently transferred to Rani Durgavati Medical College in Banda for advanced treatment, he said.

While being brought to the hospital, the girls told police that they were bathing in the Yamuna on Thursday, when some individuals clicked photos and filmed videos of them.

The girls were scolded by their families over the incident. Distressed by this, the two consumed poison, Singh said.

The SP said three police teams have been deployed to investigate the matter.

The first team has been assigned to oversee the girls' treatment, the second is coordinating with their family members and the third is actively searching for those who filmed the girls, the officer said.

Women's reservation: Stay on the charted course

There is something profoundly disingenuous about the Opposition's sudden outrage over the absence of a sub-quota for Other Backward Classes in the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023).

This is the very law they supported—without amendment, without dissent, without even a procedural insistence that such a provision be included. The same voices that voted for it now seek to undermine it—not by opposing it outright, but by suffocating it with post facto conditions.

To understand the scale of this opportunism, one must return to what the law actually provides—not what is being politically projected. The Adhiniyam mandates that one-third of all seats in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies be reserved for women, with these seats to be determined after delimitation and rotated periodically. This rotation is not incidental, it is foundational. Reserved constituencies will change after each delimitation exercise, ensuring that no seat is permanently locked and that representation is geographically distributed over time. In other words, the framework is deliberately designed to prevent political monopolies over "safe" reserved seats, while expanding opportunity across regions.

But like all rotation-based systems, it comes with trade-offs. The shifting of constituencies may reduce long-term incumbency incentives, as representatives cannot assume continuity from the same seat. That is a structural feature—not a flaw discovered in hindsight. If the inclusion of OBC women was truly non-negotiable, why did Rahul Gandhi not insist on it in Parliament in 2023? Why no amendment under Article 368? Why no attempt to constitutionally embed OBC reservation alongside SC/ST in Articles 330A and 332A? Why pass the Bill first and discover its "defects" later? The answer is neither legal nor moral—it is political. At that moment, supporting the Bill carried dividends. Today, delaying its implementation serves a different calculus.

A brief historical reminder is instructive. In the mid-1980s, a Supreme Court judgement affirming maintenance rights for a divorced Muslim woman was effectively neutralised by legislation under a government led by Rajiv Gandhi. Today, his son has gone further. The contradiction is glaring. In September 2023, Rahul Gandhi demanded immediate implementation—without delimitation, without sequencing, without constitutional groundwork. Today, the same voices insist on a caste census, a redesign of the law, and additional layers of constitutional engineering that would inevitably push implementation into 2034. What was urgency has now become obstruction. The constitutional reality was never in doubt. The 106th Amendment extends reservation to women within categories already recognised by the Constitution—Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It does not create an OBC political category because such a category does not exist in legislative reservation in that constitutional form. To introduce it would require a fresh constitutional architecture, a legally defensible enumeration and a framework capable of surviving judicial scrutiny. If representation was truly the concern, it would begin within party structures. The Samajwadi Party, which traces its ideological roots to Ram Manohar Lohia, offers a telling case. Under Mulayam Singh Yadav and continuing under Akhilesh Yadav, the party evolved into a tightly held familial network. At various points, nearly 18 members of the extended family occupied political office or positions of influence. This is not empowerment. This is consolidation.

India, Indonesia & the shared vision of Middle Powers

Indonesia and India worked closely together to convene the historic Bandung Conference in 1955, but relations became dormant later

EVER since I spent a year as India's Ambassador to Indonesia in 2001-02, I have had the impression that this archipelago nation to our east occupies less space in Indian minds than it should. Few Indians are aware that Indonesia is a close and contiguous neighbour. The last island in the Nicobar chain is barely 80 km from the northernmost Indonesian island of Sumatra. The two countries have a defined maritime boundary. Indonesia straddled the old maritime routes leading from ports on the Indian peninsula to those on the eastern seaboard of China. But there was a flourishing trade between India and the Indonesian islands themselves. Indian cottons were a major item of trade, but among the elite, the exquisite patolas from Gujarat were prized and preserved over generations. I recall that the Sultan of Jogjakarta had, as family heirloom, jackets and flared pants made of patola, which were a few hundred years old. They were exclusively worn by the princesses of the royal court for the sacred dances performed by them once a year to ensure a bountiful harvest. In Sumatra, a masjid I visited had the holy Koran wrapped in a piece of patola. Indian traders bought large quantities of spices from Indonesia in return and the ports of the Malabar coast, such as Kochi (Cochin) and Kollam (Quilon) became the entrepôts for the spice trade, in particular pepper. With trade, cultural exchanges followed as did religious ideas and rituals. But it is the innate genius and aesthetic sense of the Indonesian people which transformed these cultural infusions, not intrusions, into something uniquely their own.

One may see the colours and hear the sounds of India across the islands, but this is not India. There is affinity but not identity. A culture which has celebrated its own expansive plurality through the ages welcomed its multiple transformations in distant lands. In the 11th century, a dean of the famed Vikramshila University, Atisa Dipamkara, braved the elements and sailed to Palembang in Sumatra to learn at the feet of Dharmakirti, an Indonesian Buddhist master, revered across the Buddhist world. How these transformations took place and enriched the interacting cultures over time would be a fascinating historical inquiry. But this sense of affinity is not only rooted in the past. Very

quickly, through my assignment, I found that Bollywood films were a rage throughout the country and Indian film songs were on everyone's lips, even if the words were not always understood.

A Shahrukh Khan extravaganza in a stadium packed with thousands is still remembered with excitement. Indian television serials are repackaged in the Indonesian idiom and are hugely popular. Culture could be a powerful instrument of diplomacy throughout Southeast Asia, but is underrated and underinvested in. I was in Indonesia recently after a gap of more than a decade. The country has become more prosperous and its capital Jakarta pulses with an energy I had not witnessed before. The infrastructure has greatly improved and so has the once

Movement, which was established in 1961, was the creature of Bandung, building upon the spirit of solidarity that had pervaded the summit. It was unfortunate that post-Bandung, Indonesia went through a prolonged political crisis, which eventually ended with the military coup in 1965 and the coming to power of a military-led government under General Suharto.

Relations with India became dormant. It was with the return to democracy in 1997 that the two countries began to reconnect again. The Act East policy, announced by India in 1992, brought Southeast Asia and its largest country, Indonesia, back on India's radar. During the recent visit, I found a more confident and self-assured country, ready to play a more active role beyond its immediate region.

There is an interest in promoting the role of Middle Powers as distinct from the Global South. I was part of an interaction among several Middle Powers, which not only included the relatively more powerful countries of the Global South but also several from Europe, Australia and Canada. Since Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney had spoken at the Davos Forum in January this year about the need for Middle Powers to come together to safeguard international peace and security against US assault, Indonesia appears to have taken up the cause, though still at the non-governmental level. It was argued that unlike at Bandung, the Middle Powers had greater agency today. They had both the need and the ability to resist coercive action by great powers. They could also play a mediating role to prevent or stop armed conflict. Pakistan's role in helping bring about a two-week ceasefire in the Iran war is the most recent example of what a middle power can achieve. Middle Powers are evidence that the world is

moving towards a diffusion of power and multipolarity. But multipolarity is a state of being. It is not an alternative order. To qualify as an alternative order, there must be some shared vision, some sense of solidarity among those aspiring to constitute a stable order, with a consensus on its norms, the nature of its institutions and processes.

Bandung had a clear vision of what Afro-Asian solidarity would aim for—a more equitable and just international order with development at its centre. Is the world ready for another Bandung and could India and Indonesia come together again to articulate a shared vision for the Middle Powers? This could be an initiative worth exploring in our troubled and dangerous world.



notorious traffic. There is an efficient metro and a cross-city sky-train. A Chinese-made fast train takes one from Jakarta to Bandung in just 40 minutes. It used to take at least a couple of hours by road. Despite being the most powerful among the 11-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Indonesia has been a somewhat reluctant leader even within the grouping. And yet, there was a time when Indonesia and India worked closely together to convene the historic Bandung Conference in 1955, with several of the newly decolonised countries declaring their intent to safeguard their hard-won political freedom and to work together for their economic emancipation. The Non-Aligned

Healthcare burden: A robust insurance cover is a must

Insurance coverage alone is not enough; India must strengthen its public healthcare infrastructure

HEALTHCARE in India is grappling with a paradox. Nearly half the country's population has some form of health insurance cover, yet out-of-pocket medical expenditure remains high, according to a new survey by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Government-backed schemes have spurred the expansion of coverage, especially in villages, where it is now higher than in urban areas. However, for crores of families, falling ill still carries the risk of acute financial distress. The survey has exposed a glaring fault line: the average out-of-pocket bill for each case of hospitalisation is over Rs 34,000, more than what the majority of the households in India can afford. Even as the insurance umbrella gets bigger, the economic burden of medical treatment continues to rise, often outpacing inflation. A key factor is the growing dominance of private healthcare. More Indians are preferring private hospitals, where the costs



are far above those in government-run institutions. With public healthcare's share in hospitalisation declining, patients are inevitably being pushed towards more expensive options, diluting the benefits of the

insurance safety net. Flawed implementation of flagship schemes such as Ayushman Bharat Yojana is another impediment. Delayed reimbursement threatens to disrupt pocket-friendly services. If empanelled hospitals back out, the very backbone of publicly funded insurance could weaken, leaving underprivileged citizens in the lurch.

The takeaway is obvious: insurance coverage alone is not enough. India must strengthen its public healthcare infrastructure, regulate expenses in the private sector and ensure timely payments under government schemes. In the absence of these reforms, the expansion of insurance will be just a statistical achievement rather than a meaningful safeguard. Access to healthcare cannot merely be about enrolment; it must focus on affordability.

This yawning gap needs to be bridged, failing which hospital bills will continue to eat into the earnings and savings of hapless people—regardless of whether they are insured or not.

