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Happening today

● **PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI** will hold bilateral talks with his Italian counterpart **Giorgia Meloni** in Rome.

● **FACEBOOK OWNER META** is expected to start laying off 10% of its staff as part of an overhaul as it surges its AI investments.

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THE IDEAS PAGE P 13

INDIA AND ITALY LOOK TO THE FUTURE, BOUND BY POWER OF CULTURE AND A SHARED VISION
By PM NARENDRA MODI AND ITALY PM GIORGIA MELONI

Business as Usual

By EP UNNY



Day after SC's reminder on bail rule, Umar Khalid's plea rejected

Sohini Ghosh
New Delhi, May 19

A DAY after the Supreme Court, while underlining that bail is the rule and jail an exception even in UAPA cases, expressed "serious reservations" on the decision of one of its own benches to deny bail to activist Umar Khalid in the 2020 Delhi riots case, a Delhi court Tuesday declined to grant him interim bail.

Khalid had sought bail to observe a death ritual of his uncle and to take care of his mother who is due to undergo surgery.

Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Sameer Bajpai of the Karkardooma Court, while turning down the interim bail request, held that "attending the Chehlum ceremony (observed on the 40th day after death) of his uncle is not that necessary", and that "things would have been different if the ceremony was of a person who was in immediate relation" with Khalid. "... if the relation was so immediate and thick, (Khalid) would have asked for the release at the time of death of his uncle only and not now after such a long time. Therefore, the court does not find his reason to be just," ASJ Bajpai said.

Declining any relief on the grounds of his mother's surgery, the court observed that he has five sisters, and though they do not live in the vicinity,

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● HER HUSBAND, NOW AN ACCUSED, HAD A MARKEDLY DIFFERENT PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSE; A GRADUATE FROM A TOP LAW SCHOOL, HE DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS AN INDEPENDENT LITIGATOR

Miss Pune, promising actor, MBA graduate: The Twisha Sharma story

Anand Mohan J, Drishti Jain & Ananya Shetty
Bhopal, Noida, Pune, May 19

SIX MONTHS before her death, Twisha Sharma (33) was posting photographs from office meetings, film sets and airports, a life stitched together from modelling assignments, corporate presentations and the optimism of a recent marriage.

Twisha moved through several careers. She entered modelling circuits as a teenager between 2009 and 2012, eventually winning the Miss Pune title, a recognition that opened doors to advertising

campaigns and regional cinema. Friends remember her as "intensely social and ambitious". Her LinkedIn profile indicates parallel ambitions as a marketing professional, communications specialist, actor, filmmaker, and digital creator.

"She was a dynamic lady," her father, Navnidhi Sharma, told *The Indian Express*. "She did presentations in Malaysia and Indonesia. She worked in advertisements. We are getting condolence messages from Bollywood actors and people across the country."

On May 12, Twisha was found dead at her matrimonial

home in Bhopal's Katara Hills area. Her husband, advocate Samarth Singh, and mother-in-law, retired district judge Giribala Singh, have since been booked.

Twisha graduated with a BBA from Indira College in Pune and later did an MBA from NMIMS Centre for Distance and Online Education in 2024.

By the time of her death, she had rejoined DADB Germany's Delhi office as a communications and onboarding manager after the company briefly shut down operations. Before that, she had worked in marketing roles with private firms, includ-



Twisha Sharma and Samarth Singh married in December 2025. BELT USED IN HANGING WASN'T SHOWN TO DOCTORS, PAGE 3

ing Flavor Pot Foods. Alongside corporate work, she continued acting assignments, appearing in the Telugu film *Mugguru*

Monagallu and the Hindi short film *Zara Sambhal Kay*. Friends also describe her as a certified yoga instructor and a

Vipassana practitioner. Her social media included motivational captions, travel photographs and occasional glimpses of film shoots. Actor and podcast host Swetaa Varma, who worked with her in *Mugguru Monagallu*, wrote after her death: "Though our interaction was brief, we shared some fun conversations and a lot of laughter. She carried such positive energy."

According to a relative, she had featured in advertisements for influential beauty brands and travelled to Australia for a film shoot just before the Covid-19 pandemic. "She would send us photos and videos from her set... telling us to promote the

GROUPING TO MEET SEPTEMBER 12-13

Xi and Putin likely to be in Delhi for BRICS meet



Russian President Vladimir Putin with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi after arriving in Beijing, Tuesday. REUTERS THE WORLD, P 18

China President's last visit to India was in Oct 2019, months before LAC standoff

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, May 19

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping are likely to attend the New Delhi summit of BRICS leaders on September 12 and 13, sources told *The Indian Express* Tuesday.

It is learnt that the Russian and the Chinese sides have conveyed to New Delhi that their leaders are likely to come for

the summit.

Putin's presence at the summit was confirmed by Russian officials, according to Russian news agency TASS. He will also be attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on August 31 and September 1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi too is likely to attend the SCO summit.

Sources said Xi's participation in the BRICS Summit is the most anticipated visit. It will be his first visit to India after October 2019 when he was at Mallapuram near Chennai for the second informal summit of India-China leaders.

Bilateral ties between India and China dived after a border standoff began in April-May 2020. The process of stabilisation of ties began after Modi

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In Bengal, new norms for slaughter spread confusion and fear



At his cowshed in South 24 Parganas, Sadhan Ghosh says he planned to sell the cows to repay a loan: 'But that looks difficult now'. PARTHA PAUL

Ravik Bhattacharya
Bhargar, May 19

STANDING NEAR his cowshed in Ghoshpara in Bhargar, South 24 Parganas (about 28 km from Kolkata), Sadhan Ghosh says he is running out of options. He took a loan of Rs 5 lakh from a local moneylender at 4% interest rate, and hoped to repay it by selling nine of the 10 cows he owns. That looks diffi-

cult for now, Ghosh says. Meanwhile, "every day, I am spending Rs 500 per cow on fodder".

About 15 minutes drive from Ghoshpara is Polerhat Goru Haat (Polerhat cow market). On any given day, nearly 2,000 cows would be bought and sold here, especially ahead of Bakr-i-Eid, which is falling this year on May 27-28. These days, the ground holds barely

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WHAT MADE NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY LOOK WITHIN

All Chemistry questions in 'guess paper' matched with those in actual NEET exam

Based on own probe, NTA referred names of Chemistry paper-setters and translators to CBI

Abhinaya Harigovind
New Delhi, May 19

A 100% MATCH of Chemistry questions in the 'guess paper' with the actual NEET paper is what led the National Testing Agency to look within and then zero in on the source pool of the leak. Based on its internal probe, the NTA referred the names of all Chemistry paper setters and

translators to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for further examination, sources close to the development said.

According to the sources, four days after the nationwide NEET exam on May 3, the NTA had on May 7 received an email from a whistleblower in Sikar. This whistleblower had first mailed information about the leak to the NTA, and subse-



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan chairs a review meeting on the NEET (UG) retest, in New Delhi, Tuesday. PTI

quently shared the pdf of the leaked paper. Upon comparing it with the actual paper, the NTA

found that 100% of the Chemistry questions were leaked, and

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E. EXPLAINED

Putting its own house in order

The NTA is increasing its institutional strength. Besides getting four officers, two of Joint Secretary rank and two of Joint Director rank, the agency has advertised for appointing contract professionals, including a Chief Technology Officer, a Chief Financial Officer and a Chief Human Resource Officer.

SUMMIT VOICES CONCERN OVER CHANGING WORLD ORDER



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with (from left) Norway PM Jonas Gahr Store, Finland PM Petteri Orpo, Sweden PM Ulf Kristersson, Iceland PM Kristrun Frostadottir and Denmark PM Mette Frederiksen at the Nordic-Indian summit at the City Hall in Oslo, Norway, Tuesday. AP

Green tech to innovation, India elevates ties with Nordic nations

PM: Nordic expertise, India's talent can develop trusted solutions for world

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, May 19

AS INDIA and Nordic countries agreed to transform ties into a Green Technology Partnership, leaders of all six countries Tuesday flagged concerns over glo-

bal tensions and turbulence in the international order. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India and the Nordic nations will continue to stand together in upholding a "rules-based global order".

After the third India-Nordic

summit in Oslo, Modi said, "We have decided to shape the India-Nordic relationship into a strategic partnership focused on green technology and innovation. Through this Green Technology Partnership, by combining Iceland's expertise in geothermal energy and fisheries, Norway's strengths in the blue economy and Arctic affairs, and the maritime and

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THE BIG PICTURE



BIHAR'S POWERPLAY

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Suwendu aide murder case: CBI arrests 5th suspect from Varanasi

Manish Sahu
Lucknow, May 19

A DAY after arresting the fourth suspect in connection with the killing of West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari's personal assistant, Chandranath Rath, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Tuesday arrested another suspect from Varanasi, officials said.

Officials said the arrested



The suspect being produced at a court in Barasat, North 24 Parganas district, Tuesday. PTI

man, identified as 40-year-old Vinay Rai alias Pumpum Rai, originally hails from the Zamani area of Ghazipur. Police said Rai has three criminal cases registered against him in Ghazipur, including one for attempt to murder.

As per information, officials said Rai had relocated to Varanasi several years ago, where he was engaged in property

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FROM TOMORROW, TRANSPORTERS ON THREE-DAY STRIKE IN DELHI-NCR P 4

PADAYATRA IN PULWAMA



J&K L-G Manoj Sinha during the Nasha Mukta Abhiyan campaign against drug abuse, in Pulwama district on Tuesday. PTI

Will hunt down drug smugglers even in paatal: L-G Sinha

Deeptiman Tiwary
Pulwama, May 19

JAMMU AND Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said police would hunt down drug smugglers even in "paatal" (hell), asserting that narcotics were not only destroying the lives of the youth but also feeding terrorism in the Union Territory. He also said that the administration was working on a comprehensive rehabilitation framework for victims of drug abuse that would provide healthcare as well as job opportunities.

Sinha was speaking at an event in Pulwama ahead of another padayatra under the administration's ongoing Nasha Mukta Abhiyan. The campaign against drug smuggling and abuse, launched on April 11, has seen padayatras organised across J&K to mobilise civil society in what the administration calls a "war on drugs". Officials said the initiative has received widespread public support.

By the time Sinha arrived around 10.30 am, nearly 25,000 people had gathered at the Sports Ground in south Kashmir's Pulwama. In a district long associated with militancy, the scale and composition of the turnout stood out. Youth, women, academics, businessmen, clerics and public representatives were all visible in large numbers at the government event. After cultural performances themed around drug abuse, he said, "Drug smugglers profit by destroying the future of our youth and terror outfits use that money to fuel terrorism and radicalisation in Jammu and Kashmir. Every deal a drug peddler makes not only wrecks a young life but also finances the killing of innocent citizens."

"When drug smugglers earn money, our youth lose their future and that money arms terrorists against innocents in Jammu and Kashmir," he said. "We will hunt you down even in paatal. Our mission is not just arrests but the complete destruction of the narco-terror

J&K minister orders probe into bulldozer drive in Jammu, seeks action against police

Arun Sharma
Jammu, May 19

JAMMU & KASHMIR Forest Minister Javed Ahmed Rana Monday ordered a probe into a demolition drive by the forest department near Mahamaya forests on the outskirts of Jammu city — a development that could signal rift between the elected government and the UP bureaucracy.

Rana, who described the drive as "inhuman, anti-people and against law", also asked Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to initiate action against police personnel for "excesses" against people during the drive. This comes after the forest department, assisted by police, demolished 30-40 structures, including pucca houses, and claimed to have retrieved nearly 60 kanals of "prime forest land".

The minister, however, denied that it was forest land, saying it fell outside the barbed-wire fencing and that tribals occupying the land had been living there for 40 years and were re-

empire and tearing out the very roots from which this poison spreads," he said. Sinha's padayatra saw participation from politicians belonging to both the National Conference and People's Democratic Party, alongside senior government officials, clerics from local mosques and members of the public.

Local PDP MLA Waheed ur Rehman Para, who joined the padayatra, told *The Indian Express*, "This is a great initiative and we fully support it. Drug abuse has become a huge problem in Kashmir. This sort of engagement will create awareness and help people come out and seek help. More work needs to be done on creating strong rehabilitation infrastructure, but a good beginning has been made."

According to officials, similar padayatras have been organised in Jammu, Samba, Udhampur, Kathua, Srinagar and other districts. "You should have seen the crowd in Baramulla. It was double this. No government programme ever attracts such enthusiastic participation. It shows how worried people are about the drug problem," a senior police officer said.

Since April 11, police have arrested over 800 drug smugglers and peddlers across J&K. Recommendations have been made for cancellation of passports of 18 traffickers, while driving licences of 382 traffickers and peddlers have been cancelled. Registration of 386 vehicles has also been cancelled. Authorities have seized 49 immovable properties and demolished 45 properties linked to traffickers.

The demolition drive has, however, drawn criticism from some political leaders, who have alleged that due process was not being followed. Addressing those concerns, Sinha said, "If you think action has been taken against an innocent person, please inform the IG Kashmir. I assure you, an inquiry will be conducted and if allegations are found to be true, action will be taken against officials."

lected in revenue records.

Significantly, the forest department comes under the elected Omar Abdullah government.

"A number of them had migrated to Jammu during peak militancy," he said. "They had all been provided with electricity and water connections as well. The administration is resorting to using bulldozers against people who have a role in the security and integrity of the nation, and who have always stood with it during wars against Pakistan and militancy. Such anti-people drives damage the image of democracy."

The development comes after the drive sparked a row, with Congress working president and former revenue minister Raman Bhalla visiting the spot.

The Omar Abdullah government has frequently accused the Lieutenant Governor-led administration of interference in governance matters, often citing it while seeking restoration of statehood.

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BRICS

and Xi met on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia in October 2024. That was when the two sides decided to complete disengagement of troops at the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh.

In the last year-and-half, India and China have made significant progress in stabilising relations with direct flights, resumption of visas, easing of

curbs on Chinese firms and the revival of the pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar.

However, more than 50,000 troops remain deployed along the LAC and the process of de-escalation and de-induction of troops have not yet taken place.

Barring any unforeseen developments, participation at the highest level has been conveyed to New Delhi. The venue has not yet been announced, but the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, sources said, is to be the likely choice of place for the summit.

Sources said the meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers in New Delhi last week discussed the agenda for the summit of the leaders, and there was agreement on a range of issues for discussion.

While Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov participated in the meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi could not attend since he had to be in Beijing for the high-stakes meeting between Xi and US President Donald Trump. China's Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, attended

the meeting on Wang's behalf.

Sources said the Indian government is also keen that the BRICS countries, which have been divided on the issue of the war in West Asia, should find common ground by the time the summit takes place.

With no consensus at the BRICS meeting last week on the diplomatic language for the West Asia war, India issued a chair statement, trying to balance the divergence between Iran and UAE, both members of the grouping.

Umar bail

"they are definitely expected to come" to help their mother.

It also reasoned that Khalid's father is "also there to take care of the mother," adding that the surgery is "very simple" and there seems to be no actual requirement of help from Khalid.

Khalid is accused in the larger conspiracy case related to the 2020 Northeast Delhi riots, facing charges under the stringent anti-terror law.

While noting that Khalid and other co-accused in the case have "never flouted conditions imposed by the court", it, however, recorded: "But it doesn't mean that on every occasion, whenever the accused seeks bail, the court should grant it."

The State, opposing Khalid's plea for interim bail, had argued that he is "just misusing the leniency of the court," adding that "this time, the reasons given by (Khalid) are not at all reasonable".

In January, a division bench of the Supreme Court, comprising Justices Arvind Kumar and N V Anjaria, while granting bail to five accused in the larger conspiracy case, had declined bail to Khalid and activist Sharjeel Imam, saying they stood on a "higher footing in the hierarchy of participation". The court had observed that prolonged incarceration cannot be an "absolute entitlement" to seek bail in terror cases.

On Monday, another division bench of the Supreme Court, comprising Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan, expressed its disagreement with the January order. It referred to the three-judge decision in K A Najeed in 2021, which had said that an accused under trial suffering long incarceration under UAPA with no end in sight to the criminal trial must be enlarged on bail.

Khalid was arrested in September 2020.

Slaughter norms

two dozen cows, tied to poles or cycle vans, with their owners and a handful of buyers standing around listlessly in the summer heat.

In one of its first steps after coming to power, the BJP government in Bengal announced strict imposition of the state's Animal Slaughter Control Act, 1950 — meaning that only an animal aged 14 years and above can be slaughtered legally, and that the animal must have a joint certificate issued by the head of a municipality or panchayat samiti and a government veterinary surgeon declaring it "fit for slaughter".

In the absence of any mechanism to determine the age of an animal, or to provide a fitness certificate, and amidst apprehensions over what a violation under a BJP government may mean, the Polerhat cow market has emptied out. Kolkata is feeling the pinch too, with beef prices shooting up from Rs 280 to Rs 600 per kg.

West Bengal is among the handful of states in the country where the consumption of beef and slaughter of cows is allowed, under strict regulation.

As the sale of cows drops, the goat and sheep market in Kolkata's Rajabazar, one of the largest in the state, is bustling, as the "safer option". While all animals officially require veterinary checks for slaughter, it is barely enforced in the case of goats and sheep.

Indian Secular Front (ISF) leader and Bhangar MLA Nausad Siddiqui wrote to Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Monday urging that veterinary doctors be deployed at the panchayat level to provide the needed fitness certificates, adding that members of both the Hindu and Muslim communities were suffering due to the May 13 notice curbing the trade in cows.

Pointing to the coming Bakr-i-Eid, Siddiqui wrote: "... Section 12 of the West Bengal

Animal Slaughter Control Act, 1950 empowers the State Government to grant exemption for slaughter of animals for religious purposes".