Lessons from Pahalgam

Pakistan unwilling to shun terrorism despite paying an enormous economic, social & political price

THE Pahalgam terror attack's first anniversary should be an occasion for a sober reflection on terrorism, its regional and international manifestations, global patterns and the places where it has become endemic. It's time for the Indian establishment and the political class to make a dispassionate assessment of how India has handled Pakistan-sponsored terrorism over the past three-and-a-half decades, especially since 2014. Pakistan has repeatedly used force against India in a bid to achieve its security and foreign policy objectives. The despatch of tribal raiders to Kashmir in 1947, Operation Gibraltar and Operation Grand Slam in 1965, the initiation of hostilities in 1971 and the Kargil war in 1999 are illustrative. Terrorism targeting India has become part of Pakistan's security doctrine. It is particularly striking that Pakistan has raised the bogey of nuclear weapons as a shield. In doing so, it has turned on its head the doctrine that has prevailed among nuclear states. Pakistan is unwilling to shun terrorism despite paying an enormous economic, social and political price for it. That is a lesson which the Pahalgam attack reaffirmed. India worsted Pakistan each time it used conventional force. This was so even when it was surprised, as in Kargil. However, has it got the better of terrorism originating from Pakistan? Has India succeeded in containing it, let alone eliminating it? Sadly, the answer to these questions is 'no'. Till the Uri attack of 2016, India used diplomatic means to make the global community exert pressure on Pakistan to abandon the path of terror. On each occasion, the major powers assured India that they would deter Pakistan, but did nothing to this effect. It continued to promote terrorism, confident that it would not have to face the



visit to Lahore on Christmas that year, but it was a wasted effort because just a week later, the Pathankot airbase was attacked by terrorists. After the nuclear tests of 1998, Pakistan propagated the view that India's conventional response to a terror attack was extremely dangerous in a nuclearised environment. It asserted that the nuclear threshold was so low and the dangers of escalation so high that the international community should deter India

from resorting to a conventional war in the wake of a terror attack. Right from the early 1990s, Pakistan kept up the charade that terrorism in India was home-grown. The Indian response to the Uri, Pulwama and Pahalgam attacks was to use kinetic force. The massacre of 25 male tourists in front of their family members at Pahalgam on April 22, 2025, enraged the nation, just like the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks had done. There was no doubt about Pakistan's involvement, but it resorted to its usual prevarication. The world promptly condemned the attack, but did not really demand that Pakistan should visibly dismantle the terror infrastructure it had nurtured for decades. The global community counselled restraint to both parties. While this response rubbed salt into India's wounds, it demonstrated the harsh truth that the global tide against terrorism, which had emerged after 9/11 and led to the US-helmed war on terror, had ebbed. The pressure exerted on Pakistan by the Financial Action Task Force had also eased by 2022.

Indeed, with its relations with the Afghan Taliban souring, Pakistan began to face attacks from the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Baloch groups seeking to throw off the Pakistani yoke. Islamabad alleged that India was behind these attacks, which it claimed were occurring from Afghan territory. A major militant attack occurred around six weeks before the Pahalgam massacre. The inference that flows from this timing is obvious. The major powers' main concern lay in preventing an armed conflict between India and Pakistan on account of a terror incident. This was also witnessed after the Pahalgam attack. While they failed to prevent kinetic Indian action, their attention shifted to de-escalating

hostilities between two nuclear-armed neighbours. While all major powers engaged with India and Pakistan, the leading role was played by the US.

President Donald Trump stepped in during Operation Sindoor. He has repeatedly claimed that it was his mediation that helped save millions of lives in India and Pakistan. India has implicitly rejected Trump's statements, while Pakistan has embraced them. Indeed, the latter even nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize. Islamabad was rewarded when Trump hosted Field Marshal Asim Munir to a luncheon meeting at the White House. This was unprecedented. Later, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was invited to the White House and the prospects of US-Pakistan cooperation in critical minerals and cryptocurrency were discussed. Munir was present at this meeting too.

Trump has tried to balance his goodwill for Munir with a continued outreach to PM Modi. He has ignored Munir's involvement in promoting terrorism in India. Now with its mediation between the US and Iran, Pakistan's (and its military's) integration into the international community is evident. This presents problems for India and requires a new persuasive narrative on Pakistan. It is imperative that this work is undertaken without delay. Pakistan will remain a sponsor of calibrated terrorism against India. How should New Delhi respond? One entrenched view in sections of the security establishment is that terrorism does not pose a strategic challenge; hence, the country can live with it. This view is bolstered by Pakistan's continually precarious macro-economic condition. This strategic opinion ignores that governments will find it politically difficult not to use force after every terror attack which sparks a nationwide outrage, especially in view of the template set after the Uri, Pulwama and Pahalgam incidents.

Noida International Airport gets interim CEO to fast-track flight operations

Noida International Airport has appointed Neetu Samra as interim chief executive officer with immediate effect. The change aligns with BCAS rules and is expected to speed up final clearance before flight operations begin.

Noida. (Agency)

In a major administrative reshuffle, Noida International Airport (NIA), commonly known as Jewar Airport, has appointed Neetu Samra as its interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with immediate effect. She will hold the position until the company's board finalises a permanent CEO. The change has been made in line with a directive from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), which mandates that the CEO of any airport in India must be an Indian citizen. Final security clearance from BCAS — a prerequisite for starting flight operations — can only be granted once this condition is met. Samra has been serving as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the airport since October 2021

and has played a key role in financial management, governance, and strategic planning during critical phases of the project. Her appointment is expected to ensure continuity in operations.

Meanwhile, Christoph Schnellmann, who had been serving as CEO since August 2020, will transition to the role of Executive Vice Chairman on the board and will continue to be associated with the project. Daniel Bircher, Chairman of Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (YIAPL), said that following the airport's inauguration by the Prime Minister in March 2026, the focus is now on commencing operations at the earliest. He added that the management change is aimed at expediting this process.

Noida International Airport is being developed as a modern, world-class aviation hub, expected to enhance connectivity for the Delhi-NCR region and western Uttar Pradesh with multiple domestic and international destinations. In its first phase, the airport features one runway and a terminal with an annual capacity of around 12 million passengers, with plans for future expansion.

The project also emphasises sustainable development, with a focus on achieving net-zero emissions. With an Indian CEO now in place, the airport is expected to receive final BCAS clearance soon, and flight operations are likely to begin by the end of May. Preparations for the launch have been accelerated by YIAPL.



Short news

Angered over sister's elopement, 3 Gujarat men beat her lover to death

Uttar Pradesh. (Agency)

Two teenage girls allegedly attempted suicide by consuming poison in Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh on Friday after they were filmed by some individuals while bathing in the Yamuna river, police said. The incident took place in the Pahari police station area. Superintendent of Police (SP) Arun Kumar Singh said a memo was received from the Pahari community health centre (CHC) saying that two girls, aged 16 and 17, had consumed poison. By the time police reached the CHC,



the two had been referred to the district hospital in Karwi. They were subsequently transferred to Rani Durgavati Medical College in Banda for advanced treatment, he said.

While being brought to the hospital, the girls told police that they were bathing in the Yamuna on Thursday, when some individuals clicked photos and filmed videos of them. The girls were scolded by their families over the incident. Distressed by this, the two consumed poison, Singh said.

The SP said three police teams have been deployed to investigate the matter. The first team has been assigned to oversee the girls' treatment, the second is coordinating with their family members and the third is actively searching for those who filmed the girls, the officer said.

4 hurt after speeding Thar rams scooters in Ghaziabad, driver detained

Ghaziabad. (Agency)

A high-speed Mahindra Thar allegedly driven recklessly caused chaos in the Shalimar Garden area of Ghaziabad, leaving four people injured after crashing into two scooters and bystanders late on the night of April 23. The driver has been detained, police said.

According to officials, the incident occurred around 10:50 pm near Aggarwal Sweets, where Sumit Gupta and his wife Poonam



Gupta had stopped their scooter to have ice cream. A black Thar, reportedly moving at high speed, lost control and rammed into their vehicle. The impact was severe, leaving the couple seriously injured and their scooter badly damaged. The car then hit another scooter, injuring its riders, identified as Siddharth and Prince Gupta.

The injured alleged that the driver appeared to be under the influence of alcohol at the time of the accident.

Following the crash, Prince Gupta alerted police by dialling 112. A police team reached the spot promptly and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Police have seized the Thar from the scene and, based on a complaint by the victims, registered a case and detained the accused driver.

RTC driver's death sparks tension in Telangana's Narsampet, body taken to depot

Following Shankar Goud's death during the RTC strike, workers sought to bring his body to the Narsampet depot. Police later allowed it after appeals, as the incident drew tributes, protests and political demands.

Narsampet (Warangal). (Agency)

Tension gripped Narsampet town in Warangal district following the death of Road Transport Corporation (RTC) driver Shankar Goud, who had reportedly attempted suicide amid the ongoing RTC strike, sparking anger among transport workers. RTC employees demanded that Shankar Goud's body be brought to the Narsampet RTC depot to enable colleagues to pay their last respects. Workers appealed to DCP Rajamahendra Nayak for permission, calling it an emotional issue and a matter of honouring their colleague's service.

"Shankar Goud was our colleague. We should be allowed to pay our respects at



the depot. It is a matter of our emotions," RTC workers said.

As tensions escalated, heavy police deployment was made in the area to prevent any untoward incidents, with authorities closely monitoring the situation as large numbers of workers gathered.

In a late-night development, police permitted the body to be shifted to the depot following appeals from RTC unions and family members.

Shankar Goud, who had served at the Narsampet depot for 22 years, was taken there for final respects, with a large number of RTC employees and members of the public paying tribute.

The incident also triggered political reactions, with BRS leaders demanding Rs 1 crore ex gratia compensation for the family and a government job for one of the family members.