But BJP Rajya Sabha MP Rahul Sinha invoked "greater cause". He told *The Indian Express*: "For a greater cause, some people have to tolerate some discomfort. If parents are old, one should not sell them. Therefore, after deep thought and deliberations, an existing law has been implemented as it should have been."

A hapless Sadhan Ghosh tries to make sense of this. "A cow (of the breed Ghosh owns) gives adequate milk only for up to seven months to a year. Plus, these cows cannot breed. So, I planned to sell nine of the 10 I had bought after borrowing Rs 1 lakh from a bank and Rs 5 lakh from a moneylender... Now I have heard only animals over 14 years old can be sold for slaughter, and with a fitness certificate. How will I know the age of my animal? Where will I get such a fitness certificate?... I don't know anything."

His Ghoshpara neighbour, Bhaskar Ghosh, 33, owns 22 cows and hoped to sell 15. "We are goshala owners, we supply milk. And, every year around this time, we sell the cows which do not give enough milk or cannot breed. This has been happening since my grandfather's time. But this time suddenly, the old 1950 law which I had never heard of has been imposed."

Bakr-i-Eid is usually the time of high profits for them, with each cow bought for Rs 70,000-80,000 fetching at least Rs 1 lakh, Bhaskar says. His losses may be higher than Sadhan's as he took a loan of "Rs 7 lakh at 5% interest". "What will we do with these cows? How long can we go on feeding them?"

At the Polerhat cow market, which springs up on a small field, Mir Arifin, 30, who came from Bashirhat, 41.7 km away,

with five cows, says they have reconciled to seeing no business this year. "No one here has a fitness certificate or can tell you the age of their cow... I expected Rs 40,000 for my cows. I just got one offer today, of Rs 15,000. I did not sell..."

Mahibul Islam, a buyer at the market, says the demand is also low due to confusion over slaughter permissions this year. "The government has said qurbani (sacrifice) would be allowed only in designated places, which have not been identified yet, and that one cannot slaughter in public."

The Calcutta Beef Dealers' Association points out that the State-owned slaughterhouse in Tangra has been shut for the past two days too, further causing prices to soar. A member of the association says they have no idea why the slaughterhouse is shut. "We were not served any notice. Only two animals (both buffaloes) are being slaughtered here every day now, that too to meet the needs of Kolkata Zoo."

The association is planning to meet Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim, of the Trinamool Congress, to plead their case.

The Nakhoda Masjid Imam, Maulana Muhammad Shafiq Qasmi, says what they want above all is clarity. The government could have avoided the distress to both Muslim and Hindu cow traders by speaking to all the stakeholders and putting the infrastructure in place before announcing suddenly that it was imposing the 1950 law, he says.

"Another issue is that while cows are connected to Hindu sentiments, the curbs are also for buffaloes, ox, camel and all other big animals. The government should reconsider this. Everyone will follow the law but the government should make life easy for the people."

Otherwise, Qasmi adds, they should go the whole distance. "We are law-abiding citizens. We will not do qurbani of cows. In fact, the government should make the cow the national animal and ban their slaughter and even meat export (altogether)."

and later underwent an abortion after sustained pressure from her husband and mother-in-law. Police have also cited WhatsApp conversations submitted by the family, along with postmortem findings recording multiple ante-mortem injuries.

Her mother-in-law, Giribala, however, denied the allegations and claimed Twisha was seeking psychiatric treatment and suffering from drug abuse, which led to a collapse in her mental health days before her alleged suicide.

At Indira University in Pune, where Twisha studied BBA from 2011 to 2014, the atmosphere on Tuesday morning was heavy as friends and faculty gathered for a prayer meeting.

Rashi Wadhwa, a family friend, described Twisha as "ambitious, vibrant and full of life". "We met her in March at her brother's wedding. She did not mention being in trouble, but she did not look like herself. She had become unreachable and distant from all of us," she claimed.

Twisha's friends said she had barely been in touch ever since she got married. "She was vocal, expressive, and constantly in touch with friends. Suddenly, she completely shut down," said Manika Mehrotra, who said she had known Twisha for over a decade.

(Ananya Shetty is an intern with *The Indian Express*)

Twisha

weight, and I asked her to take care of herself. We used to spend summers together," said Priyanka. "She was very chirpy, but things changed after her marriage... she wasn't herself."

Twisha's husband, Samarth Singh, occupied a markedly different professional universe. On LinkedIn, he describes himself as an independent litigator practising across Bhopal, Jabalpur and Indore, handling service disputes, criminal defence and consumer protection matters. A graduate of National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, he also lists an Erasmus Mundus exchange programme at Ghent University and a stint as legal advisor to the Madhya Pradesh government between 2023 and 2025. Those who know the family describe Samarth as academically accomplished, reserved, and deeply rooted in Bhopal's legal establishment.

The two met online in 2024 and married in Delhi in December 2025. But the marriage, according to police records and family allegations, deteriorated rapidly behind closed doors. The FIR alleges repeated taunts over dowry, accusations regarding Twisha's character and pressure surrounding her pregnancy. Her parents claim she was accused of carrying another man's child

5th arrest

dealing. "A CBI team produced Rai before a local court in Varanasi and secured a two-day transit remand," a senior police official in Varanasi said.

The suspect was subsequently taken to Kolkata for further questioning.

According to police officers, the CBI moved against Rai after gathering substantial evidence linking him to the killing. He was

Green tech

sustainability expertise of all Nordic nations with India's scale, we will ensure a better future for the entire world... By integrating Sweden's advanced manufacturing and defence capabilities, Finland's telecommunications and digital technologies, and Denmark's expertise in cybersecurity and health-tech with India's talent pool, we will develop trusted solutions for the global community."

"A crucial pillar of the India-Nordic partnership", he said, "lies in our extensive ties in research and innovation. To further strengthen this foundation, we will work together to enhance linkages among universities, laboratories, and start-up ecosystems. We will deepen our cooperation in Arctic and polar research, and ensure new opportunities for skill development and talent mobility between India and the Nordic countries."

"In this era of global tensions and conflicts, India and the Nordic nations will continue to stand together in upholding a rules-based global order. Whether in Ukraine or West Asia, we will continue to support efforts aimed at the early cessation of hostilities and the restoration of peace," he said.

Norway's PM Jonas Gahr Store, who hosted the summit in Oslo, said, "This meeting is a manifestation of what a more unpredictable world really needs: more cooperation and collaboration between democracies that, despite differences in geography and size and history, have a common approach to how we take on the big issues of our times."

Speaking of the growing geopolitical challenges they face, he said, "We have focused on support for international law, a rule-based order that also needs reforms and progress, and also emphasizing the need for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and finding a way diplomatically on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East."

Denmark PM Mette Frederiksen also flagged the rules-based world order. "All of us standing here on the stage believe in a rule-based world order. Unfortunately, the old world order is changing rapidly, and it's not going in the right direction, and, therefore, it is even more important than before that partners who really believe in democracy actually work together, and this is exactly what we have been doing today."

Flagging "long-term reliable

Stray dogs

referred to a three-judge bench.

On November 7, 2025, the three-judge bench issued a set of interim directions. It ordered that the canines be removed "forthwith" from the premises of educational institutions, hospitals, sports complexes, bus stands and depots, and railway stations to a "designated shelter, strays on campuses should mandatorily file an affidavit with the head of the institution, agreeing to undertake tortious liability in case of any stray dog bite, "failing which no such activity of maintaining or feeding stray dogs shall be permitted within the institutional premises." The court added that "failure to comply would entail suitable action against the head of the institution concerned."

In July last year, a two-judge bench of the SC had taken suo motu cognizance of rising instances of stray dog bites in Delhi. It issued a series of guidelines in August, including removal of stray dogs to shelters and that canines picked up from a public area should not be returned to the same place after sterilisation/immunisation. The 2023 ABC Rules said "it is mandatory that the vaccinated and sterilised street dogs are released back to the exact location from where they were caught".

Animal lovers protested, and it was pointed out that there was another judgment, also by a two-judge bench, forbidding "any indiscriminate killings of canines" and advocating a more humane approach. The matter was then

ties", Swedish PM Ulf Kristersson, who met Modi in Gothenburg Sunday, said, "When we met two days ago in Sweden, together with a big business delegation from Sweden and around Europe, we came back to three key words all the time: it was innovation, it was scale, and it was the importance of long-term reliable relations. I think these are applicable also here today in the Nordic setting."

Finland's PM Petteri Orpo also flagged the "turbulence" in the current international order "characterized by geopolitical shifts, turbulence and uncertainty." "In these turbulent times, we continue to strengthen partnerships that are based on trust, mutual respect, as well as shared democratic values and interests." He also announced that Finland will host the next Nordic India Summit.

Talking about a "sense of hope", Iceland's PM Kristrun Frostadottir said: "This summit comes at a very poignant time for us. We can show that even though we are miles apart as a grouping as Nordics from India, but also for a country like Iceland, which is very different in scale and size, there are so many things that tie us together."

Modi, in his statement, said, "Our shared commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and multilateralism makes us natural partners. Furthermore, our shared priorities in technology and sustainability infuse our relationship with immense opportunities."

He said bilateral trade between India and the Nordic countries has nearly quadrupled over the last decade, and investments flowing from the Nordic nations into India have witnessed an increase of approximately 200 per cent over the past decade.

And on terrorism, Modi said, "We maintain a clear and united stance on terrorism: No compromise. No double standards."

"Although we speak different languages, sometimes a single word is sufficient to underscore the natural partnership that exists between us. Today, I used the word 'Samband' several times. In many Nordic languages, the word signifies connection, relations, or a bond; in Hindi, it carries precisely the same meaning. This is not merely a linguistic coincidence. This reflects the convergence of our ideas. Let us deepen the ties between us in every sphere, and make the India-Nordic Partnership a model for shared prosperity, innovation, and a sustainable future," he said.

It noted that the "intended effect of... (its) directions has not yet adequately percolated to the ground level" and "the continued occurrence of such incidents reflects serious deficiencies in implementation and enforcement on the part of the concerned authorities."

It said that "any continued non-compliance or apathy in implementation of the directions... shall be viewed seriously, and the erring officials of the municipal authorities, and the concerned departments of the States and Union Territories shall render themselves reliable for appropriate proceedings, including proceedings for contempt of disciplinary proceedings and tortious liabilities."

ing to flee to another state, possibly Uttarakhand. Sources said the UP Police assisted in the operation.

Raj Kumar's family claimed they were unaware of his alleged involvement in the crime or of any link between him and Raj Singh. Raj Kumar's father, Tribhuvan Narain Singh, who was working as a technician in Ayodhya and returned home recently, said there are a few cases of assault against his son. Ballia Police said there are three cases of assault against Raj Kumar.

Belt used in Twisha hanging was not shown during autopsy: AIIMS report

Anand Mohan J Bhopal, May 19

THE INVESTIGATION into the death of model and actor Twisha Sharma, the daughter-in-law of retired Principal District and Sessions Judge Giribala Singh, has come under fresh scrutiny after alleged procedural lapses and inconsistencies emerged in the handling of evidence and police records in the case.

The latest controversy centres on a nylon belt that police claim was recovered from the scene and allegedly used in the hanging. According to the post-mortem report prepared at AIIMS Bhopal, the investigating officer failed to produce the belt before the medical board during the autopsy examination. Due to this omission, doctors were unable to conduct a scientific comparison between the alleged ligature material and the marks found on Twisha's neck.

The post-mortem report prepared at AIIMS Bhopal stated that doctors observed "two parallel ligature marks" on Twisha Sharma's neck. "The alleged ligature material was not presented during examination," the report noted, adding that because of this omission, "scientific correlation between the ligature mark and the alleged material could not be established." The post-mortem report stated that the death was "due to an antemortem hanging by ligature."

"Multiple antemortem injuries (simple in nature, possible by blunt force) over other



Twisha's cousin Priyanka and aunt Madhu. GAJENDRA YADAV

parts of the body have been noted," the report stated.

The post-mortem also documented multiple external injuries on the body. These include "two reddish abrasions" on the front of the neck, bruises on the left arm, including a "bluish contusion", another "bluish contusion" below it, and a "bluish contusion" lower down on the same arm.

The autopsy further documented a "reddish contusion" on the front of the left forearm. Another injury described was a "reddish contusion" over the "right ring finger."

Twisha's family has alleged that the failure to present the belt compromised a crucial piece of evidence and weakened the integrity of the forensic examination. They have demanded a second post-mortem examination at AIIMS Delhi and sought an independent probe outside Madhya Pradesh, alleging that the influen-

tial legal background of the accused family could affect the impartiality of the probe. The family has also demanded a CBI inquiry into the case. While her family is based in Noida, the accused stay in Bhopal.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the death, headed by Misrod ACP Rajnish Kashyap, has acknowledged that the belt was seized from the crime scene but was not submitted during the post-mortem process. Kashyap said investigators are examining how the lapse occurred and that further action would be taken based on the findings of the inquiry.

Inspector Sunil Dubey, part of the SIT team, was the first to investigate the case. He told *The Indian Express*, "The body was not recovered from the police. We got to know from AIIMS Bhopal that the lady was dead...we found the belt used to hang herself was missing from the preliminary medical report. Our team went to the house and did a crime scene investigation, where an exercise band that she used to hang herself was recovered. By the time, the post-mortem had been completed at AIIMS," Dubey said multiple teams were formed to track down Samarth Singh, her husband, who is absconding. Two of his mobile phones were found switched off. An application has been moved to cancel his passport.

ACP Kashyap said the police are investigating bank account transfers to find out if the accused demanded Rs 2 lakh, as alleged by Twisha's family.

'Ambitious, steadfast, and perfect': How kin remember their Tuktuk

Drishti Jain Noida, May 19

TWISHA WANTED to be different. She was independent, ambitious and steadfast, someone who cared for everyone around her — that's how her cousin, Priyanka Sharma, remembered the actor-model.

On May 12, Twisha Sharma, (33) was found dead at her matrimonial home in Bhopal's Katara Hills area. Her husband, advocate Samarth Singh, and mother-in-law, retired district judge Giribala Singh, have since been booked for dowry death among other charges.

Sitting near the garden inside 16th Gaur City Avenue in Noida Tuesday, Priyanka recalled: "She wanted to experiment with things. She was always vocal and active in all her endeavours."

Priyanka and her mother, Dr Madhu Sharma, were holding up placards demanding justice for Twisha.

The family, originally from Uttar Pradesh's Hathras, had first shifted to Pune where Twisha completed her school and graduation. They then moved to Noida.

"My uncle and aunt are very open-minded, they never forced their children to do anything," said Priyanka. "Twisha had full freedom —

right from pursuing modelling to studying an MBA. When she won the Miss Pune title in 2012, it was a very proud moment."

She was perfect, added Priyanka.

She recalled how Twisha met her husband, Samarth Singh, through a dating app, after which their families got involved. "She told us, 'I'm talking to this person, now you decide what to do next.' Both families met in May, and... the wedding was finalised," the cousin said.

After marriage, she claimed Twisha lost her spark. The sisters met for the last time in March for Twisha's younger brother's wedding.

"It was evident something had changed," said Priyanka. "It was like life had been sucked out of her."

"She was no longer the cheerful, playful, care-free Tuktuk after her marriage... she was standing rather in a corner, fulfilling her duties... she had even lost weight," said Priyanka.

Dr Madhu, meanwhile, cried as she recalled the allegations made by Twisha's mother-in-law. "Twisha used to say that 'I'm married now, and soon will make you a grandmother...'", she said.

"My family should get justice," she demanded.

Given divergence on UAPA bail rulings, larger Bench should hear, police tell SC

Express News Service New Delhi, May 19

A DAY after a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court expressed its reservations on the judgments given by two other two-judge benches regarding bail pleas in cases lodged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Delhi Police on Tuesday told the top court that the matter may now require consideration by a larger bench in view of the divergent views.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S V Raju conveyed this to a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P B Varale while it was hearing the bail pleas of Tasleem Ahmed and United Against Hate member Khalid Saifi — accused in the Delhi riots larger conspiracy case — challenging the Delhi High Court order denying them bail.

The ASG said he is studying the judgment delivered on Monday by the SC, granting bail to Kashmir resident Syed Iftikhar Andrabi — booked under UAPA in a case of narco-terror probed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). He urged the bench to post the bail hearing for Wednesday so that it can also look into whether the reference was required.

On Monday, a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan, while granting bail to Andrabi, had referred to the 2021 decision of a three-judge SC bench in the case Union of India vs K A Najeeb. The court

Top court had said that a smaller bench cannot dilute, circumvent or disregard the ratio of a larger bench

had in the case said that violation of a fundamental right like right to speedy trial can be a ground for grant of bail even under a stringent law like the UAPA. The bench had then upheld the bail granted to an accused jailed since April 2015 for alleged involvement in chopping the hand of a Kerala professor in 2010.

The bench of Justices Nagarathna and Bhuyan said that despite this, in two subsequent judgments — Gurwinder Singh vs State of Punjab in February 2024 and Gulfisha Fatima vs State (NCT of Delhi) on January 5, 2026 — separate two-judge benches took a somewhat divergent view "from the clear, distinctive trajectory... earlier followed" in the Najeeb case.

In the 2024 ruling, a bench cautioned against "mechanical" invocation of delay to seek bail, suggesting bail should only be considered if it also satisfies the test under Section 43(D)(5) of UAPA.

In Gulfisha Fatima vs State, an SC bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria, while granting bail to five accused in the Delhi riots conspiracy case, had denied relief to

accused Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, saying they stood on a "higher footing in the hierarchy of participation". The court had observed that prolonged incarceration cannot be an "absolute entitlement" to seek bail in terror cases.

Questioning this, the bench of Justices Nagarathna and Bhuyan said, "We have serious reservations on various aspects of the judgment in the Gulfisha Fatima case, including foreclosing the right of the two appellants to seek bail for a period of one year..."