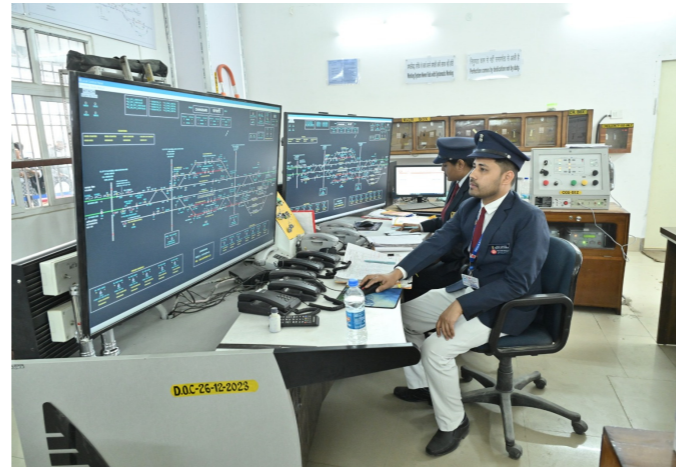
Former Narsampet MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy blamed the state government for the death and urged RTC workers not to lose morale, assuring the party's support.

NFR Undertakes Infrastructure Up-gradation to Boost Safety and Efficiency

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 25th April: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has been consistently striving to enhance the safety and reliability of train operations through continuous monitoring and upgradation of its infrastructure. Adopting modern and technically advanced systems remains a key focus area to ensure safe and efficient train movement across the zone. During March 2026, NFR has undertaken several significant initiatives in the signalling and safety domain. Thick Web Switch Point machines have been installed at five stations across Katihar, Alipurduar, Rangiya and Lumding divisions of the zone. System Integrity Testing has been carried out at seven stations across Katihar, Alipurduar and Tinsukia divisions, while an extensive System Integrity Testing drive covering 32 Level Crossing gates has also been completed

across all divisions. Additionally, multiple level crossing gates in Lumding and



Rangiya divisions have been interlocked to enhance operational safety. Further

strengthening the signalling infrastructure, 10 sliding booms have been commissioned at various level crossing gates in Katihar, Lumding and Rangiya divisions. Automatic Fire Detection and Alarm Systems have been commissioned at 02 stations in Tinsukia division, including upgradation to advanced aspiration type systems at 02 locations. Electric lifting barriers have also been installed at 02 level crossing gates in Tinsukia division by replacing older mechanical systems, thereby improving safety at rail-road intersec-

tions. Signalling cable meggering has been carried out at 11 stations and 12 level crossing gates to ensure reliability and proper insulation performance. In order to improve the reliability of safety equipment, a total of 1,258 signalling batteries of various capacities have been replaced across all divisions. Replacement of 246 glued joints and 92 integrated type signal LEDs has also been carried out across the zone. Further, improved earthing arrangements have been provided at Gauripur station in Alipurduar division to enhance system safety and stability. These infrastructural upgrades play a crucial role in ensuring safe train operations, improving reliability and enhancing the overall capacity of railway operations. NFR remains committed towards providing a safer, more efficient and punctual travel experience for its passengers through continuous monitoring and strengthening of its infrastructure.

31 Honda Activas stolen from Ahmedabad Godown, 3 held in inside job bust

Police in Ahmedabad cracked a Rs 23 lakh Honda Activa theft case, arresting three including a minor. Employees siphoned vehicles during deliveries and sold them cheaply in rural areas.

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

In a major breakthrough, the Ahmedabad Zone-5 Local Crime Branch (LCB) has busted a theft racket involving 31 two-wheelers stolen from a Honda warehouse in the Nava Naroda area. Investigators found that the crime was orchestrated by insiders working at the facility. Police arrested two men and a minor in connection with the case and recovered 26 stolen Honda Activa scooters worth Rs 23.25 lakh. The complaint was filed by Dharampal Chauhan, a warehouse manager at a Honda showroom in Nikol, after a stock audit revealed that 30 Activas and one

motorcycle had gone missing over four



months. The warehouse, located behind Shelby Hospital, typically stores over 1,000 vehicles.

HOW THE THEFT WAS CARRIED OUT

According to police, the main accused, Shahid Sheikh, who worked at the warehouse, devised a simple but effective plan.

Whenever a showroom order came in, Shahid would dispatch one extra Activa beyond the official count. Before the delivery reached its destination, he would hand over the additional vehicle to co-accused Digu Singh.

Singh, who worked at a nearby TVS showroom, would then sell the stolen scooters in rural areas at heavily discounted rates to avoid suspicion. The accused reportedly sold the stolen scooters for around Rs 30,000 each,

claiming they were company-damaged vehicles. To build trust, they offered convincing explanations for missing registration documents and insisted on cash payments.

Police said Shahid earned between Rs 18,000 and Rs 25,000 per vehicle, while Digu Singh received around Rs 5,000 per sale. The large inventory at the warehouse helped the accused operate undetected for months, as discrepancies initially went unnoticed.

Following the complaint, police tracked down the suspects and recovered 26 of the 31 stolen vehicles. Efforts are underway to trace the remaining scooters and identify buyers. Officials said further investigation is in progress to determine whether more individuals were involved in the racket.

Merchant Navy Officer From Rajasthan On Vessel Seized By Iran: Family

Jaipur. (Agency)

An India-bound container vessel was seized by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in the Strait of Hormuz, with a merchant navy officer from Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar district among the crew, his family said on Friday. The vessel, identified as 'Epaminondes', was intercepted while heading towards India, and vice captain Sanjay Mahar (38), a resident of Sadhbhavana Nagar in Sri Ganganagar, is among the 21 crew members on board.

Speaking to his family, Sanjay Mahar said the crew is safe but described tense moments during the incident. "There was firing from the Iranian side while they were crossing the Strait of Hormuz. All crew members immediately moved to a safe location inside the ship," Sanjay's father Om Prakash Mahar said.

The ship, sailing under the Liberian flag, had been waiting near the strait for the past three to four days for clearance to proceed

Maine kaand kar diya: Killer called cousin after murdering IRS officer's daughter

New Delhi.(Agency)

Investigators say the accused called his cousin after the Delhi killing and said he had committed a crime. The call, along with betting debt leads, movement tracking and recoveries, has widened the probe's focus.

In another revelation in the rape and murder of a 22-year-old daughter of a senior Income Tax officer in Delhi, investigators have identified the person the accused, Rahul Meena, was speaking to while fleeing the scene. CCTV footage had captured Rahul talking continuously on the phone as he exited the residence in Amar Colony. According to his mother, Mukeshi Devi, he was speaking to his cousin Trilok in Delhi. During the call, Rahul allegedly told him, "Maine Delhi mein kaand kar diya hai, main ab marne wala hoon police mujhe pakad legi...(I have committed a crime in Delhi. I may die now. The police will catch me soon)". However, he reportedly denied committing Alwar rape, claiming he had only gone to retrieve his mobile phone and had not harmed the victim.

Police sources also said that the mobile phones of both the victim and the accused were missing.

TWO CRIMES WITHIN 12 HOURS

Investigators have established that the accused targeted two victims across states within a span of hours. On Tuesday night around 10.30 pm, Rahul allegedly entered a neighbour's house in Rajasthan's Alwar, where he raped his friend's wife. An FIR was registered based on her complaint.

Within hours, Rahul travelled nearly 200 km to Delhi, reaching a housing society in south-east Delhi's Kailash Hills around 6.30 am. He entered his former employer's residence at approximately 6.39 am.

The victim, an engineering graduate preparing for UPSC, was alone at home. When her parents returned from the gym around 8 am,

they found her lying in a pool of blood, with belongings strewn across the house.

BRUTALITY INSIDE DELHI FLAT

According to police, Rahul used his familiarity



with the house layout and security arrangements to gain entry. He allegedly barged into the victim's study room, struck her with a lamp and another heavy object,

and then strangled her.

Police suspect he sexually assaulted her while she was unconscious. He dragged her body from the rooftop study area downstairs, attempted to open a locker using her finger, and later broke it open using tools.

He then stole cash and jewellery, changed his blood-stained clothes, wore clothes belonging to the victim's brother, and fled the scene.

The autopsy conducted at AIIMS Delhi confirmed strangulation as the cause of death. The report also noted multiple abrasions, contusions and a nasal fracture, indicating a violent struggle.

Forensic samples have been preserved, and confirmation of sexual assault is pending examination.

China's nail house resistance seen at Delhi-Dehradun expressway

New Delhi.(Agency)

In 2025, a Chinese landowner, tofu vendor Ye Yushou, did not let the government acquire his property for the construction of the G206 highway in Jinxi County, in eastern China's Jiangxi province. The highway was completed, but his house remained exactly where it was. Authorities had to reroute the project and build the highway around it by diverting the route. The structure later came to be known as a "nail house". This was the most recent episode of Nail House reported from China. There are multiple cases of landowners resisting giving up their land to the Chinese government.

Now, a similar resilience of the nail house has emerged in India too. A house in Mandola village in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, drew attention for obstructing the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway's crucial part. On April 14, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the project, but along the 213-km stretch, a house named "Swabhimani", which translates to self-respect, stands squarely in the path of the service road.

The 213-km-long Delhi-Dehradun Expressway cuts travel time between the two cities from around 6 hours to just 2 to 2.5 hours. The estimated cost of the project was around Rs 12,000 to 13,000 crore. Featuring a six-lane access-controlled design with a speed limit of 100 kmph, the corridor included 14 roadside amenities, multiple bridges, interchanges, and rail overbridges.

But like the Chinese nail house, Swabhimani has not budged, literally and figuratively.

Shivang Shukla of India Today Group's Mo visited the house for a reality check. When he reached the spot, he saw a two-storey house spread over almost 1,600 square metres. The security guard of the property arrived after Shivang shouted, "Koi hai?!" (Is anyone there?!) from outside. When asked about the owner, the guard replied, "Owner stays in Noida."

4 hurt after speeding Thar rams scooters in Ghaziabad, driver detained



New Delhi.(Agency)

A high-speed Mahindra Thar allegedly driven recklessly caused chaos in the Shalimar Garden area of Ghaziabad, leaving four people injured after crashing into two scooters and bystanders late on the night of April 23. The driver has been detained, police said.