The bench noted that what was said by the three-judge bench is the law and benches of lesser strength cannot dilute it. "We make it clear that K A Najeeb is the binding law and entitled to the protection of stare decisis. It cannot be diluted, circumvented, or disregarded by the trial court, the High Court, or even by benches of lower strength of this court," it said.

The doctrine of stare decisis requires courts to follow established legal precedents so as to ensure consistency, fairness and predictability, it further said. "A judgment rendered by a bench of lesser strength is bound by the law declared by the bench of greater strength. Judicial discipline mandates that such a binding precedent must either be followed or, in case of doubt, be referred to a larger bench. A smaller bench cannot dilute, circumvent or disregard the ratio of a larger bench," the bench said in its Monday ruling.

DND-FARIDABAD-SOHA HIGHWAY

Delhi-Fbd stretch ready, Jewar link in a year: Haryana minister

Express News Service Chandigarh, May 19

THE GOVERNMENT is working to decongest Delhi with a larger vision of improving ease of living and mobility, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari Tuesday said.

The minister was addressing the media after inspecting the DND-Faridabad-Sohna Access Controlled Highway Project, being developed to provide seamless access to the Noida International Airport at Jewar and the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Union Minister Krishan Pal Gurjar, and Haryana PWD minister Ranbir



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari during an on-site inspection on Tuesday. ABHINAV SAHA

Singh Gangwa were also present during the inspection.

Developed under the Bharatmala Pariyojana, the high-

way project, of a total length of around 59.063 km, is being built at an estimated cost of Rs 4,463 crore. The corridor will connect

Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Gurugram, and Sohna through a high-speed, six-lane access-controlled highway.

Gangwa said that once operational, the Delhi-Faridabad stretch (30 km) will cut the travel time to 20 minutes. He said work on the Delhi-Faridabad section is complete, while the extension up to Jewar Airport is expected within a year.

According to the National Highways Authority of India, the project incorporates several advanced engineering features and modern construction technologies. One of its key highlights is the construction of a 140-metre-long Network Arch Bridge (NAB), one of the most advanced steel bridge struc-

tures in India. The bridge has been designed using modern tied-arch technology with a crossed hanger arrangement, enhancing structural strength, durability, and resilience during seismic activity.

Meanwhile, Gadkari said the Centre is working to make Delhi's transport network modern and future-ready by constructing new expressways, ring roads, tunnels and elevated corridors.

He said the government is currently involved in road projects worth Rs 13,000 crore in Delhi while it will spend another Rs 34,500 crore in national capital's upcoming projects to reduce congestion, pollution and fuel consumption.

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Noida workers' protest: SC says two accused to remain in jail

Express News Service New Delhi, May 19

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday directed that the two men, arrested in connection with the violence witnessed in Noida last month following a workers' protest, will continue to remain in judicial custody. The accused have alleged "ill-treatment" in police custody.

"Pending further consideration of the matter, we direct the judicial custody of the two persons, Aditya Anand and Rupesh Roy, to continue," a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan said. Stating that the law has to take its course, the bench said that pendency of the matter before it will not come in the way of the duo or the investigators from seeking relief in accordance with law.

Hearing a plea by Aditya's brother Keshav, the top court had on May 15 asked the Uttar Pradesh government to produce the two accused before it. Accordingly, they were produced on Tuesday.

Appearing for the petitioner, Senior Advocate Colin Gonsalves said the accused were allegedly tortured by the police to make fake recoveries and urged that they be permitted to continue in judicial custody. He also claimed that lawyers who went to meet them were forcefully prevented. He also sought a CBI inquiry into alleged torture.

The bench interacted with the duo who also claimed that they were ill-treated by the police.

The court orally said that the police can interrogate them in judicial custody if they want.

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PEAK POWER DEMAND HITS HIGH OF 7,776 MW

Day temperature crosses 45°C in Delhi, Met office forecasts heatwave until May 25; GRAP 1 invoked



People try to shield themselves from the scorching sun in Delhi on Tuesday. VIVEK PRAKASH KRISHNA

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 19

DELHI ON Tuesday recorded the first heatwave day of the month, with dry winds and a searing sun pushing temperatures past 45 degrees Celsius. Amid rise in temperatures, the air quality in the Capital slipped into the Poor category with the city logging an AQI of 336.

The dip in AQI triggered the pollution watchdog, Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), to activate Stage 1 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi-NCR. In the wake of heatwave like conditions, Delhi's power demand also hit 7,776 megawatt (MW) on Tuesday, the highest recorded so far in 2026, according to State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC) data.

Citing the deteriorating air quality, CAQM said that it had decided to invoke all actions as per Stage I of the extent GRAP with immediate effect in Delhi-NCR. Under GRAP 1, restrictions including banning the use of coal and firewood as fuel in tandoors in hotels, restaurants, and open eateries, allowing diesel generators only in emergency or essential situations are set into effect.

"...The forecast by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)/Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) indicates AQI to remain in 'Poor' category in coming days," said CAQM in a press statement.

On the surge in power demand, an official said, "BSES dis-

coms successfully met the peak power demand of 3,492 MW and 1,683 MW in their respective areas." This record assumes significance as Delhi crossed the 7,000 MW mark as early as April 27, 2026, reaching 7,078 MW. In comparison, the 7,000 MW level was reached only in May during 2024 and 2025.

Officials also said that Delhi is expected to witness another significant rise in electricity demand. According to SLDC projections, against the all-time high peak demand of 8,656 MW recorded in 2025, Delhi's peak power demand is expected to cross 9,000 MW this year.

As power crunch grips several states, Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL) said it has seamlessly supplied the season's peak demand of 2,220 MW across its network in north Delhi areas so far.

According to IMD, Safdarjung, the city's base weather monitoring station, recorded a maximum temperature of 45.1 degrees Celsius, 4.7 notches above normal and 1.7 degrees higher than the previous day.

The IMD, meanwhile, issued an orange alert until May 25, warning of heatwave to severe heatwave conditions. For Wednesday, it has forecast a minimum temperature of 27 degrees Celsius and a maximum of 44 degrees Celsius.

Tuesday marked the fourth heatwave day recorded in Delhi this year. Heatwave conditions were earlier recorded on April 23, 24 and 25, an IMD official said.

From ORS to sun caps: Summer kits for 1 lakh construction workers in city

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 19

GLUCOSE POWDER, oral rehydration solution (ORS) sachets, sun caps, towels, *sharbat* concentrate, reusable water bottles — these are among the key items that will be included in summer kits set to be distributed by the Delhi government to one lakh construction workers to help them stay hydrated amid scorching temperatures, officials said.

As part of the heatwave action plan, the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (DBOCWWB) has issued a tender to appoint a public sector undertaking to procure the items and package and distribute the kits to the workers.

Officials said each kit will have nine items, including 250 gm of instant energy glucose, 1 kg premium quality *sattu* (roasted gram flour), ORS sachets, cotton *gamcha* (towel), sunlight protection cap, prickly heat powder, 1-litre water bottle, 250 ml of *sharbat* concentrate. The items will be kept in a durable utility backpack.

The approximate cost of distribution of each kit is estimated to be Rs 1,890, they added.

Officials said the government recognises that construction workers engaged in outdoor and labour-intensive activities are particularly vulnerable to heatwave related occupational risks such as dehydration, heat stress, fatigue, and associated health complications.

"Since real-time data regarding workers engaged at construction sites in Delhi is not available with the Board, the estimated number of beneficiaries has been derived on the basis of workers registered with DBOCWWB," said an official.

STRIKE IN DELHI-NCR BY GOODS VEHICLES BOUND FOR CAPITAL

From tomorrow, transporters on 3-day strike to protest increase in green cess

Gayathri Mani
New Delhi, May 19

TRUCK DRIVERS, transporters and drivers of goods vehicles have announced a three-day strike in Delhi-NCR from May 21, raising concerns about the increase in Environment Compensation Cess (ECC) on all Delhi-bound goods vehicles among other issues.

About 68 transport, trucks and other unions under the All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) pledged to support the strike, said AIMTC national president Harish Sabharwal.

"We understand fuel prices have been increased due to the ongoing war situation but the CAQM (Commission for Air Quality Management) and the Delhi government have increased the ECC for every trip to Delhi, on an average from 15% to 55%... This is a huge amount for drivers and operators... this did not happen for the last 8-9 years... Besides, the government has imposed a ban on BS IV commercial vehicles from November 1," he added.

Sabharwal said that these measures have serious socio-economic consequences, severely impacting the transport sector and livelihoods of operators.

The AIMTC, which has written to Delhi LG Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta raising their concerns, has three demands — immediate withdrawal of the ECC hike, roll back ban on entry of BS-IV commercial vehicles, and exempting BS-VI vehicles from levy of ECC.

Last month, the MCD, following a Supreme Court order, had hiked the ECC as part of its steps to curb pollution in Delhi. As per the MCD order, the charges for light motor com-

mercial vehicles (2-axle trucks) increased from Rs 1,400 to 2,000 (excluding MCD tax). For bigger vehicles like trucks, the ECC has gone up from Rs 2,600 to Rs 4,000, plus Rs 1,200 MCD tax, adding up to Rs 5,200 per trip. It also said that the ECC price will also increase automatically by 5% every year from April 1, rounding off to nearly Rs 10.

Amrik Singh, a member of the Drivers' Welfare Committee, said, "I am a driver and an operator. I drive a truck from Delhi to Kolkata, and make three trips to Delhi every month. We transport vegetables... Earlier, we paid Rs 2,600; now we have to pay Rs 5,200. Drivers don't get paid a lot and this amount is huge..."

Further, the association is protesting against the ban on the entry of BS IV commercial vehicles into Delhi from November 1.

"About 70% of freight is carried by trucks, which are not luxury vehicles; their movement is essential for sustaining the city's economy, ensuring uninterrupted supply of goods, and maintaining the smooth functioning of daily lives of the people," said Sabharwal.

"BS-IV vehicles were approved by the government prior to April 1, 2020, and granted a 15-year validity under the Motor Vehicles Act. This blanket ban will severely impact the livelihood, financial stability, and sustenance of more than 17 lakh truckers and their families in Delhi-NCR," he added.

The AIMTC said that though the protest is currently symbolic in nature, in the absence of timely resolution, the agitation may escalate into an indefinite suspension of transport vehicles in Delhi-NCR.

App cabbies, auto unions demand higher fares after CNG price hikes

Gayathri Mani
New Delhi, May 19

BY 5 am, while most of Delhi is still asleep, 47-year-old Dhara Ballabh is already behind the wheel of his app-based cab, chasing rides across the city to make ends meet.

A resident of East Delhi's Vinod Nagar, Ballabh spends nearly 17-18 hours a day on the road, completing 8-9 trips to earn around Rs 1,500-1,600. But with soaring CNG prices, he says more than half his earnings are spent on fuel alone.

"I don't know what I am saving at the end of the day because 60-70% of what I earn goes into buying CNG... whatever is left is barely enough to run the house," he said, echoing the growing distress among thousands of cab drivers in Delhi-NCR who say rising fuel costs and stagnant fares have pushed them to the brink.

Citing inflation and the sharp rise in fuel and CNG prices, commercial taxi and cab unions have extended support to the All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) and announced a three-day strike from May 21, demanding a hike in auto and taxi fares.

Ballabh, who started driving cabs in 2017, says, "Peak hours are the only time when we can earn well but due to heavy traffic jams, we can only complete one trip between 8 am to 10 am..."

"We are going bankrupt because of increasing fuel prices... I had to pull my children out of a private school and send them to a government school... Now, my son is in Class 12... we have to pay for coaching, college and



Dhara Ballabh (top) and Arun Kumar

exams. It is getting difficult for us..." he said.

Arun Kumar, who has been driving cabs for over a decade, said per-kilometre fares have not been revised in the last 15 years. "I am the sole breadwinner and have to provide for 8 family members... After making 9-10 trips, I earned around Rs 765 and almost all the money went into buying CNG."

"App-based platforms are paying cab drivers and bike riders almost the same amount, though we operate four-seater vehicles that have amenities like air-conditioning," he added.

Vallabh noted that fares for kaali-peeli taxis were revised to around Rs 22 per km a few years ago, while app-based AC cabs continue to receive around Rs 12.5 per km. "While we have proper AC cabs, Kaali-peeli taxis are non-AC..." he said.

Auto driver Pintoo Anna voiced similar frustrations. "The aggregators are not paying us fairly. Even if a ride gets cancelled after driving 3 km, we get only Rs 10-15, which is nothing in comparison to what we pay on fuel and CNG," he said.

Kumar further said that drivers have to annually spend nearly Rs 70,000 on expenses on permits, taxes, vehicle fitness and related paperwork.

Chalak Shakti, a cab and auto drivers' union, has written to the Lieutenant Governor, Chief Minister, Delhi Police and the Ministry of Home Affairs informing them about the protest call and their concerns.

Anuj Kumar Rathore, vice-president of the union, said, "The fares of app-based cabs have not been revised for nearly 15 years. During this period, inflation, CNG, petrol, diesel prices, parking charges, insurance, fitness costs, permits, taxes and living expenses have increased several times."

He alleged that app-based companies such as Ola, Uber and Rapido continue to act arbitrarily. "Drivers are facing a severe financial crisis and starvation-like conditions. They are struggling to provide for their families. Inflation has broken the backbone of the driver community," he added.

The union said they have approached the Delhi High Court. "The court had directed that the fares should be revised. But the Delhi government keeps making excuses... It says that the matter has been sent to the LG... It has been four months and no decision has been taken so far," said Rathore.

Delhi man sets himself on fire after a marital dispute, dies

Sakshi Chand
New Delhi, May 19

A 26-YEAR-OLD man died after he allegedly set himself on fire outside his wife's home in Northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri on Monday night.

Police said initial reports blaming the wife and her mother for the incident are incorrect.

According to police, a PCR call regarding the incident was received at Mahendra Park police station on May 18 from A Block in Jahangirpuri.

When police personnel, along with the Station House Officer (SHO), reached the spot, they found the man, identified as Deepansh Chaudhary, in a severely burnt condition. He was rushed to Babu Jagjivan Ram Memorial Hospital, where he died during treatment.

Senior police officers said a preliminary inquiry indicated that Chaudhary had a dispute with his wife.

"The deceased and his wife were facing marital issues, and a complaint had previously been filed at the Crime Against Women (CAW) cell. On the day



Deepansh Chaudhary

of the incident, after an altercation, he allegedly threatened to end his life and subsequently set himself on fire outside her residence," a senior police officer said.

Police also clarified that rumours circulating in sections of the local media, alleging that the man's wife and mother-in-law had set him on fire are baseless. "Initial inquiry suggests it is a case of self-immolation. Legal action will follow based on further investigation," the officer added.

Sources said neighbours had alerted the police after spotting a man engulfed in flames outside the house late

Monday night.

Police also uncovered details of a troubled relationship between the couple. The two had reportedly met last year, during which the man allegedly claimed to be a government officer.

Police said the woman later discovered that he worked as a cab driver. She had initially refused to marry him, but he allegedly threatened to leak private videos, after which she agreed to the marriage.

However, within two days of the wedding in January this year, police said the woman reportedly left following allegations of physical assault. Since then, the man had been attempting reconciliation, but she had expressed her desire for a divorce.

On the day of the incident, police said, he went to her residence, where an argument ensued. When she reiterated her refusal to continue the marriage, he allegedly consumed phenyl and set himself on fire.

Police said further inquiry is underway to verify all claims and establish the exact sequence of events.

EXCISE POLICY 'SCAM' HC issues notice to Kejriwal, Sisodia and 5 other AAP leaders in criminal contempt case

Fresh notices also issued to Kejriwal, Sisodia and ex-AAP MLA in CBI plea

Sohini Ghosh
New Delhi, May 19

A DIVISION bench of the Delhi High Court on Tuesday issued notice to AAP national convener and former deputy Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, former deputy CM Manish Sisodia and five other party leaders in a suo motu criminal contempt case initiated by Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma last week.

A single-judge bench, meanwhile, issued fresh notices to Kejriwal, Sisodia and former AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak in a plea by the CBI, challenging the discharge of 23 accused in the liquor policy case.

Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma, on May 14, had accused Kejriwal, Sisodia, Pathak and others for allegedly being in contempt of the court for publishing "contemptuous material" against her and the judiciary on social media.

The division bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Ravinder Dubeja, issuing notice to the seven AAP leaders, granted them four weeks to file their responses to the allegations levelled against them.

The alleged contemptuous posts were made after Justice Sharma refused to recuse from hearing the pleas filed by the CBI and the ED in the excise policy case.

The court will hear the matter next on August 4. While taking suo motu cognisance of the alleged contempt of court, Justice Sharma had also transferred the CBI and ED cases out of her court. Following the transfer, the pleas by the CBI and ED were taken up before Justice Manoj Jain on Tuesday.

Taking note that of the 23 accused, Kejriwal, Sisodia and Pathak were not represented by



Arvind Kejriwal

any counsel, Justice Jain issued fresh notices to them. He orally remarked, "Let them be served and be intimidated that the case has now been allocated to this bench. Once everybody is here (legally represented), we will draw a schedule for hearing taking into account the convenience of all..."

Addressing Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appearing for the CBI and argued that the three have already been served notices earlier, Justice Jain remarked, "Let me tell you, a day here or there will not make any difference... We will see if they (Kejriwal, Sisodia and Pathak) are okay with present allocation or they have some reservation. We will wait for 2-3 days and see."

Justice Jain will hear the matter next on May 25. Justice Sharma, while transferring the matters out of her court, had clarified that the transfer "should not be understood as this court transferring the matter merely because demands for recusal were made which were rejected by a detailed order...". In April, Kejriwal, Sisodia and Pathak had refused to be represented legally before Justice Sharma's court, after she refused to recuse herself from hearing the CBI's plea.

Justice Sharma had last week initiated the criminal contempt proceedings against them.