According to officials, the incident occurred around 10:50 pm near Aggarwal Sweets, where Sumit Gupta and his wife Poonam Gupta had stopped their scooter to have ice cream. A black Thar, reportedly moving at high speed, lost control and rammed into their vehicle. The impact was severe, leaving the couple seriously injured and their scooter badly damaged. The car then hit another scooter, injuring its riders, identified as Siddharth and Prince Gupta.

The injured alleged that the driver appeared to be under the influence of alcohol at the time of the accident. Following the crash, Prince Gupta alerted police by dialling 112. A police team reached the spot promptly and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital for treatment. Police have seized the Thar from the scene and, based on a complaint by the victims, registered a case and detained the accused driver.

CCTV footage of the incident has surfaced and is circulating on social media. Police said the matter is under investigation and further legal action is being taken.

Ex-Muslim YouTuber Saleem Wastik arrested in murder case after stabbing attack

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi Police Crime Branch has arrested Salim Wastik, also known as Salim Ahmed, in connection with a 31-year-old kidnapping and murder case dating back to 1995. Wastik, who was recently subjected to a stabbing attack for his religious views, had been living under a false identity for over two decades. He was apprehended from Loni in Ghaziabad following a tip-off and subsequent verification of his identity through old records, fingerprints, and photographs, police said.

The case involves the abduction and murder of 13-year-old Sandeep Bansal, the son of a Delhi-based businessman. On January 20, 1995, the boy was kidnapped while on his way to school. A day later, his family received a ransom call demanding Rs 30,000 for his safe release, along with

The case involves the abduction and murder of 13-year-old Sandeep Bansal, the son of a Delhi-based businessman. On January 20, 1995, the boy was kidnapped while on his way to school.



threats against involving the police. Despite the demand, the child was killed, and his body was later

recovered from a drain in the Mustafabad area based on disclosures made during the investigation. Police investigations at the time led to the arrest of Salim, who worked as a martial arts trainer at the victim's school, and his associate Anil.

During interrogation, Salim confessed to the crime and implicated his accomplice. In 1997, both were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment by a court. However, in 2000, Salim secured interim bail from the Delhi High Court but failed to return, effectively jumping bail. Over the years, he managed to evade arrest by adopting a new identity and even faking his own death to mislead authorities. He began living as Salim Ahmed, later gaining attention as a YouTuber and self-styled social activist.

Filmed while bathing in river, scolded at home: UP teen girls attempt suicide

Two teenage girls in Chitrakoot consumed poison after they were allegedly filmed while bathing in the Yamuna river. Police have formed three teams to oversee treatment, coordinate with families and trace those involved.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Two teenage girls allegedly attempted suicide by consuming poison in Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh on Friday after they were filmed by some individuals while bathing in the Yamuna river, police said.

The incident took place in the Pahari police station area. Superintendent of Police (SP) Arun Kumar Singh said a memo was received from the Pahari community health centre (CHC) saying that two girls, aged 16 and 17, had consumed poison.

By the time police reached the CHC, the two had been referred to the district hospital in Karwi. They were subsequently transferred to Rani

Durgavati Medical College in Banda for advanced treatment, he said.

While being brought to the hospital, the girls told police that they were bathing in the Yamuna on Thursday, when some individuals clicked photos and filmed videos of them. The girls were scolded by their families over the incident. Distressed by this, the two consumed poison, Singh said. The SP said three police teams have been deployed to investigate the matter. The first team has been assigned to oversee the girls' treatment, the second is coordinating with their family members and the third is actively searching for those who filmed the girls, the officer said.



Kejriwal is Rehman Dacoit of Delhi: BJP outs 'Sheesh Mahal 2' pics; AAP calls them fake

New Delhi.(Agency)

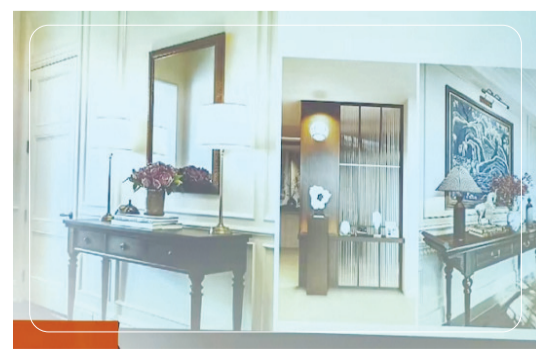
BJP leader Parvesh Verma accused AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal of living in luxury and alleged he had built a second 'Sheesh Mahal' at his new residence in Lodhi Estate. AAP MP Sanjay Singh dismissed the images as "fake" and warned of defamation action.

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Parvesh Verma on Saturday launched a sharp attack on AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, calling him the "Rehman dacoit of Delhi" and alleging that he had built a second "Sheesh Mahal". Verma went ahead to display visuals of what he claimed were from Kejriwal's new residence. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh called the visuals "completely fake" and said Verma and television channels airing them should be prepared to face defamation cases.

Addressing a press conference, Verma said the BJP would "show 'Sheesh Mahal 2'" and accused Kejriwal of living a luxurious life in contrast to his earlier claims of simplicity. "Delhi ka Sheesh Mahal 2 hum apko dikhane ja rahe hain (We will show you Delhi's 'Sheesh Mahal 2')," Verma said.

He added that after being defeated by voters in Delhi, Kejriwal shifted his focus to Punjab.

"Delhi ke voters ne is 'Rehman dacoit' ko hara diya, toh woh Punjab chale gaye. Bhagwant Mann pareshaan hai (After being defeated by Delhi voters, he moved to Punjab, and CM



Bhagwant Mann is troubled)," he said. Verma alleged that several government accommodations around Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's residence were occupied by AAP leaders, including Kejriwal,

former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, and former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia.

95 LODHI ESTATE CLAIM, VISUALS SHOWN

Turning to Delhi, Verma referred to Kejriwal's recent move into a government bungalow at 95 Lodhi Estate. "Kal woh 95 Lodhi Estate mein shift hue hain, jo bolte the aam aadmi ki tarah rahunga (He shifted to 95 Lodhi Estate yesterday, the same person who said he would live like a common man)," Verma said.

"When I visited the earlier 'Sheesh Mahal', I wondered how someone could sleep in such a luxurious house kaise neend aati hogi (how do they even sleep there?)," he added, while showing visuals he claimed were from Kejriwal's new residence. Verma also alleged that Kejriwal had earlier said he would not take a government house but later accepted a bungalow and upgraded it into what the BJP describes as a "Sheesh Mahal".

ED raids 9 locations in Bengal ration scam case, crackdown amid Assembly polls

The Enforcement Directorate raided about nine premises of suppliers and exporters in West Bengal in the alleged PDS scam case. The searches come as the state heads for the second phase of Assembly polling and extend a money laundering probe linked to wheat diversion.



New Delhi.(Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday conducted fresh raids at several locations in West Bengal, including in Kolkata, as part of its money laundering probe into alleged irregularities related to the Public Distribution System (PDS) in the state, the agency said in a statement. The searches come in the middle of election season in West Bengal.

The raids were initiated at about nine premises of suppliers and exporters in Kolkata, Burdwan, and Habra, officials said. The ED case, known popularly as the "Bengal ration scam case", stems from a police FIR registered in October 2020 in Basirhat on the basis of a complaint lodged by a deputy commissioner of customs (land customs station). The complainant had alleged large-scale diversion of PDS wheat meant for welfare schemes.

BENGAL PDS SCAM: BRIEF OVERVIEW

"Investigation revealed that the accused adopted a systematic modus operandi to divert Public Distribution System (PDS) wheat meant for welfare beneficiaries. The wheat was procured at low prices through unauthorised channels, in collusion with suppliers, licensed distributors, dealers, and middlemen," the ED said in its release. The central agency further said that large quantities of the wheat were "illegally diverted from the supply chain and aggregated at multiple locations."

To conceal the origin of the foodgrains, the accused would remove or reverse the original gunny bags bearing Food Corporation of India (FCI) and state government markings and refill them, thereby hiding identifying features and passing off the PDS wheat as legitimate stock for export or sale on the open market, the agency said.

NEWS BOX

Sad for tennis: Sinner urges Alcaraz not to rush after French Open miss due to injury

New Delhi. (Agency)

World No. 1 tennis player Jannik Sinner has urged rival and World No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz not to rush his return after a wrist injury ruled him out of the upcoming Roland Garros in Paris. Sinner expressed his disappointment over his competitor's withdrawal from the major tournament, while hoping Alcaraz could return in time for Wimbledon.

Alcaraz, the defending French Open champion, earlier announced on his social media that he would be unable to defend his title due to the injury. The seven-time Grand Slam champion picked up the issue during the first round of the Barcelona Open earlier this month. Alcaraz's withdrawal paves the way for Sinner to potentially complete a career Grand Slam — the Italian has won the Australian Open twice, Wimbledon last year, and the US Open in 2024. However, he said he simply hopes to see the Spaniard back on court soon. "That's very tough," Sinner said after his match against Benjamin Bonzi at the



Madrid Open. "With these kinds of injuries, you have to go very, very slow. It's sad for tennis. Carlos is the defending champion, and as a competitor, I always want to play against the best in the world."

RIVALRY ON THE COURT, FRIENDS OFF IT
A dominant force on clay, Alcaraz defeated Sinner in last year's marathons final at Roland Garros, saving three championship points and coming back from two sets down to win after five hours and 29 minutes.

"He's definitely the best in the world on this surface. It's sad news. I wish him a speedy recovery and hope he's ready for Wimbledon," Sinner added. The nature of the injury is concerning, given that several careers have been curtailed or affected by wrist problems. Juan Martin del Potro, the 2009 US Open winner, battled wrist issues for much of his career. Dominic Thiem struggled with a wrist injury after his breakthrough US Open title in 2020 and retired in 2024, while Nick Kyrgios has also faced similar difficulties.

Reigning two-time champ Carlos Alcaraz out of French Open due to wrist injury

MADRID. (Agency)

Carlos Alcaraz won't play for a third successive French Open title due to a right wrist injury. Alcaraz posted on X on Friday that neither would he appear in the preceding Italian Open in Rome, where he also won last year. No. 2-ranked Alcaraz was injured at the Barcelona Open this month during his first-round win and withdrew the day after.