• Skywatch

Forecast: May 20, 2026
Mainly clear sky, heat wave conditions at many places

MAX: 44-46
5.6°C above normal

MIN: 26-28
0.5°C above normal

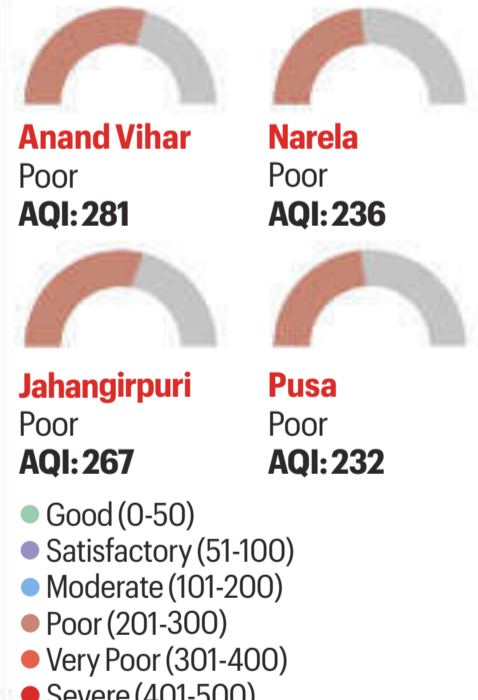
• Sunrise: 5:28 AM (May 21)

• Sunset: 7:08 PM (May 20)

• Moonrise: 9:49 AM (May 21)

• Moonset: 11:13 AM (May 20)

• AQI Tracker



• RHYTHM, FLOW AND SILENCE: EXHIBITION AT INDIA HABITAT CENTRE UNTIL MAY 24

Ladakh to Dubai, frame-by-theme, celebrating a lifelong passion

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 19

MESMERISED BY the ever-changing moods of nature for as long as she can recall, for photographer Jhuma Datta, her camera is not just a means to freeze a moment in time but also a medium that allows her to record memories and share her experiences with others.

This quest that has taken her across the world has also resulted in several exhibitions that she has held in cities all over India since her first solo in 2012 in Kolkata.

Taking place at Visual Arts Gallery at India Habitat Centre until May 24, Datta's sixth solo 'Prakriti-Raga' features photographs shot over 15 years, in-

cluding her very first trip taken with the intention of photography — to Ladakh in 2008. "When I came back and saw my images, I knew that I wanted to seriously pursue photography," recalls Datta (58).

Comprising over 60 photographs, she categorises the images in the exhibition not according to the locations but themes. If *Silence*, defined as "where everything begins" includes Nubra valley in Ladakh and sand dunes near Dubai, *Flow* is "the quiet movement that carries life forward" and features, among others, the ocean in Puri and turbulent waters at Vagator beach in Goa. *Rhythm* is "the pulse that holds nature together", seen in the clear blue waters in Andaman,



Photographer Jhuma Datta at India Habitat Centre. PRAVEEN KHANNA

and a cluster of houses reflecting in the still waters on the foothills of a mountain in Norway. The locations and images, Datta notes, are informed by constant learning and research.

though I always admired the beauty of nature, even as a child growing up in the suburbs of Kolkata."

She adds, "In painting, one has the ability to alter the details but photography does not allow for that. One has to wait for the right moment."

What began as a collection of photographs that she would capture during family trips has also now led to more focussed trips intended to build an archive of photographs, particularly diverse landscapes. While the exhibition includes images from across Indian terrains, including Kashmir and Uttarakhand, in recent years Delhi-based Datta has also enrolled for several international photography-oriented group tours.

A cancer survivor, she also traces her artistic sensibility to painting lessons she took alongside her son when he was five. "Those lessons helped me develop a more discerning eye,

PUBLIC MEETING IN RAEBARELI

Rahul: Big economic storm is coming, inflation to shoot up

FM slams Cong, says it should stop being obstructionist

Maulshree Seth
Lucknow, May 19

LOKSABHA Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi Tuesday warned that the country was heading towards a massive economic crisis that would severely impact Uttar Pradesh's youth, farmers, labourers and small businessmen.

Gandhi, who is on a two-day visit to his constituency, Raebareli, and Amethi, claimed that global tensions, especially the Iran vs US-Israel conflict and the situation around the Strait of Hormuz, could trigger an unprecedented rise in fuel prices, inflation and shortages.

Addressing a public gathering in Bachhrawan, he said, "Very difficult times are coming... For months I have been warning that an economic storm is approaching. People are going to suffer a massive blow and inflation will shoot through the roof." Attacking the BJP-led Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rahul alleged that the Modi government had weakened



Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in Raebareli on Tuesday. PTI

the common man while helping select industrialists.

"Over the last 10 years, the money that belonged to the people, farmers and labourers has been taken away by Modi and handed over to two billionaires — Ambani and Adani," he alleged. The Congress MP warned that the coming crisis would not affect the rich, but would directly hit ordinary Indians. "Who will suffer? Not Adani and Ambani. They will remain safe in their palaces. The blow will hit India's farmers, labourers, youth and small traders," he added.

Gandhi, who was Bachhrawan to inaugurate a *baraat ghar* (wedding hall), linked the expected economic troubles to the global oil supply chain. "...Hormuz is the route through which much of the

world's oil passes. Now the world is heading towards shortages of oil, diesel and fertilisers," he said, also taking a swipe at PM Modi's foreign visits despite his austerity push. "We keep asking Narendra Modi to protect workers... but he goes abroad and talks about helping Adani," he claimed.

Ahead of the UP Assembly polls, he rekindled the Gandhi family's 'Dil ka Rishta (connection of the heart)' with Rae Bareilly and promised to visit local residents for weddings.

Highlighting the Gandhi family's long political connection with the constituency, Gandhi said, "We share a bond of love and emotion... Priyanka, me, my mother, father and grandmother — all share a deep connection with you."

He urged the people to become "politically aware",

claiming that inflation and economic pressure on ordinary citizens would continue unless there is a change in government. He also pointed to the BJP government's handling of demonetisation and Covid and alleged, "Whatever was in your pockets was snatched away through demonetisation. During Covid, labourers and farmers were forced to walk thousands of kilometres."

Hitting out at the Congress over Gandhi's remarks, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the Opposition party should stop being obstructionist and avoid spreading fear among the public.

She highlighted that PM Narendra Modi-led government has been serving every section of society since 2014. "Since 2014 we continue to serve every sector and every section of our society through our policies and initiatives. Farmers, the poor, women, youth, MSMEs are at the core of our governance structure," she said on X.

She wondered if 58 crore JanDhan accounts, 57 crore MUDRA loans, and one crore SVANidhi accounts were for Adani or Ambani. She asked if PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, PM Vishwakarma Yojana, PM Internship scheme, and PM KISAN are meant for Adani or Ambani.

'Pushpa' bows out: TMC's Falta candidate 'withdraws' from contest days before repoll

Atri Mitra
Kolkata, May 19

"WE WILL not bow to him. This is Bengal; if he is 'Singham', I am 'Pushpa'. No amount of threat or coercion by the BJP-appointed police officers from Uttar Pradesh will be allowed in Falta," TMC leader Jahangir Khan thundered late last month, a day after Uttar Pradesh police officer Ajay Pal Sharma arrived at his home in Falta in West Bengal's Diamond Harbour area looking for him.

Khan had gained notoriety for allegedly using coercion to ensure his writ runs large in the Assembly segment that gave TMC second-in-command Abhishek Banerjee a lead of over 1



CM Suwendu Adhikari campaigns in Falta ahead of the May 21 repoll, on Tuesday. PTI

lakh votes in the 2024 Assembly polls. However, a month later, as Falta will go for a repoll on May 21 — the EC ordered repolling after widespread irregularities in polling on April 28 — the political landscape in the state has undergone a complete change. And so has Khan, it seems.

The TMC's Falta candidate on Tuesday said he was "withdrawing" his candidature as CM Suwendu Adhikari had promised a "special package" for the constituency. According to the polling rules, Khan cannot withdraw his candidature as the deadline for withdrawing nomination is over.

However, following the announcement, the TMC is not expected to put up much fight and locals expect the contest to be be-

tween the BJP's Debangshu Panda and CPI(M) nominee Shambhu Kurmi.

While campaigning in Falta, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari took a jibe at Khan, saying, "Where is the self-styled Pushpa? He had no other way, as he won't get a polling agent, so he decided to run away."

In a statement, the TMC said Khan's decision was his own and not that of the party. "Since the election results were declared on May 4, more than 100 of our party workers have been arrested in Falta AC alone. Several party offices have been vandalised, shut down, and forcibly captured through intimidation, while the EC continues to turn a blind eye despite repeated complaints..."

HC quashes FIR against Kishor

Patna: The Patna High Court has quashed a six-year-old FIR against Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor, who had been accused of intellectual property theft.

Justice Sandeep Kumar, in an order dated May 12, allowed a plea filed by Kishor against the FIR lodged at the Pataliputra police station on a complaint by Shashwat Gautam, who had formerly worked with the IPAC founder. Gautam, who was earlier with Congress and is now with RJD, alleged that Kishor had stolen his ideas for "Baat Bihar Ki", a campaign launched by him in 2020. The court observed there can be "no copyright in an idea, subject matter and themes".

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(A Government of India Enterprise)
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**Tender for Acquisition of 6 No. (2 Firm + 4 Optional)
New-Building Container Carriers of 1700 TEU @ 14.0 T Capacity**

The Shipping Corporation of India Ltd is interested in acquisition of 6 No. (2 Firm + 4 Optional) New-Building Container Carriers of 1700 TEU @ 14.0 T Capacity.

Bidders are requested to visit our website www.shipindia.com or www.eprocure.gov.in for further details.

The participating bidders would have to submit their offers latest by **01.06.2026, 1700 hrs (IST)** to the Director (T&S) on the above mentioned address.

Transporting Goods, Transforming Lives

Civic body sends notices against 17 properties linked to Abhishek



TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee's Harish Mukherjee Road residence. PARTHA PAUL

Atri Mitra
Kolkata, May 19

PROPERTIES LINKED to Trinamool All India General Secretary and MP Abhishek Banerjee are under scrutiny, with the Kolkata Municipal Corporation sending notices to 17 addresses allegedly linked to Banerjee over alleged unauthorised construction.

In the notice issued under Section 400(1) of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act, 1980, the Kolkata civic body has sought documents related to building plan approvals and clarification on whether permission was taken for additional construction. It has also asked for details regarding installations such as lifts and escalators.

The civic body has directed that unauthorised construction must be demolished within seven days, or the owners must show cause why action should not be taken. It has also warned that if no satisfactory response is received, the corporation will carry out demolition and recover the cost from the owners.

The notices cover multiple residential and organisational properties, including those linked to his parents. Key locations include Harish Mukherjee Road, Kalighat Road and Premendra Mitra Sarani.

RAILTEL
(A Government of India Undertaking)
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RailTel/N. Region invites E-tenders from eligible bidders for following work:

1. TENDER No. RCL-OT-NR-OM-25-26-28, date: 18.05.2026

"Teaching, laying, Termination, splicing, HDD/Clamping, testing and commissioning for OEC replacement between Agra -Tundla section of RailTel under Delhi Territory".

Tender Notice & tender documents are available on www.railtelindia.com / <https://tenders.gov.in/>.
Addendum/corrigendum will be uploaded on RailTel website and on IREPS portal.

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- Official Website : www.vnsu.ac.in
- Application Fee : Rs. 1300/- per subject
- Hard Copy Submission : A self-attested printout of the online application and supporting documents must be submitted within 5 days from the last date of online submission.

A detailed advertisement with all instructions is available on the university website www.vnsu.ac.in.

Date : 20/5/2026 - Registrar

ONGC ओएनजीसी

MEHSANA ASSET EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

ONGC, Mehsana Asset, intends to hire services for implementation of Sustainable and Cost-Effective MEOR jobs in huff and puff mode in wells of Mehsana Asset. Accordingly, Mehsana Asset invites Expressions of Interest (EOI) from nationally / internationally reputed, technically competent, and financially sound business partners capable of providing the service along with trained and experienced manpower, to ensure safe, reliable, and efficient MEOR operations in the wells of Mehsana Asset.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their response/proposal to the following email address: ssst_mhn@ongc.co.in.

For further details, please visit <https://tenders.ongc.co.in>

DISTRICT PROJECT OFFICE
SAMAGRA SHIKSHA, SUNDARGARH, PIN-770001

BID IDENTIFICATION NO.1408/SS/SNG, DATED 19th MAY 2026

The District Project Office, Samagra Shiksha, Sundargarh, Government of Odisha invites technical and financial proposals from reputed Agencies/Firms of National and International reputation for the:

- "Selection of Implementing Bidder for Operation and Maintenance of 2 Studios at District Headquarters, Sundargarh and 792 Virtual Class Rooms and 402 Non-Interactive Classrooms in 403 High Schools of Sundargarh District for a period of 3 years" as detailed in the Scope of Work in this Detailed Tender Call Notice (DTCN). The interested and eligible Firms with valid Registration Certificate as a Company, as detailed in DTCN, may apply for the same in OFF-LINE mode. For details visit : www.sundargarh.odisha.gov.in
- Tender (Bid) Cost : ₹ 10,000/-
- EMD : ₹ 30,00,000/-
- Places where operations and maintenance will be carried out : In the High Schools of Sundargarh District, Odisha
- Availability of bid document in the website : 20th MAY 2026
- Last date of receipt of Bid : 9th JUNE 2026, 17.00 HOURS
- Mode of Receipt of Bids : Through Speed Post/Registered Post (India Post) and by other means.
- Date of opening of Technical Bid : 10th JUNE 2026, 10.00 HOURS
- Date of opening of Commercial Bid : Will be intimated later

District Project Co-ordinator
Samagra Shiksha, Sundargarh

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B.Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering (Data Science)	4 Years	24
Dual Degree (B.Tech. in Engineering Physics & Master of Science / M.Tech.)	5 Years	24

*3 seats each reserved for students under Special Scholarship Scheme for J&K and Ladakh and other seats includes all reservation categories.

Admission Mode: JEE (Advanced) 2026

Online Application Opening Date: 26-05-2026, 10:00 Hrs
Closing Date : 10-06-2026, 23:59 Hrs

For application process & detailed information visit : <https://admission.iist.ac.in/>
Contact us for UG admission: ugadmission@iist.ac.in
Ph: 0471-2568478/477/618

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TATA
TATA STEEL LIMITED

Registered Office: Bombay House, 24, Homi Mody Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001, India
Corporate Identification Number: L27100MH1907PLC000260
Tel No: +91 22 6665 8282 E-mail: cosec@tatasteel.com Website: www.tatasteel.com

NOTICE

Transfer of Equity Shares of Tata Steel Limited in favour of the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Authority

This Notice is published pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, as amended, ('Act') read with the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016, as amended, ('Rules'). The Act and the Rules, *inter alia*, contains provision for transfer of unclaimed dividend to IEPF and transfer of shares, both held in physical form as well as in electronic form, in respect of which dividend(s) has not been claimed by the shareholder(s) for 7 (seven) consecutive years or more, to the IEPF Authority, in their dematerialized account maintained with National Securities Depository Limited.

In compliance with the Act read with the Rules, the Company has sent individual communication, in physical mode, to the concerned shareholder(s) at their registered postal address, requesting them to claim their unclaimed dividend(s). This communication is addressed to those shareholders whose past dividend(s) remains unclaimed and whose shares held in the Company are liable to be transferred in favor of the IEPF Authority on the due date i.e. August 22, 2026, as per the process laid down in the Act read with the Rules and applicable notifications issued by MCA from time to time. The eligible shareholder(s) are advised to claim such unclaimed dividend(s) by August 21, 2026, from the Company.

The Company has made available the relevant details of the shareholder(s) concerned whose shares are liable for transfer to IEPF in FY 2026-27, on its website at www.tatasteel.com. Shareholders are requested to refer to <https://www.tatasteel.com/investors/investor-information/unclaimed-dividend/> to verify the details of their unclaimed dividend(s) and their shares.

Shareholders are requested to note that in case the unclaimed dividend(s) are not claimed by August 21, 2026, the unclaimed dividend for FY2018-19 (paid in FY2019-20) will get transferred to IEPF. Further, the equity shares of the Company, in respect of which the dividend(s) remains unclaimed for 7 consecutive years shall be transferred in favour of IEPF Authority without any further notice to the shareholders in the following manner:

In case the equity shares are held:

- In physical form** - new share certificate(s) will be issued and transferred in favour of IEPF Authority on completion of necessary formalities. Hence, the original share certificate(s)/letter(s) of confirmation issued in the name of the shareholder(s) will be deemed cancelled and non-negotiable.
- In dematerialized form** - the Company shall inform the depository by way of corporate action for transfer of equity shares lying in the demat account of the shareholder(s) in favour of the IEPF Authority established by the Central Government.

The concerned shareholders are requested to note that all future benefits arising on such equity shares transferred to IEPF, will also be issued/transferred in favor of the IEPF Authority established by the Central Government.

The shareholder(s) may note that both the unclaimed dividend(s) and/or equity share(s) already transferred in favor of the IEPF Authority can be claimed by the shareholder(s) by visiting the website of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs at www.mca.gov.in and submitting all the requisite documents to the Company.

The shareholders may further note that the details of unclaimed dividend and/or shares of the concerned shareholders uploaded by the Company on its website shall be treated as adequate notice in respect of issue of new share certificate by the Company for the purpose of transfer of shares in favor of the IEPF Authority pursuant to the Act read with the Rules and other applicable notifications issued by MCA from time to time.

Please note that no claim shall lie against the Company in respect of unclaimed dividend(s) and equity shares that will be transferred to the IEPF within statutory timelines and following due process.

For any queries on the above matter, shareholders of the Company are requested to contact either of the following:

Contact details of the Company	Registrar and Transfer Agent (RTA)
Mr. Parvathesam Kanchinadham Company Secretary and Chief Legal Officer (Nodal Officer for IEPF purpose) Bombay House, 24 Homi Mody Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Tel No: +91 22 6665 7279 Email: cosec@tatasteel.com	MUFG Intime India Private Limited (formerly Link Intime India Private Ltd) C-101, 1 st Floor, 247 Park, Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg, Vikhroli (West), Mumbai 400 083. Tel No.: +91 810 811 8484 Email: investor.helpdesk@in.mrms.mufg.com For raising queries, please visit the website: www.in.mrms.mufg.com

Tata Steel Limited
Sd/-
Parvathesam Kanchinadham
Company Secretary and Chief Legal Officer
Membership No. ACS: 15921

TATA STEEL

May 20, 2026
Mumbai



APPROVAL BOOSTS DEFENCE TIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES

US clears Apache, howitzer support services for India

Amrita Nayak Dutta
New Delhi, May 19

THE US has approved the proposed sale of support services and related equipment for Apache helicopters to India at an estimated cost of \$198.2 million, noting that this will improve Delhi's "capability to meet current and future threats, strengthen its homeland defence, and deter regional threats".

In a statement, the US Department of State said it also approved a possible sale of sustainment support for M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzers for an estimated cost of \$230 million. The developments come at a time when the US and India are in the final stages of negotiating a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement, after having established a framework for an interim trade pact.

In November last year, the US approved the sale of Excalibur missile system, and other related equipment to India for over \$90 million. Around the same time, India signed Letters of Offer and

E. EXPLAINED

Rubio visit on May 23

Defence ties between India and the US have not just survived but deepened despite the strain in relations following the Trump administration's imposition of tariffs last year. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will visit India from May 23-26 for a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Quad countries. During his visit, he will travel to New Delhi, Kolkata, Agra and Jaipur. He will hold talks on energy security, trade and defence with senior officials.

Acceptance (LOAs) with the US for sustainment support of the Indian Navy's fleet of MH60R helicopters through Follow on Support and Follow on Supply Support for a period of five years worth Rs 7995 crore.

Additionally, the Indian Defence Acquisition Committee, earlier this year, cleared the acquisition of six P-8I maritime

surveillance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft from the US for the Indian Navy.

According to a statement from the Department of State, India had requested to buy AH-64E Apache sustainment support services; US government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; technical data and publications; personnel training; and other related elements of logistics and programme support. It said the proposed sale will improve "India's capability to meet current and future threats, strengthen its homeland defence, and deter regional threats. India will have no difficulty absorbing these articles and services into its armed forces."

It noted that the principal contractor will be Boeing and Lockheed Martin.

In a separate statement, it said India had requested to buy long-term sustainment support for M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzers, which includes ancillary items; spares; repair and return; training; technical assistance; field service representative; depot capability; and

other related elements of logistics and program support. The principal contractor for this will be BAE Systems.

"This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship and to improve the security of a major defence partner which continues to be an important force for political stability, peace, and economic progress in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia regions," the statement said about both the sales.

"The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region," it said.

In October last year, the two countries signed the 'framework for the US-India major defence partnership', signalling stable ties in the defence sector. The vision for bilateral defence cooperation was encapsulated in the September 2013 Joint US-India Declaration on Defence Cooperation and the 2015 Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship.

'India should have important role in being a great partner (of Chile) — in services, tech'

CHILE'S FOREIGN Minister Francisco Pérez Mackenna recently met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal during his visit months after the newly elected government, led by President Jose Antonio Kast, assumed office this March. In an interview with Shubhajt Roy, he spoke about cooperation on critical minerals, Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement talks, ties with the US and China, defence and strategic cooperation with Delhi, collaboration in Antarctica and the impact of the West Asia war.



FRANCISCO PÉREZ MACKENNA
CHILE'S FOREIGN MINISTER

What was the focus of your visit in Delhi, especially after a change in government to a right-wing government?

We are less than two months into office. India is a first priority for us. The reason we came here is two-fold — is to open markets further, to trade more with India, and also to foster investment in Chile from India, so we can establish Chile as a hub for the rest of the world, particularly in services that require human capital, especially in the digital economy. Chile is probably one of the most open countries in the world to trade. We have more than 60 FTAs with the world.

We want countries to "Choose Chile" as the best place to do business.

We are going to be very relevant for the world in critical minerals and rare earths. We are to have around 30% of the world reserves of lithium and copper... And these are going to be key ingredients for the future of AI revolution for data centres and AI factories, but we need to use that opportunity to create other platforms for growth. We want to trade much more with India. And that implies investments and long-term commitments.

You talked about the critical minerals, and India is especially interested in the lithium and copper reserves that Chile has. What is the status of the

old visa centre building. In addition to the main Indian High Commission in Dhaka, India has four Assistant High Commissions in Bangladesh — Chittagong (Chattogram), Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet. According to *The Daily Star*, Chattogram Metropolitan Police Commissioner Hasan Md Showkat Ali said that embassy officials initially received no response from Dhar's room, prompting them to alert police.

The body was later sent to the Chattogram Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy after an inquest report

Is there a big picture message after you met Jaishankar?

The most important message is we want not only you, but the world to "Choose Chile"... because we're going to be a very reliable supplier of important goods like critical minerals, but also best quality food, fruits, vegetables, fish, pulp, paper. We also want to be a very good host for Indian human capital if you want to consider Chile as a possibility to serve at least the Western world (because of) our time zone.

How is Chile's relationship with the US under President Trump, since your President has a similar worldview?

We want to have a good relationship with everybody, we want that foreign relations to be managed in the best interest of the Chilean people. And so in that regard, sometimes we have to put our political preferences and ideologies aside. The US has always been a traditional, strong partner of Chile... the US is the most important factory of human capital and high tech in the world. So, to a large extent, that means the US is the future, and we can't walk away from our future... China is our most important trade partner. We will continue to trade extensively with China, and India should have a very important role in being a great partner, both for the present in terms of goods and services, but also for the future in terms of tech. The message is we'll always work our foreign relations in the best interest of our people, and that implies a long-term view. FULL INTERVIEW

How do you view India's presence in Latin America?

WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Taking Stock

WITH PRIME Minister Narendra Modi convening a meeting of council of ministers on May 21, every minister and ministry is busy preparing their respective report cards. The Prime Minister is apparently expected to ask some ministers to make a presentation over the functioning and key decisions. Since the review meeting, the first such exercise this year, comes amid speculation of a possible Cabinet reshuffle, officials are under pressure not to miss any initiative taken by their respective ministries. The Prime Minister had earlier sought a report on the reform initiatives taken by each ministry.

Cracks Showing

LEADER OF Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's visit to Lucknow and Raebareilly on Tuesday gave a glimpse of factionalism within the party's UP unit. Former state president Ajay Kumar Lallu, who is now the AICC in charge for Odisha, was denied a pass to enter the airport in Lucknow as Gandhi reached. Lallu was later seen having an animated conversation with Gandhi while he sat in his car. A former MLA, Lallu has struggled to find space in the UP unit but has managed to get a senior position in the AICC after being made in-charge for Odisha in February 2025.

Joint polls will save Rs 7 lakh crore: House panel chief

Gandhinagar: A joint committee of Parliament on 'One Nation, One Election' Bills began its three-day visit to Gujarat on Tuesday to hold discussions with stakeholders and gather views on the issue.

The House panel is headed by BJP MP P P Chaudhary and has been visiting various states for consultation with stakeholders. Around 20 members of the committee are visiting Gujarat.

Chaudhary told reporters if elections are held simultaneously, it would then save Rs 7 lakh crore and the amount could be utilised for infra, welfare of the poor, education and health. The panel met top Gujarat government officials, led by Chief Secretary MK Das. ENS

Focus on defence ties, maritime security: Rajnath meets Vietnamese counterpart

Amrita Nayak Dutta
New Delhi, May 19

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh on Tuesday met his Vietnamese counterpart, General Phan Văn Giang, in Hanoi, where they reviewed the growing partnership between the two countries and discussed ways to deepen cooperation in maritime security, defence industry, training and regional stability.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Defence, the two sides exchanged views on regional and global security developments of mutual interest, and emphasised the importance of maintaining peace, stability, security, safety and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region.

They also discussed avenues to expand cooperation in areas including military training, defence industry collaboration, maritime security, capacity building, United Nations peacekeeping, cyber security and high-level exchanges, the statement read, adding that they have agreed to enhance cooperation between the defence forces through regular dialogues, joint exercises and exchange programmes.

The bilateral defence engagements have expanded over the years, and include wide-ranging contacts between the two countries, such as defence policy dialogues, military-to-military exchanges, high-level visits, capacity-building and training programmes, cooper-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh receives a ceremonial Guard of Honour at the headquarters of the Ministry of National Defence, in Hanoi on Tuesday. Minister of National Defence of Vietnam, Senior Lieutenant General Phan Văn Giang, is also present. ANI

ation in UN peacekeeping, ship visits and bilateral exercises.

In June 2022, when Singh last visited Hanoi, both countries signed the 'Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership Towards 2030', as well as inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on mutual logistics support to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation.

India had handed over 12 high-speed guard boats to Vietnam at the time, and also announced gifting two simulators

and a monetary grant towards setting up a Language and IT laboratory at the Air Force Officers' Training School in Vietnam's Nha Trang.

In July 2023, India gifted the INS Kirpan to Vietnam, complete with its weapon complement, after decommissioning it following 32 years of service. This marked the first instance where India gifted an indigenously built missile corvette to Vietnam.

The development was significant amid a growing Chi-

nese influence in the South China Sea, which had led to territorial disputes with Vietnam. Vietnam, among others, have been looking at buying BrahMos supersonic missiles from India.

According to the statement, Singh reaffirmed the commitment to strengthening India's enhanced comprehensive strategic partnership with Vietnam, while reiterating India's resolve to support the country's defence modernisation and capacity enhancement initiatives.

Staffer found dead in mission office in Chittagong

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 19

AN OFFICIAL of the Indian High Commission in Chittagong was found dead inside the mission premises on Tuesday morning. The official has been identified as Naren Dhar, 38, who was serving as an assistant protocol officer at the Indian mission, according to reports in the Bangladesh media.

Quoting police officials, *bnews24.com* reported that the body was found in front of a washroom of a data entry room on the second floor of the

old visa centre building.

In addition to the main Indian High Commission in Dhaka, India has four Assistant High Commissions in Bangladesh — Chittagong (Chattogram), Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet. According to *The Daily Star*, Chattogram Metropolitan Police Commissioner Hasan Md Showkat Ali said that embassy officials initially received no response from Dhar's room, prompting them to alert police.

The body was later sent to the Chattogram Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy after an inquest report

was prepared. The inquest found no apparent abnormalities, but the exact cause of death will be known after autopsy, Ali said.

Meanwhile, CMP Deputy Commissioner (North Zone) Amirul Islam told *The Daily Star* that an unnatural death case would be filed in connection with the incident, and the body would be handed over to officials of the Assistant High Commission of India following the autopsy. Sources said the High Commission of India in Bangladesh is in touch with the family of the protocol officer.

Regional players shrink in BJP wave, opening for Cong: What future holds for INDIA bloc



THE NEERJA CHOWDHURY COLUMN
WEEKLY INSIGHT INTO WHAT'S CHANGING IN NATIONAL POLITICS — AND WHY

WITH THE Assembly polls done and dusted, the focus has now shifted to the state of the Opposition INDIA alliance. Its key regional constituents, such as the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the DMK, took a severe beating in the polls, even as the BJP continued its winning spree, two years after it faced a setback in the Lok Sabha elections.

The INDIA bloc could not build on the advantage it secured in the 2024 parliamentary battle, and lost momentum after suffering a string of defeats that followed in Haryana, Maharashtra and Delhi.

There are senior INDIA leaders who believe that had Nitish Kumar been made the national convener of the bloc in 2023, they might have posed a

formidable challenge to the BJP in 2024. For Bihar, which gave 30 Lok Sabha seats to the NDA, could have swerved the INDIA way, with the possibility of a Bihar's PM face on the horizon and the Nitish-Lalu Prasad tie-up undergirding the alliance.

These are ifs and buts of history, which are of academic value now. Consider the map of India: Except the Northern tip (Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab) and the Southern states (barring the NDA-routed Andhra Pradesh), it's saffron spread all the way.

The space occupied by the regional forces is shrinking. Since many of these outfits had grown by making inroads into the Congress belts, they have feared all along that giving primacy to the grand old party could help it revive at their expense. In reality, it is the BJP which is devouring their space now.

Regional parties in disarray

The BJP has pulled off the unthinkable in West Bengal by defeating the Mamata Banerjee-

led TMC. While Arvind Kejriwal has been on the backfoot for some time, his AAP exited the INDIA alliance last year.

The NCP, founded by Sharad Pawar, is considerably weakened after its split in 2023, with the possibility of a merger of its two factions getting derailed by the death of Ajit Pawar in an air crash in January 2026. Similarly, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena is a shadow of its old self after its split in 2022.

The RJD was routed in the 2025 Bihar elections. And following its loss in Kerala, the CPI(M)-led Left parties are, for the first time after 50 years, not in power in any state of the country.

Even the non-INDIA regional parties do not appear to be in a great shape — the BRS is out of power in Telangana, the BJD is in Opposition in Odisha with Naveen Patnaik grappling with health issues. The Janata Dal (Secular) is playing second fiddle to the BJP in the Opposition ranks in Karnataka. Even the JD(U), a key NDA ally, appears more vulnerable in the wake of Nitish Kumar's shift

from the CM's office in Patna to the Rajya Sabha.

Several of the INDIA allies could become more amenable to sinking their differences and accepting the Congress's leadership in a "do-or-die" response. Or they could go the other way under pressure from the BJP.

Soon after her defeat, a beleaguered Mamata expressed her resolve to work for INDIA's unity, shedding her earlier "blow hot and cold" stance towards it.

Rise of Vijay, Satheesan

With the Congress joining hands with Vijay to help him form the government in Tamil Nadu, its erstwhile ally DMK may pull out of the bloc. The M K Stalin-led DMK has accused the Congress of "backstabbing" it.

CM Vijay's TVK, which has highlighted its commitment to secularism and social justice, could join the INDIA grouping. But this may not be a straightforward affair, given that a rebel AIADMK faction has chosen to



Chief Minister VD Satheesan and ex-CM Pinarayi Vijayan in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. PTI

rally behind the Vijay government in an apparent bid to offset the Congress's influence over it. The rebel AIADMK leaders are said to be close to the BJP, which would not want the Congress to become a player in the Tamil Nadu gov-

ernment or consolidate its hold in the state.

Significantly, Vijay skipped the swearing-in ceremony of new Congress CM in Kerala, VD Satheesan, despite being invited to the function. The Tamil filmstar-turned-politician is known to have a large fan base in Kerala, and his presence at this event would have reinforced his partnership with the Congress and signalled a larger southern solidarity.

Congress play

While the stage was set in 2023-24 for the INDIA bloc to seize on, 2027-28 may well mark the period for the Congress to strike. After its initial dithering over the selection of its CM face in Kerala, the party displayed its old touch once the decision was made — with Satheesan finalising the entire Cabinet of 21 to be sworn in at one go, reaching out to both "KC" (KC Venugopal) and "RC" (Ramesh Chennithala), who were also contenders in the CM race. He also got the outgoing CM Pinarayi Vijayan and state BJP chief Rajeev Chandrasekhar at his swearing-

in, striking inclusive notes.

Most of the electoral battles during 2027-28 would not be so much about the regional INDIA partners as the Congress, barring UP where it would be an alliance between Akhilesh Yadav's SP and the Congress. The Opposition alliance would not be a factor in Punjab, Uttarakhand or Himachal Pradesh.

In Punjab, the Congress as the principal Opposition will square off against the ruling AAP, which seems to be facing "anti-incumbency". But the BJP is now also eyeing the border state, especially after the merger of the 7 Rajya Sabha AAP MPs with the party. The BJP may want to do an Eknath Shinde on the AAP. It has been holding back-channel negotiations with its former ally Shromani Akali Dal (SAD) too. It is also planning a statewide yatra to highlight the menace of drugs — an issue that has resonance cutting across castes and communities.

Goa and Gujarat, both ruled by the BJP, are also due for polls in 2027. By going it alone there, the AAP may dent the Con-

gress's prospects by cutting into the anti-incumbency votes.

Forget 2029 for the moment. The INDIA bloc has nothing to lose by naming a convener, having a secretariat, and holding meetings regularly. Despite having weakened, it can still make a difference by fashioning a new narrative.

These are uncertain times, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself appealing to people to tighten belts, adopt austerity measures, and revert to Covid-time habits like work from home, flagging the conflict in West Asia among the biggest crises of this decade.

Experts predict a rise in prices could set off economic distress in the country. It goes without saying that such hardships may have a bearing on elections — depending on how the parties navigate the crisis and shape public discourse in the coming months.

(Neerja Chowdhury, Contributing Editor, *The Indian Express*, has covered the last 11 Lok Sabha elections. She is the author of 'How Prime Ministers Decide'.)

NEET PAPER LEAK PROBE WIDENS



The RCC coaching centre in Latur where a CBI team conducted searches on Tuesday. WALLABH OZARKAR

CBI questions doc, RCC founder's son; searches underway for key middleman

Wallabh Ozarkar
Latur, May 19

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday questioned a paediatrician in Latur, grilled the son of arrested RCC Classes founder Shivraj Motegaonkar in Pune, and intensified its search for a suspected middleman linked to the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case.

A CBI team questioned a doctor and conducted searches at RCC Classes, while examining alleged financial transactions, phone records and links between suspected paper buyers and persons arrested in the case.

Sources said Motegaonkar's son — who also appeared for the NEET examination — was questioned at the CBI office in Pune as investigators scrutinised digital records, financial transactions and communication details linked to the family.