He pulled out of this week's Madrid Open and attended the Laureus World Sports Awards in the Spanish capital on Monday with his wrist immobilized. Alcaraz was named world sportsman of the year at the gala.

Alcaraz confirmed he was a no-go for Paris after undergoing more medical tests on Friday. "After the results of the tests carried out today, we have decided that the most



prudent thing is to be cautious and not participate in Rome and Roland Garros," he wrote on X. "It's a complicated moment for me, but I'm sure we'll come out stronger from here." Alcaraz started the year in sensational form, beating Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open final. That made him the youngest man ever to win all four major titles in tennis. He has won only one title since — at Doha in February — and will be without a title in the major clay-court events. He lost the Monte Carlo final to Jannik Sinner at the start of this month and surrendered the No. 1 ranking to his Italian rival. Sinner hoped Alcaraz returns soon.

"Tennis needs Carlos," Sinner said after his first-round win at the Madrid Open. "Tennis is a much better sport when he's around."

"I hope he's going to come back and he will not have any further injuries. But I also believe that it's good that he and his team take the time. If you come back too early then maybe you have a bigger problem afterwards."

With Pat Cummins boost, Sunrisers set sights on extending impressive run vs Rajasthan

IPL 2026, RR vs SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad head to Jaipur seeking another win against Rajasthan Royals with Pat Cummins back in contention. The contest puts Rajasthan's top-order reliance under focus as both sides chase a stronger top-four position.

New Delhi. (Agency)

When Sunrisers Hyderabad slumped to defeat against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in their IPL 2026 opener last month, it seemed they might struggle to stay in the playoff race. Nearly a month on, however, the picture has changed, with SRH staging a spirited comeback. Heading into their clash against Rajasthan Royals in Jaipur on Saturday at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, they will be confident of extending their winning run.

Their cause is further strengthened by Pat Cummins' return after a prolonged battle with a back injury. SRH might also have a psychological edge with the Royals having not beaten them in the last three years. Rajasthan, on the other hand, need to tread carefully. Riyan Parag's side began their campaign with three consecutive wins but then slipped with back-to-back defeats before bouncing back against Lucknow Super Giants. With teams below them closing in, the Royals will need to keep winning to solidify their position in the top four.

OVERRELIANCE ON TOP ORDER

Rajasthan Royals must be wary of their overreliance on the top three, as it could hurt them in the long run. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Dhruv Jurel and Yashasvi Jaiswal have been exceptional so far, but whenever they've failed, the Royals have come under pressure.

This vulnerability was first exposed in their 57-run defeat to the Sunrisers in Hyderabad. Against the Super Giants, the trio again fell short, but a lower-order effort helped them post 159 for six. Even then, the Royals were far from comfortable, relying on a strong

bowling performance to seal the game. With Sunrisers boasting a formidable batting unit, Rajasthan will need a more complete effort with the bat if they are to come out on top.

CUMMINS RETURNS TO BOOSTS HYDERABAD

The Sunrisers, meanwhile, will be boosted by



the return of Pat Cummins. On Friday, Cummins confirmed his availability for the upcoming clash against Rajasthan Royals via an Instagram post. The Australian pacer has been struggling for around 10 months due to a back injury and had even returned to Australia during the IPL. However, he has now cleared his fitness test and is back in

contention. With Cummins returning, he is expected to take captaincy duties from Ishan Kishan, who has led the side impressively in his first stint as IPL captain. His return could also force Dilshan Madushanka, who featured as an Impact Sub against the Capitals, to sit out. Beyond leadership, Cummins' comeback strengthens Sunrisers' lower-order batting as well. Back in 2022, Cummins hit a 14-ball fifty in the IPL and that shows his credentials as a batter. Players like Praful Hinge and Sakib Hussain are also likely to benefit from sharing the dressing room and field experience with the experienced Australian.

JAIPUR: PITCH AND CONDITIONS

Jaipur will host its first match of the season, and a competitive contest is on the cards. The average IPL score at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium stands at around 167 from 64 matches. Chasing sides have enjoyed significant success here, winning 41 of those games, suggesting that captains may prefer to bowl first after winning the toss. Notably, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's blistering 35-ball century at this venue came in a chase.

From best to worst, rating captains in a killing field: An IPL 2026 mid-season report

New Delhi. (Agency)

The IPL has never been an easy place to lead, but captaincy here can turn on you very quickly. One good run and you are praised for every move; a few losses in a row and the questions start coming thick and fast. IPL 2026 has just hit the halfway stage, and already five captains have seen things shift from steady to shaky in the space of a couple of weeks. T20 captaincy has changed, even if it has not been spoken about enough. It is no longer just about setting fields or rotating bowlers. It is about staying ahead of the game, reading situations early, and reacting before things slip. Even something like keeping a left-right batting combination going has become a constant factor. Teams plan for it, bowlers adjust to it, and captains are forced to think on their feet all the time. Get one call slightly wrong and the game can move away very quickly. This season also stands out because all ten teams are being led by Indian captains, which means every decision is under the scanner.

At its core, good captaincy is still about getting the basics right. Cutting off easy runs, making batters play shots they are not fully comfortable with, and setting fields with a clear plan. A deep extra cover for the inside-out shot, a fine leg moved at the right

time, a mid-wicket placed for the slog. These are simple things, but they shape how an over plays out. And in this format, one over can change everything. A lot of matches this year are also being driven by tactical matchups coming from analysts in the dugout rather than the captain's instinct in the



middle. The obsession with left-right combinations or avoiding left-arm spin to left-handers has become almost rigid. Match-ups matter, but they are a guide, not a rulebook. The best captains know when to follow them and when to trust what they see. At times this season, it has felt like the art of captaincy is being squeezed out of the game. The captains who have looked the most in control are the ones who have kept things simple. Shreyas Iyer has been clear in his approach and backed his instincts, while

Rajat Patidar has stayed calm under pressure and kept his side steady. They have not got everything right, but they have got enough right at the right time. Others are still searching for that rhythm. Rishabh Pant, Ajinkya Rahane, Hardik Pandya and Axar Patel have all had phases where defensive calls around bowling changes or batting order have stalled momentum. Shubman Gill and Riyan Parag, meanwhile, have looked like they are reacting to the game rather than shaping it.

There have been specific calls that stand out. Axar holding himself back against SRH, Ruturaj Gaikwad handing the third over to a part-timer like Short. These are not just isolated errors. They point to a pattern. In contrast, Shreyas Iyer and Rajat Patidar have largely kept things on track, trusting simple plans and making timely calls.

It is not just about what is happening on the field either. Backroom decisions have been just as questionable. Team selections have lacked clarity, batting orders have been shuffled without logic, and toss calls have often gone against conditions. Put it all together, and it feels like more matches this season are being lost in the planning room than on the pitch.

The Man in the Mirror: How Virat Kohli's Ziddi spirit is outrunning time in IPL

BARCELONA. (Agency)

The Indian Premier League is currently navigating a period of unprecedented hyper-inflation. Since the introduction of the Impact Player rule in 2023, the 200-run mark, once a daunting peak, has been relegated to a mere par score. In such a landscape, the anchor role has faced a forced evolution. While the transition from steady accumulation to high-velocity hitting is a steep climb for many, Virat Kohli has navigated this shift with a startling, effortless grace. In last season, contributing with both bat and ball. In IPL 2025, he picked up 17 wickets in 15 matches and chipped in with useful runs lower down the order. The numbers behind Kohli's 2.0 phase reveal a cricketer who has consciously rewired his approach. For over a decade, Kohli's T20 career was defined by a strike rate of around 135—the gold standard for the classical accumulator. However, as the game's geometry changed, so did he.

In 2024, he plundered 741 runs at a strike rate of 154.69, followed by a pivotal role in RCB's 2025 title triumph where he amassed 657 runs at 144.71. This season, the King has found an



even higher gear. In seven matches, he has struck 328 runs at a blistering 163.18. Perhaps most impressively, he has dismantled the notion of the slow starter, operating at a strike rate of 169.4 in the Powerplay this year. He is no longer waiting for the game to find its rhythm. He is the one conducting the orchestra from ball one.

THE ZIDD PHILOSOPHY

What drives a man who has already conquered every peak in world cricket to keep sprinting? Gujarat Titans assistant coach Vijay Dahiya believes the answer lies in a specific brand of professional obstinacy—a refusal to let the game move past him. "There is a word called Ziddi (stubborn)," Dahiya told the press in Bengaluru after Friday's game. "A lot of times we use it in the wrong way. But, I think he is Ziddi to do well. That's one thing that stands out." Dahiya, who watched Kohli dismantle his bowling attack with surgical precision, suggests that the fire no longer burns to satisfy the critics, but to answer the man in the mirror.

Betis equalizes in stoppage time, deals blow to Real Madrid's slim title hopes

The result meant Madrid has failed to win five of its last six games in all competitions.

SEVILLE. (Agency)

Real Madrid's already slim hopes of winning La Liga were dealt another blow when Real Betis scored a stoppage-time equalizer in a pulsating 1-1 result on Friday. Madrid was left trailing league leader Barcelona by eight points with only five games to play. Barcelona has a game in hand at Getafe on Saturday. The match started well for visiting



Madrid as Vinicius Junior scored for the second time in four days. Betis goalkeeper Alvaro Valles could only parry Federico Valverde's long range shot and the Brazilian striker followed up to slot in the rebound. Betis, though, was not overawed and Andriy Lunin, in goal for the injured Thibaut Courtois, made at least two world-class

saves to keep his side in the game.

At the other end, Kylian Mbappé had a goal chalked off for offside, annulling a superb assist from Trent Alexander-Arnold.

Betis kept pushing for an equalizer and it came in the dying seconds. Ferland Mendy went down and appealed for a foul but the referee waved play on and former Arsenal defender Héctor Bellerín calmly side-footed home inside a packed penalty area to the delight of the 54,000 fans at Betis' Estadio La Cartuja. The result meant Madrid has failed to win five of its last six games in all competitions. Betis, meanwhile, was in fifth place, six points ahead of Getafe and seven behind Atletico Madrid.