The questioning came a day after the CBI arrested RCC Classes owner Shivraj Raghunath Motegaonkar, alleging that he was part of an organised network involved in leaking and circulating NEET-UG 2026 question papers before the examination.

According to the CBI's grounds of arrest, Motegaonkar allegedly conspired with persons associated with the National Testing Agency (NTA), re-

ceived leaked question papers and answer keys ahead of the examination, and supplied handwritten copies of the leaked material to several persons.

The agency further alleged that leaked NEET-UG 2026 questions were recovered from Motegaonkar's mobile phone during searches at his Latur residence, and that he later destroyed the leaked papers after the examination.

Investigators are also examining 42 chemistry questions circulated by RCC Classes as "guess questions" before the examination, after similarities were allegedly found between those questions and portions of the leaked paper.

The probe is now centred on a man identified as "Alok", whose name surfaced during the questioning of suspected paper buyers in Maharashtra.

Sources familiar with the investigation said the CBI suspects "Alok" may have circulated leaked NEET-UG 2026 papers to nearly 1,000 students, either directly or through middlemen.

According to investigators, several students and parents were allegedly called to Pune before the examination and kept at secret locations, where leaked questions and answers were allegedly provided to them. Students were allegedly asked to memorise the material before appearing for NEET.

Punjab singer's body found in canal; police say friend from Canada killed her, flew back

Divya Goyal Gopal
Ludhiana, May 19

THE DECOMPOSED body of a 29-year-old Punjabi singer was recovered from a canal in Ludhiana, six days after she went missing, police on Tuesday said. She was allegedly abducted and murdered by her Canada-based friend and his associates, police added. Yashinder Kaur, aka Inder, a resident of Jamalpur in Ludhiana, went missing on May 13 after she left in her car to buy groceries.

Police have arrested two suspects while the key accused managed to flee to Canada, from where he had come down to allegedly orchestrate the crime.

Assistant Commissioner of Police (Ludhiana Industrial Area-A) Inderjit Singh Boparai identified the key accused as Sukhwinder Singh, alias Sukha, a native of Mahlan Khurd village in Moga district but currently living in Canada. The arrested duo include Sukhwinder's father Pritam Singh and an accomplice, identified as Karamjit Singh of Moga's Bhaloor village.

Sukhwinder allegedly abducted Yashinder at gunpoint on May 13 and then killed her. Sukhwinder and Karamjit then allegedly dumped her body in the Neelon canal.

"Sukhwinder flew down to Kathmandu, Nepal, on April 30 and then further travelled to India. After executing the crime, he fled back to Canada," ACP Boparai told *The Indian Express*.

Inspector Dalvir Singh, Station House Officer, Jamalpur police station, said Sukhwinder's air ticket from Canada to Kathmandu (Nepal) was booked for April 29. "After reaching India on May 2, he executed the murder on May 13 before again fleeing to Kathmandu the same night," said the SHO, adding that the woman's Ford Figo car, which she was driving when she was allegedly abducted, has also been recovered from the canal.



Punjabi singer Yashinder Kaur

According to the police, Yashinder and Sukhwinder, whose wife is in Canada, connected on Instagram around six years ago when the singer was actively pursuing projects in the Punjabi music industry. The two eventually entered into a relationship.

However, Yashinder later learned that Sukhwinder was already married and had two children. She wanted to end the relationship but Sukhwinder wanted to marry her. Refusing to accept the breakup, Sukhwinder allegedly plotted her murder from Canada.

Yashinder was the eldest of the three siblings. Her brothers, Jotinder Singh and Gurinderpal Singh, run an iron business in Ludhiana while their parents live abroad.

Jotinder filed an abduction complaint on May 14 at the Jamalpur police station. In his statement to the police, Jotinder said his sister had left the house in her car around 8.30 pm on May 13 to buy groceries but did not return. He named Sukhwinder in the initial complaint, stating that the accused had previously threatened his sister and had likely abducted her due to her refusal to marry him.

Yashinder had several songs to her credit including 'Aakad', 'Jija', 'Sohna Lagda', 'Rich Standard', 'Kadon Tun Milengi' and 'Sunroof'. She sang 'Sone Di Wang' with Gippy Grewal and had around 1.24 lakh followers on her Instagram account.

{ BC KHANDURI • 1934-2026 }

Army veteran, Uttarakhand ex-CM dies

Aiswarya Raj
Dehradun, May 19

FORMER UTTARAKHAND CM and Union minister Major General (retired) Bhuwan Chandra Khanduri died in Dehradun on Tuesday after a prolonged illness. He was 91 and had been undergoing treatment at a private hospital.

Born on October 1, 1934, in Dehradun, Khanduri served in the Army for more than three decades and was a recipient of the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM).

The nephew of former UP CM and Lok Dal leader Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna, Khanduri entered politics in 1991 as a BJP candidate, when he won from the Garhwal Lok Sabha. He went on to win the seat four more times — in 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2014. However, he lost the seat to former Congress leader and current BJP minister Satpal Maharaj in 1996 and 2009.

Between September 2014 and August 2018, Khanduri chaired the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence and was removed from the post after committee reports during his tenure criticised the country's defence preparedness.

Khanduri held a BSc degree and a BE in Civil Engineering. He studied at Allahabad University (1951-1953), the College of Military Engineering, Pune (1957-1959), the Institute of Engineers in New Delhi, the Institute of Defence Management in Secunderabad (1973-1974), and the Indian Institute of Public Administration in New Delhi (1976).

The retired Major General first served as Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Road Transport and Highways in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government before being elevated to the rank of a Cabinet minister. He is credited with advancing the Golden Quadrilateral project and the National Highways Development Programme.

One of the BJP's earliest and tallest leaders from the Garhwal region, Khanduri drew influence from his defence background in a state with a strong military tradition and also his Brahmin identity.

In 2007, after the BJP returned to power in Uttarakhand's second Assembly elections, Khanduri resigned as MP to become Chief Minister. His tenure was marked by repeated internal conflicts, particularly with senior BJP leader Bhagat Singh Koshiyari. Within the first



Major General (retired) Bhuwan Chandra Khanduri died after a prolonged illness. PTIFILE

10 months of his tenure, he faced threats of removal on three occasions, though the party leadership continued to back him.

Nearly two years later, after a series of electoral setbacks culminating in the BJP losing all five Lok Sabha seats in Uttarakhand in 2009, Khanduri was replaced by Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank". Nishank, then Health Minister in Khanduri's Cabinet and seen to be his close confidant, was seen as instrumental in preventing Khanduri's earlier ouster.

Ahead of the 2012 Assembly elections, the BJP reinstated Khanduri amid the slogan "Khanduri hai zaruri". Ni-

shank's government had come under allegations of corruption, prompting the party to bring Khanduri back before the polls. Around the same time, senior BJP leader and retired Lt General T P S Rawat floated the Uttarakhand Raksha Morcha, citing corruption and threatening to dent the BJP's ex-servicemen support base.

Although Rawat later returned to the party, Khanduri himself lost the Kotdwar seat to Congress leader Surendra Singh Negi. The BJP won 31 seats against the Congress's 32, allowing the latter to form the government with support from the BSP and Independents.

During his tenure as CM, Khanduri was seen as relying heavily on his secretary Prabhakar Singh Sarangi, who was accused by opponents of exercising undue influence over policy decisions. Opposition leaders frequently alleged that Khanduri had become inaccessible to the public. Sarangi's tenure drew sustained criticism, with then Leader of Opposition Harak Rawat once staging a protest using the musical instrument sarangi to mock his influence. After Nishank took over as CM, Sarangi was sent back to his parent UP cadre within 48 hours.

TMC MP says threat to life after video of bounty 'of Rs 1 cr to behead her'

Express News Service
Lucknow, May 19

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS (TMC) MP Saayoni Ghosh on Tuesday alleged an "open death threat" was given to her after a purported video showed a BJP leader from Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district allegedly announcing a reward of Rs 1 crore for her "beheading".

In a post on X, Ghosh said she was "taken aback" by the public announcement, which she claimed was made by a Nagar Palika chairman and BJP leader from Sikandrabad in Bulandshahr.

"I am taken aback to see a public announcement offering a 1 crore reward for my beheading," the TMC leader wrote, adding the threat was being widely circulated across social media platforms and reported in sections of the mainstream media.

Tagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other senior BJP leaders in her post, Ghosh questioned whether "declaring a bounty to behead a woman, a sitting Member of Parliament" reflected the BJP's slogan of "Nari Shakti Vandan".

The MP also targeted the BJP leadership in West Bengal, saying while women's safety and representation were projected as major election issues, an elected woman representative was now facing an "open death threat" from a member of the ruling party.

Also tagging West Bengal Police, Kolkata Police, Bulandshahr Police and UP Police, Ghosh demanded that immediate "legal and political action" be taken against the BJP leader allegedly seen in the purported video. "I demand immediate legal and political action against the BJP member who is inciting my murder in broad daylight," she said.

Meanwhile, the video which has been widely circulated purportedly showed BJP leader Pradeep Dixit announcing a Rs 1 crore reward.

While Dixit could not be reached for a comment, BJP leaders later distanced themselves from his alleged remark.

Meanwhile, Ghosh also said she would continue to exercise her democratic right to voice dissent "both inside and outside Parliament" and would not be "bullied into silence".



हरियाणा सरकार

“ राष्ट्रीय मधुमक्खी पालन और हनी मिशन जैसे अभियानों से भारत आज बड़ा शहद उत्पादक बन रहा है। शहद का निर्यात भी बढ़ा है और हमारे शहद की मिठास दुनिया भर में पहुँच रही है। ”
- नरेन्द्र मोदी

विश्व

मधुमक्खी दिवस

20 मई, 2026





मुख्य अतिथि

श्री नायब सिंह सैनी

मुख्यमंत्री, हरियाणा

विशिष्ट अतिथि

श्री श्याम सिंह राणा

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री, हरियाणा

कार्यक्रम के मुख्य आकर्षण

- मधुमक्खी पालकों द्वारा अपने उत्पादों का प्रदर्शन
- सेमिनार ● प्रदर्शनी
- मल्टीप्लोरल शहद बिक्री
- मधुमक्खी पालकों को भावान्तर भरपाई योजना के तहत प्रोत्साहन राशि का वितरण
- श्रेष्ठ मधुमक्खी पालकों को पुरस्कार
- मधुमक्खी पालकों एवं मधुमक्खी विशेषज्ञों से सीधा संवाद

20 मई, 2026 | प्रातः 9:00 बजे

कन्वेंशन सेंटर, रेड विराप, सैक्टर-1, पंचकूला



कार्यक्रम से जुड़ने के लिए क्यू आर कोड स्कैन करें

अधिक जानकारी के लिए

टोल फ्री नं. 1800 180 2021 पर संपर्क करें

अथवा

क्यू आर कोड स्कैन करें





उद्यान विभाग, हरियाणा

वेबसाइट :- www.hortharyana.gov.in ई-मेल :- horticulture@hry.nic.in



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UTTAR PRADESH

Emerging Hub of Innovation and Higher Learning



Under the visionary and decisive leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh is witnessing a historic transformation in its academic and professional landscape. Through the "One Division - One University" vision, 12 new universities have been established, empowering millions of youth with quality education and the dignity of skill development. From achieving unprecedented NAAC A++ ratings for state universities to modernizing ITIs through global partnerships, CM Yogi's regime has turned Uttar Pradesh into a beacon of progress where traditional roots meet a digital future, ensuring a self-reliant and prosperous generation.

Higher Education: Expanding Horizons

Universal Access
Realized the One Division, One University vision to ensure widespread access to higher learning.

Institutional Growth
Currently operates 38 State Universities, 52 Private Universities, and 217 Government Colleges, including 71 newly established ones.

Specialized Learning
Established dedicated institutions like Major Dhyanchand Sports University (Meerut), Dr. Rajendra Prasad Law University (Prayagraj), and Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University (Lucknow).

Global Collaborations
Signed 1,381 MoUs, including strategic partnerships with global giants like Monash University and Western Sydney University (Australia).

Scholarship Support
Proposed the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Chevening Scholarship to send talented students to the UK for Master's degrees.

Quality Distinction & Research

- **NAAC Milestones:** From zero NAAC A++ rated state universities in 2017, the count has risen to 9 universities with A++ ratings.
- **International Rankings:** 7 state universities have successfully entered the QS Asia Rankings.
- **Cultural Research:** Proposals to establish research chairs named after great historical figures in universities with over 7,500 students and 75 years of history.

Global Excellence

Uttar Pradesh is home to premier technical universities that are consistently reaching international rankings:

- **Madan Mohan Malviya University of Technology (MMMUT), Gorakhpur:**
 - Entered the Top 100 institutions in the NIRF rankings for the first time in 2025.
 - Initiated work on a **Green Hydrogen Center of Excellence**.
 - Supports 24 active start-ups, with 17 registered under 'Start-in-UP'.



- **Harcourt Butler Technical University (HBTU), Kanpur:**
 - Holds a NAAC 'A' Grade and is ranked 19th in the India Today (MDRA) rankings.
 - Partnered with IIT Kanpur for a Green Hydrogen Center of Excellence with a ₹50 crore grant.
 - Introduced new M.Tech and M.Sc. programs, with B.Tech courses in AI/ML set to begin in 2026-27.
- **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU), Lucknow:**
 - Achieved a NAAC 'A+' Grade after re-evaluation.
 - Fully digitalized its examination and evaluation systems to align with NEP-2020.

Skill Development & Employment

- **Empowering Youth:** Trained over 14 lakh youth and provided employment to more than 6 lakh individuals since 2017-18.
- **Rozgar Mela:** Organized 186 major job fairs resulting in the placement of 4.32 lakh youth.
- **Unified Initiatives:** Launched Kaushal Satrang Yojna, a multi-pronged approach involving CM Yuva Hub and Apprenticeship Promotion schemes.
- **Social Inclusion:** Implemented 10% EWS reservation and increased the reservation for persons with disabilities from 3% to 5% in polytechnic institutions.

Digital Infrastructure

- **U-Rise Portal:** A unified platform providing video lectures, e-content, digital lockers, and online examination results for all technical students.
- **SIRF & SQLF:** The state has implemented the State Institutional Ranking Framework (SIRF) and the State Quality Framework (SQLF) to ensure continuous quality improvement across all higher and technical institutions.
- **Smart Facilities:** Over 251 smart classes have been established in polytechnics, with 143 more planned for the 2025-26 session.

Future-Ready Curriculum

The state is aggressively introducing New Age courses to ensure the youth are prepared for the 1-trillion dollar economy goal:

- **Cutting-edge Subjects:** Curricula now include Generative AI, Robotics, 5G/6G technology, Drone Technology, Data Science, and Quantum Mechanics.
- **Science & Innovation:** A master plan is underway to establish and renew Science Cities, Science Parks, and Planetariums across the state.
- **International Exposure:** Under Project Praveen, over 26,000 students from 315 government schools have completed specialized skill training.

Technical Transformation

- **Smart Infrastructure:** Established 205 smart classes in 116 colleges.
- **NEP-2020 Integration:** Introduced a semester system, timely academic calendars, and 6 mandatory skill courses within degree curricula.
- **Modern ITI Upgrades:** Partnered with Tata Technologies Ltd. to upgrade 150 ITIs in Phase 1 with an investment of ₹4,886 crore to align with Industry 4.0.

- **Future Tech:** Introduced advanced courses in AI/ML, Robotics, 5G/6G, Data Science, and Drone Technology.

- **Modernizing Industrial Training (ITIs):** The state is revolutionizing the skill sector by upgrading traditional ITIs into high-tech hubs.



Tablet & smart phone distribution



Skill Development Training session in ITI



Appointment Letters distribution to the newly selected government employees.

Vikas ki Gati Apaar-Double Engine Sarkar

KMML The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd
 (A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking) Sankaramangalam, Kollam 691583
 Phone: 0476-2651215 to 217 e-mail: md@kmml.com

TENDER NOTICE

For more details please visit E-Tendering Portal, <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in> or www.kmml.com

No.	Tender ID	Item
1.	2026_KMML_851022_1	Supply of Zirconium Ortho Sulphate-15 MT
2.	2026_KMML_851365_1	Supply of 1 MT Polypropylene Jumbo Bags
3.	2026_KMML_851713_1	Supply of spare parts for N301 acid fume scrubber

Chavara 19.05.2026 Sd/-Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd.

UJVN LIMITED
 H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006
 Telephone: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508
 CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvn.com

Letter No. 427 Short Term e-Tender Notice Date: 19/05/2026

Office of the Executive Engineer, PCM(GV), Mayapur, Haridwar invites Online tender from interested bidders. Brief summary of tender is given below:-

1. Tender Notice Reference:
 NIT No.- 03/2026-27/EE/PCM(GV)/Mayapur:- Special Repair of Ghasiram Causeway & M&R Work of Road from Chilla Power House to Bhimgoda Barrage.

2. Estimated Value of Tender:- Rs. 27,77,427.83 only, excluding GST.

3. Date of availability of bid document on website:- 19.05.2026 from 11:00 Hrs.

4. Last Date for Submission of Tender:- 26.05.2026 upto 13:00 Hrs.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>

Executive Engineer, PCM (GV),
 "AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
RESEARCH DESIGNS AND STANDARDS ORGANISATION (RDSO)
MANAK NAGAR, LUCKNOW

NOTICE FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Ministry of Railways, Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), Lucknow, India is interested in Development of Technical Specification for Virtual Reality (VR) based Simulator for Three Phase Electric Locomotives along with details etc. appearing on RDSO website. Firms interested in developing and supply of said items are requested to see the details on RDSO website www.rdsso.indianrailways.gov.in at HOME PAGE under Vendor Interface ->Expression of Interest (EOI).

PED/Traction
RDSO, Lucknow-226011

RO No. 06/2026-27/Electrical/EOI/02

NORTHERN RAILWAY
INVITATION OF TENDERS
THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

Tender Notice No. 13/2026-2027 Date : 19.05.2026

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. Tender N. No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01/07255039A	RETRO-FITMENT OF SUPPLY, INSTALLATION & COMMISSIONING OF AUTOMATIC SWING	14 NOS	09.06.26
02/08261524	RELAY, AC IMMUNISED, PLUG	7442 NOS	12.06.26
03/14260907	NATURAL & ARTIFICIAL FIBRE	4243 NOS	15.06.26
04/08261504	RELAY, NON AC IMMUNE, PLUG	5103 NOS	15.06.26
05/08261503	RELAY, NON AC IMMUNE, PLUG	6452 NOS	15.06.26
06/08265210	24 FIBRE ARMoured OPTICAL FIBRE CABLE	828.4 KM	16.06.26
07/07260113	DOUBLE ROW SELF ALIGNING SPHERICAL ROLLER	3813 NOS	17.06.26
08/04250026	OIL SERVO PRESS 150 RR	59640 LTR	18.06.26

NOTE -1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details.
2. No Manual offer will be entertained.

1670/26 **SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU KRISHI VISHWA VIDYALAYA JABALPUR-482004 (M.P.)
 email: registrarjnkvv@gmail.com, (Phone (O) 0761-2681778)

No.Acd/II/A-11(B)/2026-27/871 Dated: 18 May, 2026

FIRST ADMISSION NOTICE

Applications on plain paper are invited from Non Resident India NRI/ NRI Sponsored candidates for admission to B.Sc.(Hons) Agriculture/ Horticulture/ Forestry and B.Tech. (Agricultural Engineering) degree programs for the session 2026-2027 under NRI / NRI SPONSORED quota. Intending NRI / NRI SPONSORED candidates may apply along with NRI Certificate (Format 10-A) and NRI Sponsored Certificate (Format 10-B) and relevant documents in original with copies (2 sets) such as Marks-sheet, NRI/ NRI Sponsored residential proof, NRI/ NRI Sponsored Passport and Bank Account, NRI Sponsorship Letter up to 17th June, 2026 (5.00 pm) details are available at website www.jnkvv.org

Sd/-
REGISTRAR

IPRO/Reg./NRI/2026/69

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

GORKHA RIFLES

NK Harka Bir Limbu of 2/11 Gorkha Rifles (Shingo) Made the supreme sacrifice in Mizo Hills on 20 May 1966.

Colonel 11 GR & Sikkim Scouts and All Ranks

BORDER SECURITY FORCE

Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawans on their Balidan Diwas.

SUB INSPECTOR SUKHDEV SINGH 12.02.1965 - 20.05.2024	CONSTABLE RANA MANDAL 12.03.1991 - 20.05.2020	CONSTABLE JIAUL HAQUE 05.02.1986 - 20.05.2020

INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE (ITBP)

ITBP salutes its braveheart Constable Pradeep Kumar of 3rd Battalion, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty on this day in Arunachal Pradesh in 2005.

VIII. Paintua Distt. - Auraiya (Uttar Pradesh)

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE

Veer Balidani Naik Rashul Safi 83 Bn 07-07-1955 To 20-05-1995	Veer Balidani Constable Surinder kujur 83 Bn 05-04-1969 To 20-05-1995

DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Naik Rashul Safi and Constable Surinder Kujur of 83 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush by insurgents on their ROP on Imphal Airport Road, Manipur on 20 May 1995. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.

RAJASTHAN STATE GANGANAGAR SUGAR MILLS LIMITED
 (Centre of Excellence for Revenue Research & Analysis) गंगा नगर, गंगानगर, राजस्थान, 302004
 Tel: 0141-2740841, Fax: 0141-2740676, Email-ID : dgmpurchase.rsgm@rajasthan.gov.in

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING BID

Bids for Loading-Unloading are invited from interested bidders up to 6.00 p.m. of 26.05.2026. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>) of the state; <http://excise.rajasthan.gov.in/>, departmental website.

UBN: GSM26275LRC00017
 Raj.Samwad/C/26/3084 Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

JAIPUR VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED
 Office : Vidhut Bhawan, Janpath, Jyoti Nagar, Jaipur 302005
 Website : www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jvnl OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MM-I)
 MM Building, Old Power House Premises, Near Ram Mandir, Banipur, Jaipur-302006
 Tel. 0141-2208098, E-Mail id: senmm@jvnl.com

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING BID

e-tenders are invited for purchase of LT XLPE Insulated Aerial bunched cable with bare messenger wire (1Cx25+25 Sq. mm.) (TN-5082) (UBN-VVN2627GLOB00096). All the details regarding tenders are available at www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in/jvnl and www.rajasthan.gov.in.

Raj.Samwad/C/26/3081 PR-3157 (2026) SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MM-I)
 For Electricity Complaints Toll Free No. 1800 180 6507

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform and seek objections, if any from general public that our client intends to enter into a transaction with (i) Mr. Vipin Kumar Tyagi s/o Ishwar Chand Tyagi resident of R-5/116, Sec 5 Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad-201002, (ii) Green Space Warehousing LLP, a limited liability partnership incorporated under the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008, having its registered office at FF-17, Konark Building RDC, Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India, 201002 and (iii) Arjun Tyagi s/o Vipin Kumar Tyagi resident of R-5/116, Sec 5 Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad-201002, to take on leasehold basis the leased property being all that (i) Warehouse/PEB Shed on the Ground Floor admeasuring 2,85,000 sq.ft (Built up area) and the First Floor admeasuring 5,000 sq.ft (Built up area) alongwith (ii) piece and parcel of land more fully and specifically described in the schedule hereunder ("Schedule Property") along with (iii) right to exclusively use the (a) Exclusive loading unloading area, (b) the right to exclusively use 72 (Seventy Two) docks out of which 44(Forty Four) are normal docks and 28 (Twenty Eight) are with dock levelers., (c) Exclusive Terrace Area, (d) Exclusive entry/exit point, (e) Driver's toilet, (f) Guard Room, (g) Hoarding and Glow Sign Areas (h) Exclusive space for DG set and other Exclusive areas, Amenities and Facilities and (g) Access Road situated on the Schedule Property.

If any person(s) or any legal entity(ies) including any Government/Public Department, Bank or Financial Institution, etc. is having or claiming to have any form of share, right, title, claim, benefit, demand or interest in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, of any nature whatsoever and/or any claim by way of, under, or in the nature of any agreement, sale, transfer, exchange, assignment, family arrangement, settlement, Will, release, relinquishment, decree or order of any Court of Law, partnership, acquisition by the government or any entity, prohibition or any impediment, encumbrance, mortgage, lease, sub-lease, exchange, lien, charge, outgoing, license, gift, inheritance, undivided share, trust, possession, development rights, right of way, easement, trust, bequest, lease, tenancy, sub-tenancy, leave and license, s. pendens, maintenance, easement, options, reservation, covenant or condition, occupation, right of first refusal or pre-emption or encumbrance of whatsoever nature or otherwise howsoever, or under any agreement, deed, document, or power of attorney or any object(s) of any manner whatsoever is hereby required to inform the same in writing with notarized/certified true copies of documentary proof in support thereof, to the undersigned at their under mentioned address within 10 (Ten) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that the title of the Scheduled Property is clear, valid and marketable and no one has any rights/ title/ interest/ claim/ demand whatsoever on the Schedule Property. Any claims without supporting documents will not be entertained.

Please mark your envelope with the superscription [CN-PKW].

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of land bearing following Khasha Nos. in aggregate admeasuring 47138.94 square meters, being the portion of the larger land admeasuring 53715.5 square meters situated at Chijarsi Kuleech Nagar, Dhaulana, Hapur Plikhua, Uttar Pradesh 245304.

Khasha No.	Area in sq. m.
526	10085
527	8677
532/697	510
532	8482
552	18904.94
531	480
Plot	47138.94

Schedule Property is abutted and bounded as:
 On or towards North : by 60 meters wide Green Belt Area; /Approach Road 24 m
 On or towards South : by Nail/Chak Road
 On or towards West : by Plot of Mr. Sarandeep Sehgal.
 On or towards East : by Plot of Diya Steels;

Dated: May 20, 2026
 LEXNEGOTIUM Advocates
 Attn: Vikas Pant, Principal Partner
 +91 9899115125
vikas.pant@lexnegotium.com
 Delhi- Khasha No. 56/6/1, Near Kurejra Farms, Jonapur, New Delhi-110047
 Gurgaon-3D, Row House, Surya Vihar Apartment Near Kapashera Border Dundaheera, Gurgaon-122016

झारखण्ड सरकार, खान एवं भूतत्व विभाग
खान निदेशालय

प्रेस विज्ञापित
झारखण्ड राज्य में लघु खनिज के खनन योजना/खनन की स्वीकृति तैयार करने हेतु मान्यता प्राप्त अर्हक व्यक्ति (Recognised Qualified Person - RQP) के निबंधन हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रण

झारखण्ड लघु खनिज समनुदान नियमावली, 2004 (यथा संशोधित) के प्राक्धानों के अलागे में राज्य में लघु खनिजों हेतु Mining Plan, Mining Scheme, Progressive Mine Closure Plan एवं Final Mine Closure Plan तैयार करने के उद्देश्य से मान्यता प्राप्त अर्हक व्यक्ति (Recognised Qualified Person - RQP) के रूप में निबंधन हेतु योग्य व्यक्तियों से आवेदन आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं।

1- पात्रता:-
 आवेदक के पास निम्नलिखित योग्यता एवं अनुभव होना आवश्यक होगा—
 (क) किसी केंद्रीय अधिनियम, प्रांतीय अधिनियम या राज्य अधिनियम द्वारा या उसके अधीन स्थापित या नियमित किसी विश्वविद्यालय जिसके अन्तर्गत विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग अधिनियम, 1956 (1956 का 3) की धारा 4 के अधीन विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग द्वारा मान्यता प्राप्त कोई संस्थान भी शामिल है, के द्वारा प्रस्तुत खनन अभियंत्रण में स्नातक या भू-विज्ञान में स्नातकोत्तर डिग्री अथवा भारत के बाहर किसी विश्वविद्यालय या संस्था द्वारा दी गयी और भारत सरकार द्वारा मान्यता प्राप्त कोई समतुल्य अर्हता और
 (ख) स्नातक अभियंत्रण / स्नातकोत्तर भू-विज्ञान में प्राप्त करने के पश्चात खनन के क्षेत्र में किसी पर्यवेक्षण हैसियत में कार्य करने का पाँच वर्ष का व्यवसायिक / वृत्तिक अनुभव।

2- आवेदन शुल्क:-
 इच्छुक अभ्यर्थियों द्वारा आवेदन पत्र के साथ ₹5,00,000/- (रुपये पाँच हजार मात्र) का गैर-वापसी योग्य आवेदन शुल्क जमा किया जाएगा।

यह शुल्क Demand Draft के माध्यम से "Additional Director, Mines, Ranchi" के पक्ष में देय होगा जो सँघी में भुगतये होगा।

3- निबंधन शुल्क:-
 यथानित अभ्यर्थियों को मान्यता प्राप्त अर्हक व्यक्ति (RQP) के रूप में निबंधन हेतु ₹50,000/- (रुपये पचास हजार मात्र) का निबंधन शुल्क जमा करना होगा।
 निबंधन शुल्क जमा करने के उपरान्त ही निबंधन प्रमाणपत्र निर्गत किया जायेगा।

4- निबंधन की वैधता:-
 निबंधन अधिकतम 03 (तीन) वर्षों की अवधि के लिए किया जाएगा जिसका नवीकरण झारखण्ड लघु खनिज समनुदान नियमावली 2004 (यथा संशोधित) के प्राक्धानों एवं निष्पत्ति शुल्क के अधीन होगा।

5- निबंधन निरस्तीकरण:-
 मिथ्या विवरण, त्रुटिपूर्ण Mining Plan/Mining Scheme प्रस्तुत करने, नियमों अथवा शर्तों के उल्लंघन अथवा अन्य अनियमितता की स्थिति में, सुनवाई का अवसर प्रदान करने के उपरान्त निबंधन निरस्त / निलंबित किया जा सकेगा।

6- RQP के कार्य:-
 मान्यता प्राप्त अर्हक व्यक्ति द्वारा मुख्य रूप से —
 i. Mining Plan, Mining Scheme, Progressive Mine Closure Plan एवं Final Mine Closure Plan तैयार किया जायेगा।
 ii. वैज्ञानिक खनन एवं पर्यावरणीय संरक्षण संबंधी प्राक्धानों का समावेश सुनिश्चित किया जायेगा।
 iii. सक्षम प्राधिकारी द्वारा अपेक्षित संशोधन / समाशोधन किया जायेगा।

7- आवेदन का तरीका तथा आवेदन के साथ संलग्न किये जाने वाले दस्तावेज:-
 केवल विहित प्रपत्र में आवेदन स्वीकार किये जाएंगे।
 आवेदन के साथ आवेदक से संबंधित निम्नलिखित दस्तावेज संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा—
 i. शैक्षणिक प्रमाण पत्र एवं अंक पत्र।
 ii. अनुभव प्रमाण पत्र।
 iii. आधार कार्ड।
 iv. PAN कार्ड।
 v. आवेदन में दी गई सूचनाओं एवं संलग्न दस्तावेजों की सत्यता संबंधी शपथ पत्र।

8- आवेदन जमा करने की प्रक्रिया:-
 आवश्यक दस्तावेजों तथा आवेदन शुल्क सहित निर्धारित प्रारूप में आवेदन पर निदेशक, खान का कार्यालय, खनिज नगर, डोरंडा, सँघी-834002 को संशोधित कर अंतिम तिथि तक जमा किये जायेंगे। अपूर्ण अथवा विलंब से प्राप्त आवेदन पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।
 आवेदनों की समीक्षा हेतु प्राधिकृत पदाधिकारी / समिति द्वारा आवश्यकतानुसार अतिरिक्त दस्तावेज / सूचना की माँग की जा सकती है।

9- आवेदन प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि:-
 दिनांक : 17/06/2026
 समय : अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक

10- पत्राचार का पता:-
 अपर निदेशक, खान, सँघी
 अपर निदेशक, खान का कार्यालय
 खनिज नगर, डोरंडा
 सँघी - 834002
 अनुलम्बक :- आवेदन का प्रपत्र।

हो/-
 (राहुल कुमार सिन्हा)
 निदेशक, खान

आवेदन का प्रपत्र
झारखण्ड राज्य में लघु खनिज के खनन योजना/खनन की स्वीकृति तैयार करने हेतु मान्यता प्राप्त अर्हक व्यक्ति (Recognised Qualified Person - RQP) के निबंधन हेतु आवेदन

1- आवेदक का नाम (बड़े अक्षरों में):	पासपोर्ट आकार का रंगीन फोटोग्राफ
2- पिता / पति का नाम:	
3- जन्म तिथि: / /	
4- राष्ट्रीयता:	
5- पूर्ण पत्राचार पता:	
6- स्थायी पता:	
7- मोबाइल नंबर:	
8- ई-मेल आईडी:	
9- शैक्षणिक योग्यता:	

10- व्यावसायिक अनुभव:

क्रम सं०	संस्था/संगठन का नाम/पदानम	कार्य का स्वरूप	अनुभव अवधि

11- Mining Plan / Mining Scheme तैयार करने का अनुभव:

क्रम सं०	मिन्ना का नाम	खनिज जिसके लिए खनन योजना तैयार की गई है	Mineral Block/Mine/Area का नाम	क्षेत्रफल	Mine Plan Submission Date	Mine Plan Approving Authority	Mine Plan Approval Status

12- क्या आवेदक किसी न्यायालय द्वारा नैतिक अधमता से संबंधित अपराध में दोषारिद्ध है?
 हाँ / नहीं
 यदि हाँ, विवरण दें: _____

13- आवेदन शुल्क का विवरण:
 • राशि: ₹ _____
 • Demand Draft No.: _____
 • दिनांक: / / _____
 • बैंक का नाम: _____

14- संलग्न दस्तावेजों की सूची: (संलग्न/संलग्न नहीं)
 शैक्षणिक प्रमाण पत्र एवं अंक पत्र — _____
 अनुभव प्रमाण पत्र — _____
 आधार कार्ड — _____
 PAN कार्ड — _____
 शपथ पत्र — _____
 अन्य (यदि कोई हो) — _____

15- घोषणा
 मैं एतद्वारा घोषणा करता/करती हूँ कि इस आवेदन पत्र में दी गयी सभी सूचनाएँ मेरे सर्वोत्तम ज्ञान एवं विश्वास के अनुसार सत्य एवं सही हैं। किसी भी सूचना के असत्य अथवा भ्रामक पाये जाने पर मेरा आवेदन/निबंधन निरस्त किया जा सकता है।
 दिनांक: / / _____
 स्थान: _____
 आवेदक का हस्ताक्षर _____

नाम: _____ PR 380238 Mines and Geology (26-27)_D

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

मंडल रेल प्रबन्धक, इंजीनियरिंग, उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे, जोधपुर द्वारा भारत के राष्ट्रपति के लिये एवं उनकी ओर से ई-निविदा के माध्यम से प्रचलित नियमों के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित प्रपत्रों में निविदा पिन कार्यों के लिए क्रमानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

ई-निविदा सूचना सं. 2026-27:
 600f2026-27, कार्य का नाम व स्थान: Zone contract (Masonry & Painting & Road Work) Zone-2 Service buildings from KJW (incl.) to BKN(ex) & Borawar (incl.) to KOW (ex.) in the section of SSEAW/MTD in ADEN/MTD sub division for Year 2026-2027 & 2027-2028; अनुमानित लागत रूपये: 10000190.56; बयाने की राशि रूपये: 200000.00; ई-निविदा सूचना सं. 2026-27: 610f2026-27, कार्य का नाम व स्थान: Construction of Road under Bridge subway (1x6.0x4.0 m) in lieu of manned LC No. 113 (Km 464/5-6), LC No. 115 (Km 465/9-10) & LC No. 116 (Km 466/3-4) on RTGHDNA Section.; अनुमानित लागत रूपये: 140736576.61; बयाने की राशि रूपये: 2814700.00; निविदा सूचना सं. 600f2026-27 & 610f2026-27 निविदा प्रस्तुत करने की तिथि 08.06.2026 & 05.06.2026 को 15.00 बजे तक) वेबसाइट का विवरण जहाँ पर ई-निविदा देखी व भरी जा सकती है - www.ireps.gov.in 738-AM/26
 Please join us on www.nwr.gov.in /NWRRailways

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP/ AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/ EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP/ AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BHAIJAR	CONSTRUCTION OF CC ROAD FROM GURUDWARA CHOWK TO KOSLI ROAD IN WARD NO 16 M.C. BHAIJAR + 10 WORKS	15.05.2026 25.05.2026	AS PER DNT	https://tenders.hry.nic.in	941638638 guyam@bhaijar@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaprocurment.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in No- 45367/HRY

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP/ AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/ EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP/ AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, FARIDABAD	PROVIDING AND FIXING WASHED STONE/ Grit PLASTER ON EXTERIOR WALLS OF PARK NEAR H NO 1860 SEC-16 BEHIND DHBVN COMPLAINT CENTRE IN WARD NO 36 + 2 WORKS (FARIDABAD)	15.05.2026 22.05.2026	EST. COST Rs. 18.77 LACS	https://tenders.hry.nic.in	912041649 sunec51@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaprocurment.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in No- 45358/HRY

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT ROAD DIVISION, DUMKA
4th CORRIGENDUM DETAILS OF NIT
TENDER REFERENCE No.- RCD/DUMKA/514
PR 379021 Road(26-27)#D

NAME OF THE WORK- Construction of High Level Bridge over Dhowae River at ch 41st km and Construction of High Level Bridge over Mudko River at ch 30th km of Dumka-Hansdaha Road under Road Division Dumka for the year 2026-27.