Root better to watch than Virat Kohli? Ex-England captain sparks social media war

IPL 2026: Michael Vaughan said Joe Root is better to watch than Virat Kohli after Sam Billings praised Kohli's latest RCB knock. The remark set off a social media debate as Kohli's franchise form and Root's red-ball class were weighed against each other.

BENGALURU. (Agency)

Former England captain Michael Vaughan triggered a social media debate after claiming that English batter Joe Root is better to watch than Virat Kohli, in response to a post by Sam Billings. Billings, who is currently playing in the Pakistan Super League, had posted on X asking, "Is there anything better than watching Virat Kohli in full flow?" The comment referred to Kohli's

performance for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) the previous night, where he helped his side chase down a massive 206-run target with balls to spare. Kohli did not remain unbeaten, getting bowled by Jason Holder after scoring 81 off 44 balls. In response, Vaughan cheekily suggested that there is another batter more enjoyable to watch than Kohli, naming Joe Root. "Yes, Joe Root," he wrote on X, accompanied by a winking face emoji. The remark quickly sparked reactions online, with some users criticising Vaughan, while others agreed that Joe Root is more enjoyable to watch in red-ball cricket. One user even shared an image of Root watching Kohli, captioned: "Agreed! Watching Joe Root watch Virat Kohli in full flow."



The debate comes at a time when Joe Root has further strengthened his reputation as one of the modern greats, particularly in Test cricket, while Kohli, retired from both T20is and Tests, continues to showcase his class in

franchise cricket.

THE CHASE MASTER AT IT AGAIN

On Friday against Gujarat Titans, while chasing a challenging 206, Kohli once again led from the front. It was a composed yet aggressive knock that reflected his evolving approach in the latter stages of his career. Kohli was eventually dismissed after chopping the ball onto his stumps off Holder. By then, however, RCB were in control, needing just 52 runs from 38 balls with seven wickets in hand. He currently leads the Orange Cap standings with 328 runs in seven innings at a strike rate of 163.18. The match was RCB's final home game at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, with their remaining home fixtures scheduled in Raipur from May 10, starting with a clash against Mumbai Indians.

How this 25-year old built a Rs 20 lakh portfolio in almost 3 years

New Delhi, (Agency)

What if your salary isn't very high, but your savings are? That's the story of a 25-year-old IT professional from Bengaluru who says discipline, not income, helped him build a portfolio of over Rs 20 lakh in just a few years. Sharing his journey on Reddit, the young professional spoke about starting small and staying consistent.

FROM MODEST SALARY TO STEADY GROWTH

"A bit of background. Grew up in Bangalore in an upper middle class family. Got an entry level IT job, fresh out of college. Been working in the same org for almost 3 years now," he wrote. His salary started at around Rs 4-5 lakh per annum and gradually rose to Rs 8-9 lakh. While the income growth was steady, it wasn't extraordinary. What made the difference was how much he chose to save.

SAVING BIG WHILE STILL ENJOYING LIFE

Despite a moderate income, he managed to invest most of what he earned.

"I am able to invest around 80-85% consistently every month without controlling my spends too much. I still enjoy and i go on trips regularly on my own dime," he shared. Living with his parents helped him keep expenses low, while his main spending remained limited to travel and occasional weekend outings.

A DIVERSIFIED PORTFOLIO TAKES SHAPE

Over time, his investments spread across multiple assets. "Equity Mutual Funds - 2.77L, Direct Stocks - 4.27L, US Stocks - 6.3L, Savings A/c + debt funds - 6.14 EPF - 75k," he detailed.

Oil comeback depends on Hormuz lifeline: Goldman Sachs

New Delhi, (Agency)

Global crude oil output from the Gulf region could rebound significantly within months if the Strait of Hormuz reopens, according to a recent report by Goldman Sachs. However, the bank cautions that a full return to pre-conflict production levels may take considerably longer, particularly if geopolitical tensions in West Asia persist or the key shipping route remains disrupted.

Goldman estimates that Gulf oil production has dropped by about 14.5 million barrels per day—roughly 57% below pre-war levels—highlighting the scale of the disruption. The report suggests that a relatively swift recovery is feasible, provided there are no further attacks on energy infrastructure and the Strait is reopened safely in the near term. Even so, the final phase of the recovery could be slower and more uncertain, especially if logistical and operational constraints intensify. Among the key challenges are transportation bottlenecks and reduced well flow rates. The bank notes that available empty tanker capacity in the region has declined by around 50%, or 130 million barrels, since the conflict began. Clearing stored oil, restoring pipeline flows, and mobilizing equipment and personnel for field maintenance and well workovers will all be critical to restarting production.

Historical data indicates that flows through the Strait of Hormuz once peaked at 23.3 million barrels per day, compared with a typical level of about 20 million. Pipeline diversion capacity has also temporarily exceeded normal levels by around 3.5 million barrels per day. However, prolonged shutdowns can create technical complications within oil reservoirs, often requiring additional intervention before production can resume at prior levels. The longer the disruption lasts, the more complex and time-consuming these processes become.

Centre to buy more wheat at MSP to help farmers weather freak rain shock

New Delhi, (Agency)

The Union Government has raised its wheat procurement target at the minimum support price (MSP) by 15 per cent during the current season to 34.5 million tonnes, from 30 million tonnes planned earlier, to support farmers whose crops have been damaged due to unseasonal rains, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Friday. The state-wise procurement of wheat from Madhya Pradesh is now expected to be 10 million tonnes against an earlier 7.8 million tonnes, Uttar Pradesh 2.5 million tonnes as against an earlier estimated 1 million tonnes, Rajasthan 2.35 million tonnes as against an earlier estimated 2 million tonnes, Uttarakhand 5,000 tonnes as against an earlier estimated 1,000 tonnes, and also some wheat will be procured from Delhi this year, Chopra said at an event to release the annual wheat survey of the Roller Flour Millers' Federation of India. Chopra said that wheat procurement quality norms in almost all major growing states of Punjab, Haryana, MP, and Rajasthan have been eased to enable higher purchases from farmers and help them sell their produce after the unseasonal rain, which has adversely impacted crops. He said this increased procurement at MSP will add to the opening wheat stocks of around 22 million tonnes for 2026-27. This is expected to take the actual availability of wheat close to 56.5 million tonnes.

Chopra also said that wheat production for the 2025-26 crop year is likely to be a little lower in the 110-120 million tonnes range due to crop damage from unseasonal rainfall and hailstorms in key growing states. The agriculture ministry earlier estimated the production at 120.21 million tonnes, up from 117.94 million tonnes in the previous year.

The Agriwatch Annual Wheat Survey for 2025-26 projected the all-India wheat production at 110.65 million tonnes, slightly above the 109.63 million tonnes produced in 2024-25, after factoring in recent weather damage.

Reliance Q4 profit slips to Rs 16,971 crore; Rs 6 dividend announced

Reliance Industries posted consolidated net profit attributable to owners of Rs 16,971 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2026, down from Rs 19,407 crore a year earlier.

New Delhi, (Agency)

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) reported a decline in fourth-quarter profit even as revenue rose strongly, with telecom and retail businesses helping cushion pressure in the energy segment. The company posted consolidated net profit attributable to owners of Rs 16,971 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2026, down from Rs 19,407 crore a year earlier. Revenue from operations rose to Rs 2,98,967 crore,



compared with Rs 2,64,573 crore in the same quarter last year. The board also recommended a dividend of Rs 6 per equity share of face value Rs 10 each for FY26, subject to shareholder approval at

the annual general meeting. PROFIT UNDER PRESSURE, REVENUE RISES

Reliance's quarterly performance reflected a mixed picture, with topline growth

supported by consumer-facing businesses while profit came under pressure.

Profit before tax stood at Rs 29,697 crore, up from Rs 29,103 crore a year earlier. Total income for the quarter rose to Rs 3,03,046 crore, compared with Rs 2,69,478 crore last year. Basic earnings per share for the quarter came in at Rs 12.54, against Rs 14.34 a year ago. For the financial year ended March 31, 2026, Reliance reported net profit attributable to owners of Rs 69,838 crore, while revenue from operations stood at Rs 10,75,674 crore.

Profit after tax and share of profit from associates and joint ventures for the full year came in at Rs 95,754 crore, while total income stood at Rs 11,04,637 crore.

Reliance's consolidated net worth rose to Rs 8,67,828 crore as of March 31, 2026, from Rs 7,95,069 crore a year earlier.

Cash and cash equivalents stood at Rs 48,797 crore, while total assets increased to Rs 21,78,140 crore from Rs 19,50,121 crore last year.

RBI cancels Paytm Payments Bank licence: What it means for Paytm users

New Delhi, (Agency)

The Reserve Bank of India has cancelled the banking licence of Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL), but for many users, the practical impact may be less dramatic than it first appears. That is because several key restrictions had already been imposed earlier, meaning many affected services were no longer operating normally. In an order dated April 24, the RBI said the licence issued to PPBL under the Banking Regulation Act stands cancelled with effect from the close of business on April 24. The central bank also said the entity is prohibited from carrying on the business of banking with immediate effect. The RBI further said it will apply for winding up of the bank before the High Court. It added that PPBL has enough liquidity to repay its entire deposit liabilities upon winding up.

If you want to understand the reasons cited by the RBI and what exactly the regulator said in its order, you can read our earlier report here.

WHAT PAYTM USERS SHOULD KNOW

Before this latest action, PPBL had already been directed to stop



onboarding new customers from March 11, 2022. Later, the RBI imposed further business restrictions that barred fresh deposits, credits and top-ups in existing customer accounts, prepaid instruments and wallets. In simple terms, many of the services users worry about today had already been curbed earlier. This latest move formalises the end of the bank's licence rather than suddenly

shutting down a fully functioning bank overnight. For customers with balances linked to Paytm Payments Bank, the key reassurance from the RBI is that the bank has enough liquidity to repay deposit liabilities. If you use the Paytm app for UPI payments linked to another bank account, your experience may depend more on that linked bank than on Paytm Payments Bank itself. Therefore, the latest move doesn't impact your payments in any way.

In its latest order, the RBI said the payment bank's affairs were conducted in a manner detrimental to the interests of the bank and its depositors.

The central bank also said the general character of management was prejudicial to depositor interests and public interest, while citing failure to comply with licence conditions.

So, for most users, this may be less about fresh disruption and more about understanding that a long regulatory process has now reached its final stage.

Decoding the AI threat to banks that Nirmala Sitharaman warned about

HONG KONG, (Agency)

A couple of days ago, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman met top bank chiefs to discuss risks emerging from artificial intelligence (AI), a challenge the banking sector has long dealt with in the background, mostly on the customer-facing side. But this meeting carried a different message. The tone was more urgent, and the warning was sharper. For years, the biggest risks confronting banks were bad loans, liquidity stress and market volatility. Those concerns have not disappeared. Yet a new category of risk is moving quickly up the agenda: AI-powered fraud, cyberattacks and identity manipulation that can move far faster than many traditional controls were built to handle. This is what makes the meeting, and Sitharaman's warning, worth paying attention to. The immediate focus came

amid global attention around Anthropic's Mythos, an advanced AI model whose cybersecurity capabilities have triggered debate over whether frontier systems could be misused to detect vulnerabilities, automate attacks or accelerate fraud attempts. We also explained the Mythos debate and why it caught the government's attention in a separate report. Whether Mythos becomes the defining example or not, the broader message is clear: banks are increasingly digital institutions facing increasingly digital threats.

They process millions of transactions, run always-on mobile apps, manage highly sensitive customer data and support payment systems relied on daily by households and businesses. In that environment, cyber risk is no longer a side issue. It is becoming a core business risk. To understand how

serious the threat could become, we dug deeper into the risks banks face from AI and spoke to experts across the cybersecurity and technology sectors. FRAUD IN THE AI ERA

Beenu Arora, Co-founder and CEO of Cyble, an AI-powered cybersecurity and threat intelligence company, said banks are attractive targets because they are "data-heavy digital platforms"

He added that with the rise of AI, the nature of cyberattacks has changed. Rather than being "manual or sporadic", attacks are now "automated, scalable and more difficult to detect"

That has practical consequences. Arora warned that banks face a major evolving risk in AI-based social engineering. "Deepfakes can replicate the voices and/or video images of senior executives in order to authorise fraudulent transactions or manipulate employee actions," he said.

New Delhi, (Agency)

Many people believe that cutting up their credit card is the smartest financial move. No card, no debt, no debt, it sounds simple and safe. But in reality, completely avoiding credit cards may quietly damage your financial profile.

Experts say your credit score is not built by avoiding credit, but by using it wisely.

WHY AVOIDING CREDIT CARDS CAN BACKFIRE

A credit card is more than just a spending tool. It is also a way for banks to understand how you manage money. Regular usage, even for small amounts, shows that you can borrow and repay responsibly. This builds a strong payment history, which plays a key role in improving your credit score. When you stop using your card altogether, your credit file becomes inactive. Over time, there are fewer updates about your behaviour, making it harder for lenders to assess your financial discipline.

RISK OF REDUCED LIMITS OR CLOSURE

Banks keep a close watch on how often you use your credit card. If there is little or no activity for a long period, the bank may reduce your credit limit



or even close the account. This can create a ripple effect. A closed card reduces your overall available credit, which can increase your credit utilisation ratio — a key factor that impacts your score.

IMPACT ON FUTURE LOANS

An inactive or closed credit card can also affect your chances of getting loans in the future.

When your credit history shortens or your utilisation rises, lenders may see it as a risk. This can make it harder to get approval for personal loans, home loans or even a new credit card.

KEEPING YOUR CREDIT HEALTHY

Instead of avoiding your credit card, using it wisely is often the better approach.

Making small purchases occasionally and clearing them on time keeps your account active. It also shows consistent repayment behaviour, which strengthens your credit profile.

The many ways motor insurance is mis-sold in India

Motor insurance mis-selling in India is not an exception, it is part of how the system works. What customers don't know at the time of purchase often costs them the most at the time of claim.

New Delhi, (Agency)

Buying motor insurance today feels simple. A few clicks, a quick payment, and the policy lands in your inbox.

But what looks like a straightforward purchase often hides a more complicated reality, one where coverage is quietly reduced, details are not fully explained, and customers end up with policies that do not match what they think they bought.

This is the third story in our Motor Mess series, which looks at the hidden gaps, fine print, and real-world risks in motor insurance that most vehicle owners only discover when something goes wrong. Motor insurance mis-selling is not a one-off problem. It is built into how the

system works. "Motor insurance mis-selling in India is a structural problem, not an occasional one," said Saurabh Vijayvergia, Founder and CEO of CoverSure. "The incentives of everyone in the distribution chain, dealer, agent, broker, point away from the customer's interest, and the customer rarely has enough information to push back."

What this means is simple. The system rewards selling — not necessarily selling the right policy.

HOW MOTOR INSURANCE MIS-SELLING HAPPENS

The tactics are not random. They follow a pattern, one that benefits the seller upfront, while the cost becomes visible only later.

THE "COMPREHENSIVE" ILLUSION

One of the most common forms of mis-selling is selling the wrong type of policy altogether. "Customers are sold third-party-only policies while believing they have comprehensive cover," Vijayvergia said. The word "comprehensive" itself creates confusion. "It implies totality. It delivers considerably less," he explained.

A standard comprehensive policy does not cover everything. "What it does not cover

is a long list of exclusions — engine damage due to water ingress, electrical and mechanical breakdown, consumables, and consequential loss," he said. But most buyers never hear this at the time of purchase.

PRICE MANIPULATION THAT LOOKS



LIKE A GOOD DEAL

Motor insurance pricing can be adjusted in ways that look beneficial upfront.

"IDV is quietly lowered to make the premium look attractive, with no disclosure of what that means at claim time," Vijayvergia said. Lower IDV reduces the premium slightly, but it also reduces the claim payout significantly in case of total loss. "Lowering the IDV can

cut claim payouts by 50,000 or more," he said. Another common tactic is deductibles. "Customers who accept high voluntary deductibles in exchange for a lower premium are effectively bearing a significant out-of-pocket cost on every future claim without realising it," he said. ADD-ONS: PUSHED, HIDDEN OR MISUNDERSTOOD

Add-ons are another major area where mis-selling happens. "Add-ons are bundled in without explanation, inflating premiums without adding meaningful value," Vijayvergia said. "A customer who doesn't understand what engine protection or return-to-invoice means cannot evaluate whether they need it," he said. The result is either

overpaying for unnecessary add-ons or missing critical ones. THE CASHLESS PROMISE THAT DOESN'T HOLD

Many buyers are told they will get seamless cashless service. "Cashless claims are promised broadly at the point of sale, with network limitations and approval conditions left unmentioned," Vijayvergia said.



Alia Bhatt

Was Mobbed By Airport Staff, Reveals Bodyguard: 'Usko Daba Ke Khade The, Gale Mein Haath...'



Alia Bhatt's former bodyguard, Zeeshan Qureshi, has recalled how the actress was mobbed by airport staff after the release of Student Of The Year. He recalled how Alia was standing alone as she had cleared immigration while the security personnel were still in line. Seeing her alone, many airport staff and customs officers mobbed the actress. Zeeshan told SCREEN, "I used to work with Alia as well. When she was shooting for Student Of The Year, I worked with her for 3-4 years around that time. She has another level of trust with her staff. We were once travelling with her to a location abroad, with the entire team. So, I saw that Alia cleared her immigration and stepped out to stand in a corner." He recalled, "The customs officers and airport team saw that Alia Bhatt is alone, no staff, bodyguard or manager, because we were still in the queue. Within a minute, they surrounded her with excitement, saying, 'Ma'am, ek photo chahiye, ek photo bas (We want a picture with you)'." The bodyguard continued, "They all clung on to her together. Vo bechaari ekdum haath aur per close karke khadi hai, dari hui (Poor thing stood there, all scared and uncomfortable). Once, my immigration got cleared. I ran to her and asked the officers to step aside." "All of them were educated people, but usko daba ke khade the, gale mein aur kandhe par haath rakhne ki koshish karahe the (they were trying to click pictures with hands on her shoulder). When I steered them away, rebuked them, by saying that if a girl is standing alone, at least maintain some distance. She is a heroine on screen, but she is also a girl. Then, I escorted Alia properly," he said.

Ayushmann Khurrana's Next Goes On Floors In Kerala; Shoot to Wrap By May-End: Report



Ayushmann Khurrana has already begun shooting for his next project, a gritty backwater thriller set in Kerala. According to a report by Variety India, the film went on floors earlier this month, with production kicking off in early April under tight wraps. The makers have opted for a streamlined schedule, aiming to wrap the entire shoot in a single stretch.

As reported by Variety India, the yet-untitled film shoot began in early April. The entire schedule is expected to be completed in one continuous stretch by the end of May, suggesting a tightly planned production. Akshaye Widhani is making the movie, and Sameer Saxena, best known for Kaala Paani, is directing it.

Ayushmann Khurrana and Sara Ali Khan's Uda Teer

After long delays, Ayushmann Khurrana and Sara Ali Khan's spy comedy, Uda Teer, is finally making its way to theatres. The makers have announced the official release date. The film is slated to hit theatres on September 11. The actors started shooting for the film in 2024. Taran Adarsh took to his X handle and shared the news, "AYUSHMANN KHURRANA - SARA ALI KHAN IN SPY-COMEDY 'UDTA TEER' - 11 SEPT 2026 RELEASE... Dharma Productions and Sikhya Entertainment reunite for their fourth collaboration - after #Kill, #GyaarahGyaarah, and #TheLunchbox - with #UdaTeer. A high-energy spy comedy, #UdaTeer stars #AyushmannKhurrana and #SaraAliKhan... The makers have also locked the release date: 11 Sept 2026. Written and directed by Akash A Kaushik - marking his directorial debut - the film is produced by Karan Johar, Adar Poonawalla, Apoorva Mehta, Guneet Monga Kapoor, and Achin Jain."

As reported by Mid-Day, Uda Teer shoot started in 2024 but shoot was stopped. Well, this year in January, fresh reports suggested that the film was in limbo after its first schedule wrapped in 2024. But, things picked up in the first quarter of 2026. It has been learnt that the actor shot an extensive schedule in Mumbai in February, including a massive song sequence.

Ayushmann Khurrana's other work front

The actor will be next seen in the spiritual sequel to the 2019 film Pati Patni Aur Woh, titled Pati Patni Aur Woh Do. The film will also feature Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi and Rakul Preet Singh in key roles.

Akshay Kumar Credits His Luck For His Superstardom: 'Mujhe Aisa Lagta Hai Ki Hardwork Ki Jarurat Toh Hai...'



Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar has admitted that one can succeed ahead in life only if luck favours. The actor who is currently hosting the quiz reality show Wheels of Fortune, confessed that at times he gets stuck between the battle of hard work and luck.

He stated, "Aisa main manta hoon, main apne experiences ke upar bata raha hoon, mujhe aisa lagta hain ki hardwork ki jarurat toh hain aur main jamm kar mehnat aur hardwork karta hoon, lekin mere career mein ya mere zindagi mein luck jyaada kaam aaya hain."

He added by pointing out that in his day-to-day life, from one set to another, he comes across thousands of young struggling actors who might be better looking than him or more talented than him, but it's luck that is not on their side, while they are putting their best efforts to break into the film industry.

Akshay used this personal philosophy to connect with the contestants Sarita, Jaikumar, and Tanvi on the show, reminding them that while they must give their hundred percent, they should also respect the 'luck' that brought them to the stage.

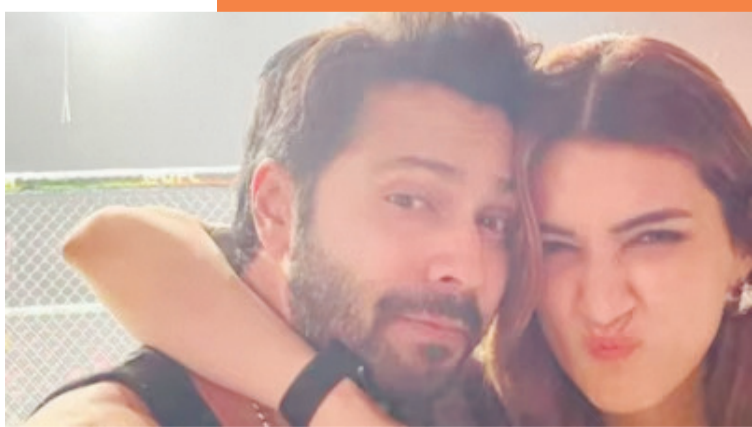
Talking about Akshay Kumar the actor has been in the Hindi film industry for over 30 years now. He has been part of many movies such as Khiladi, International Khiladi, Tu Anari Main Khiladi, Hera Pheri, Housefull, Kesari, Jolly LLB, and many more. He was last seen in the recently released movie Bhoot Bangla where he received good reviews for his performance.

Kriti Sanon

wishes Varun Dhawan as Wow party track drops

Varun Dhawan has turned a year older and wishes have been pouring in from all corners. Kriti Sanon also treated fans with glimpse of her bond with the actor as she shared a heartfelt birthday wish for him. Marking Varun's special day, Kriti dropped an unseen photo of the two, along with a warm message wishing him a "wow year ahead." Taking to her Instagram stories, Kriti Sanon shared a photo and wrote, "Happiest birthday Veedeeee!! Have a Wow year ahead!! Always there for you." Kriti and Varun was seen together in Bhediya and the chemistry was loved by fans. Many other celebrities also wished the actor with photos.

Makers Drop Party Track 'Wow' On Varun Dhawan's Birthday



An upbeat, high-energy dance number, the track comes alive with dynamic vocals by Harry Sandhu and Kiran Bajwa. Composed by Tanishk Bagchi, Rony Ajnali, and Gill Machhraji, with lyrics by Rony and Gill, it delivers a sound that's fresh, punchy, and instantly addictive. Sharing the track, Varun Dhawan wrote, "My birthday jam is WOW. So excited about this track thankful to all my people for making this birthday wow #WOWItsVarunDay #HaiJawaniTohIshqHonaHai in

cinemas on 22nd May 2026."

Harry Sandhu, who has sung the song, shared, "From the first listen, Wow had that spark. It's high on energy and super addictive the kind of song you don't just hear, you feel. Recording this with the bunch of amazing creative collaborators was an absolute blast."

Music composer Tanishk Bagchi said, "With WOW, the idea was to keep it contemporary, punchy, and irresistibly catchy. It's designed to make you move simple as that. Every artist involved in this track added their own personal touch which elevated my vision for this song."

Directed by David Dhawan and starring Varun Dhawan, Mrunal Thakur, and Pooja Hegde, Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai is produced by Tips Films Ltd and co-produced by Maximillian Films (UK). A full-on entertainer blending comedy, romance, and drama, the film releases in cinemas on May 22.





9 simple ways to Reduce Stress

Go for a walk
One of the best ways to beat stress is to exercise. It helps your body produce endorphins that make you feel good. Exercising in warm weather can boost your mood while a daily brisk walk of about 30 minutes can greatly reduce stress levels.

Have some sex
If you're using stress as an excuse to abstain from sex, think again. Having sex is actually a great way to ease stress because it lowers blood pressure, boosts self-esteem as well as increases feelings of intimacy with your partner. It also helps you sleep better.

Breathe deeply
Invest in some lavender or rosemary scents and take a deep whiff — it will instantly put you in a more relaxed state and lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol. If you prefer not to use scents, practice the act of deep breathing regularly.

This sends oxygen surging through your bloodstream, helping to calm down and beat stress.

How cancer becomes drug-resistant

A team of researchers, including an Indian-American scientist, has found that the major reason cancer drugs fail is that they cannot penetrate the high-pressure environment of solid tumours.

The findings revealed that hyaluronic acid -- a large, naturally occurring molecule -- is primarily responsible for generating elevated gel-fluid pressures in tumours.

"We show that the gel-fluid phase generates a primary mechanism of drug resistance in pancreas cancer," said lead researcher Sunil Hingorani from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in the US.

A hyaluronidase treatment -- family of enzymes that degrade hyaluronic acid -- holds promise for improving patient outcomes for drug-resistant cancers.

In the study, published in *Biophysical Journal*, the team conducted hyaluronidase treatment in a mouse model of pancreatic cancer and found that it broke down hyaluronic acid as well as normalised the fluid pressure in tumours, allowing vessels to re-expand and thereby overcoming a major barrier to drug delivery.



Here's how you can get more out of each day.

Have a laugh
While all of us have work and family responsibilities, stressing out too much about them will simply cause you more grief — both mentally as well as physically. There are several ways you can unwind — watch your favourite comedy, catch up with close



friends and talk about funny memories. Research says that every time you laugh out loud, increased oxygen flows to your organs, blood flow increases, and stress automatically reduces.

Spend time with your pet
Pets are known not only to give you unconditional love, but spending time with them is actually good for your health. Studies say that when you pet your dog/ cat even for just a few minutes, your body releases feel-good hormones like serotonin,

prolactin, and oxytocin, and also decreases the amount of the damaging stress hormones. This results in lower blood pressure, less anxiety and even

better immunity.

Get rid of the clutter

Are you surrounded by too many things in a not-so-very big space? Having too much stuff can leave you feeling overwhelmed and bog you down, eventually leading to stress. Living in constantly messy surroundings brings on unwanted anxiety. Therefore, experts say you need to de-clutter to de-stress. Don't start by wanting to clear up everything at once. That will only stress you out further. Begin with a small space and gradually move to bigger things. A space that is uncluttered can feel satisfying and soothing.

Do the housework

While this might seem like a mundane, everyday chore, try to do things a bit differently. Put on your favourite music or TV show in the background, make a list of all that needs to be done, and get down working.

Not only will you burn calories and get your work down, you won't be tired and stressed out at the end of it.

Drink juices

Researchers say that the vitamin C present in orange juice can actually help you manage stress better because it lowers levels of stress hormones like cortisol. Remember that vitamin C-rich foods such as orange juice, grapefruit juice, strawberries, or sweet red peppers boost your immune system.

Sing out loud

When was the last time you sang loudly to your heart's content? Turn up the radio and start singing. No matter how bad you think you are, studies show that singing can actually make you feel happier and feel less stressed. Singing also benefits your breathing, heart and immune system.

Exercise can counter effects of Air pollution

The merits of exercise outweigh the negatives of air pollution, even in highly polluted cities like Delhi, a new international study led by Cambridge University claimed today. The new study, published in the journal *Preventive Medicine*, found that evidence suggests that the benefits of exercise, even in an environment filled with noxious gases, outweighs the problems brought on by no exercise at all.

"Even in Delhi, one of the most

polluted cities in the world -with pollution levels 10 times those in London people would need to cycle over five hours per week before the pollution risks outweigh the health benefits," said Dr Marko, Tainio from the Cambridge University's MRC epidemiology unit, who led the study.

"We should remember, though, that a small minority of workers in the most polluted cities, such as bike messengers, may be exposed to levels of air pollution high enough to cancel out the health benefits of physical activity," he added. The researchers studied the

concentration of fine particulates, measured in micrograms per cubic metre, to gauge the levels of pollution in the air of several major world cities. They then used data from previous studies to estimate how harmful those levels of pollution would be. The researchers modelled the effects of cycling and walking at different levels of air pollution and established a tipping point -the length of time after which there was no further health benefit, and a break-even point, when the harm from air pollution began to outweigh the health benefit.