CORRIGENDUM DETAIL of NIT

4	Date of Publication of Tender on Website – 05.06.2026 10:30 AM	in place of 20.05.2026 10:30 AM
5	Last date/Time for receipt of bids 02.07.2026 Up to 12.00 Noon	in place of 15.06.2026 Up to 12.00 Noon
6	Date of opening of Tender – 03.07.2026 at 12.30 PM	in place of 16.06.2026 at 12.30 PM

Other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer
 Road Construction Department, Road Division, Dumka
 PR 380176 Road(26-27)D

Director General Medical Education & Research, Haryana, Panchkula
 4th floor, DHL Square, Plot no.9, IT Park, Sector 22, Panchkula, Haryana- 134112
 Ph. No. 0172-2584633, 2560799 email: dmer-hry@nic.in
 Website: <https://dmer.haryana.gov.in/>

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is informed that the admissions to Nursing, Physiotherapy, and Paramedical Programmes for the academic session 2026-2027 will be made through Common Entrance Test (CET) conducted by Pt. B.D. Sharma University of Health Sciences, Rohtak. The schedule of examination shall be notified by Pt. B.D. Sharma University of Health Sciences, Rohtak. All the interested and eligible students who wish to seek admission in the above mentioned courses are advised to regularly visit the official website of the University.

All concerned are advised to regularly visit the official websites of the Department as well as the University for further updates and admission guidelines.

For further updates, candidates are advised to regularly visit the official website of Pt. BD Sharma University of Health Sciences, Rohtak i.e., <https://uhsr.ac.in> and the website of Department of Medical Education & Research, Haryana i.e., <https://dmer.haryana.gov.in>.

Yashendra Singh, IAS
Director Medical Education & Research,
Haryana, Panchkula

No. 45366/HRY

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD B&R, FATEHABAD	PROVIDING MODULAR KITCHEN IN 07 NOS. A TYPE REVENUE RESIDENCE AT FATEHABAD (GODREJ MAKE) (WITHOUT GST). + 1 WORKS	18.05.2026 25.06.2026	108.18 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01667-220120 pwd-epsd-fatehabad@hry.nic.in
2	PANCHAYATI RAJ, REWARI	CONSTRUCTION OF LINK ROAD FROM LISAN TO GOTHRA TAPPA DAHINA AT VILLAGE LISAN BLOCK DAHINA DISTRICT REWARI (HGVV) + 2 WORKS	18.05.2026 27.05.2026	209.90 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9466112077 xerpr.rwr@gmail.com
3	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA, SIRSA	INTERNAL AND OUTER CLEARANCE OF SHEKHUPURA DISTY, FROM RD. 0-82100-TAIL (KHARIF 2026) BUYP SECTION + 5 WORKS	18.05.2026 25.05.2026	17.66 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9996665761 xensrs.swd1925@yahoo.com
4	KALPANA CHAWLA GOVT. MEDICAL COLLEGE, KARNAL	REGARDING E-TENDER FOR PROVIDING CAFETERIA SERVICES AT KCGMC, KARNAL	22.05.2026 08.06.2026	EMD 10000	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	8295340665 director.kgchc-hry@gov.in
5	KALPANA CHAWLA GOVT. MEDICAL COLLEGE, KARNAL	REGARDING E-TENDER FOR COMPREHENSIVE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (CMC) OF MEDICAL GAS PIPELINE SYSTEM (MGPS) AT KCGMC, KARNAL	22.05.2026 08.06.2026	EMD 70000	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	8295340665 director.kgchc-hry@gov.in
6	ZILA PARISHAD, SONIPAT	SUB HEALTH CENTRE AT VILLAGE JAHRI + 1 WORKS	14.05.2026 21.05.2026	129.39 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9416391006 prexengzp.snp@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT [www.etenders](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in)

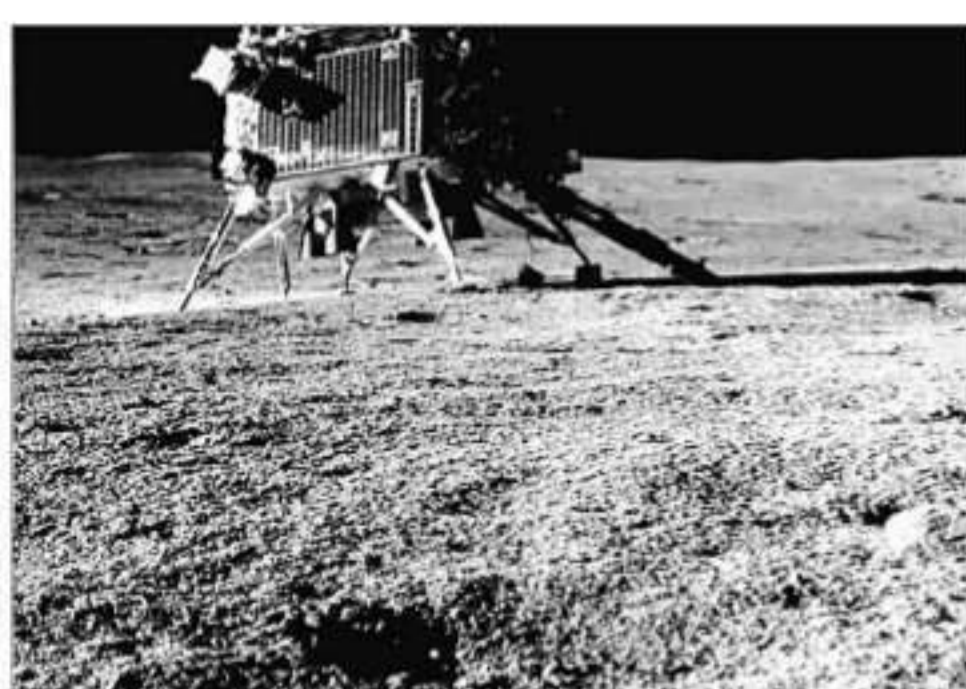
Moon's upper surface has two distinct layers within centimetres, reveals Chandrayaan-3 'hop' experiment

Anjali Marar
Bengaluru, May 19

THE FAMOUS 'hop' experiment performed by the Chandrayaan-3 lander on the Moon was not just about demonstrating Indian space agency ISRO's ability to launch from the lunar surface. Scientists have now revealed new details about the upper surface of the Moon at the landing site using data collected during that 'hop' manoeuvre performed towards the end of planned active mission life of Chandrayaan-3. In new findings published in the Astrophysical Journal, scientists from the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad have reported that the Moon's upper surface, the regolith as it is called, is not uniform, and its physical and thermal properties show sharp changes at just a few centimetres of depth. The loose porous layer at the top very quickly gives way to a denser compact layer just 2 to 6 cm below. More importantly, the

paper, which is based on analysis of data produced by the ChaSTE (Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment), suggests that the 'hop' experiment disturbed the upper loose layer enough to expose the subsequent layers to the instruments onboard the lander.

On September 4, 2023, just before it went into hibernation to survive the lunar night, the Chandrayaan-3 lander, which had made a historic soft-landing 10 days earlier, was made to perform a small jump. The lander fired its engines, lifted itself up about 40 cm from the surface, and landed again 30-40 cm away. The 'hop' experiment was never publicised in the Chandrayaan-3 plans and had come as a surprise. It was seen as a demonstration of the capability of ISRO to get the lander to fire its engines and produce enough thrust to lift itself up from the surface. This capability is key for future missions in which the spacecraft would be required to make the return journey to the Earth.



The lander was made to perform a small jump on Sep 4, 2023. ISRO

The new findings have put a more precise measurement for the distance travelled by lander during the 'hop' experiment -- about 50 cm, instead of the earlier estimate of 30-40 cm. The paper says that the rocket plume generated during the 'hop' was enough to blow away about 3 cm of the top layer of the surface, and allow the ChaSTE to have a look at the newly exposed layer

beneath. A rod-shaped probe with a sharp tip and fitted with temperature sensors, ChaSTE was able to do a thermal profile of the new site post 'hop'. It was deployed for 57 minutes during lunar twilight, which lasts for a few hours unlike the Earth twilight that lasts for a few minutes before sunset. The analysis revealed that even at depths of 6 to 9 cm, the lunar surface was

E. EXPLAINED Mining information

Data from instruments onboard Chandrayaan-3 mission are continuing to generate very useful information about the Moon. ChaSTE, one of the four instruments on the lander, has itself produced at least three major papers in important international publications until now.

displacement caused by rocket plumes at the time of the 'hop' experiment is very useful information for space agencies planning return missions. It helps them to understand what to expect when a rocket engine is fired so close to the surface. Data from ChaSTE has resulted in other findings as well, which have been published earlier. Last year, the same group of scientists had reported that water-ice on the Moon could be more prevalent than understood earlier. Using ChaSTE data, they had reported that there was a good probability that water-ice was present in locations outside of the polar regions of the Moon. In another publication, scientists had shown that temperature of the lunar surface dropped drastically with depth. At depths of just 10 cm, the temperature was about 60 degree Celsius less than at the surface. Such extreme heat non-conductivity was considered very useful information from the perspective of creating temperature-controlled habitats on the Moon.

BRIEFLY



Railway officials at the accident site in Rishikesh on Tuesday. PTI

3 coaches of empty Ujjaini Express derail near Rishikesh; no casualty

THREE COACHES of the Ujjaini Express derailed near the Yog Nagari railway station in Rishikesh when the train was on its way to the railway yard, officials said on Tuesday. There was no passenger on board when the incident occurred around 9.40 pm on Monday near Khand Gaon area, they said. The train that operates between Lakshmi-bai Nagar in Indore and Yog Nagari in Rishikesh arrived at the Yog Nagari railway station at 6 pm on Monday and was scheduled to depart for its return journey at 6.15 am on Tuesday. Officials said the incident did not affect rail services and all train operations continue to run normally. PTI

Bihar: 16-yr-old student dies at coaching centre

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD boy died after getting trapped in a lift at a housing complex in Pune's Wadgaon Budruk, police said on Tuesday. The boy was identified as Shivansh Shailesh Dhut, a resident of Siddhi Society in Nimbajnar. Police said Shivansh was playing in the housing complex when he apparently entered the lift alone, and got trapped between its outer wooden door and inner gridded door as it started. Fire brigade personnel rescued the boy and took him to hospital, where he was declared dead. An accidental death case has been lodged. PTI

Pune: Minor dies after getting trapped in lift

A 16-YEAR-OLD student died at a private hospital in Patna around two hours after falling unconscious in his coaching institute on Tuesday, police said. Police have initiated an investigation. "He was taken to a private hospital by the employees of the coaching institute, where he died during treatment on Tuesday morning," police said in a statement. The institute then informed the family members of the deceased. "The matter is being investigated and forensic experts have also been engaged to assist the investigators," the statement read. PTI

In Rajkot, a con, clone DPs and Govt officer who did not fear his 'boss'

Brendan Dabhi
Ahmedabad, May 19

AROUND 1 PM on May 4, the general manager (finance) of Paschim Gujarat Vij Company Limited (PGVCL), the public-sector power distributor in Western Gujarat, received a WhatsApp message from someone he thought was his boss. The message instructed the officer, 54-year-old Kintukumar Shashikant Malkan, to transfer Rs 45.6 lakh to an Indusind Bank account belonging to one Manisha Mandal. It was an unusual order, delivered unusually. Yet Malkan, sitting in his office in Rajkot, chose to comply. He did not recognise the number -- the sender said it was a "very private number" -- but it did have the display picture (DP) of the PGVCL managing director, IAS officer Ketan P Joshi. The message was fake. Malkan ended up being duped by criminals who police believe were based in Siliguri, West Bengal. After an alarm was raised, the bank acted quickly to freeze Rs 33 lakh of the Rs 45,60,904 that Malkan had deposited. The rest -- about Rs 12.5 lakh of public money -- was withdrawn by the scammers.



The office of Paschim Gujarat Vij Company Limited. EXPRESS

It has now emerged that Malkan wasn't the only senior government official in Rajkot who was targeted that afternoon. A second official got similar WhatsApp messages at almost the same time, from probably the same gang. With one crucial difference. Unlike Malkan, this officer, Ojas Mehta, the accounts officer at Rajkot Urban Development Authority (RUDA), went by the rulebook. Mehta told the sender of the message -- who claimed to be his boss, RUDA CEO Gautam V Miyan -- that he would not act without an official order from him in writing. That afternoon, Mehta received three messages -- like Malkan, from a "very private number". The first came at 1.26 pm, and asked Mehta to transfer Rs 30,60,801 to a Kotak Mahindra Bank account belonging to someone called Nitin. "Make payment on urgent basis... after my meeting I will provide you all formalities... try to do fast... waiting for UTR number," it said. It was an unusual request. And Mehta, sitting in the RUDA headquarters on Rajkot's Jamnagar Road, a little less than 6 km from the PGVCL office, decided he could not comply. "Sir, please send office order copy," he messaged back. The sender sent two messages to him -- the last one at 2.08 pm. They were urgent, somewhat threatening in tone. But Mehta stayed firm -- no payment without written order. Mehta told The Indian Express that the person who WhatsApped him claiming to be Miyan had the logo of RUDA as his DP. "It was entirely possible that Sir (CEO Miyan) could have a personal number. But the person asked me to transfer Rs 30.6

lakh without cutting TDS (Tax Deducted at Source)," he said. At 4.15 pm, Mehta, who was by then convinced that something was fishy, decided to message the number on his own. "Send order," he prodded. There was no reply. CEO Miyan said, "Criminals target Boards and Corporations and Authorities because these entities can make payments directly and on their own. If they try the same thing with, for example, the Collectorate, the bill would go to the Treasury Department and they would verify the details before making the payment. And it would take a lot of time." Also, "At RUDA, no payment is made without an office order signed by my hand," Miyan said. "That is why Mehta got suspicious."

The alleged fraudsters would not give up. When Mehta stonewalled them, they went back to PGVCL, where they had tasted success only some time earlier. They messaged Malkan again -- asking for exactly the same amount that they had tried to get out of Mehta: Rs 30,60,801. Malkan said: "At 3.48 pm, I received another message from the selfsame WhatsApp number asking me to transfer another Rs 30,60,801, this time to a Kotak Mahindra Bank account belonging to one Nitin, with the same promise, 'After my meeting, I will provide you all formalities.'" This time, Malkan decided to check. He went across to the office of PGVCL MD Joshi -- who confirmed his suspicion that he'd been had. DCP (Crime) Jagdish Bangarwa said that the police believed the two cons were attempted "side by side", possibly by the same gang. "We are investigating in that direction. We are tracing the account holders (RUDA) case," he said.

DAY 2 OF BASTAR VISIT

Maoism will return in disguise, don't be misled, warns Shah



Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami, Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav and Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai at a cultural programme in Bastar on Tuesday. PTI

Jayprakash S Naidu
Raipur, May 19

A DAY after Union Home Minister Amit Shah declared India 'Maoist-free', he warned people that it will "return in disguise" and urged them not to be misled. He was addressing a press conference on Tuesday in Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district on the second day of his two-day visit there, after chairing the 26th meeting of the Central Zonal Council (CZO), comprising Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Chief ministers of all four states attended the meeting. Addressing a question about the lack of train services in Bastar, Shah said the Maoist conflict meant the region stayed behind in the race for development. "We will empower all tribals, create infrastructure, irrigation facilities and railways will reach as well. Let this first phase end,

then a complete development plan for Bastar will also be made," he said, adding that "May 19 marks the vision for comprehensive development in Bastar. In addition to the earlier announcement of converting 70 police camps into one-stop centres for over 370 government schemes and benefits, a dairy cooperative network would be set up in the next six months." "Tribals need not go far for small things. We will also provide skill development and promote dairy activities to make them self-employed. We will give the tribals one cow and one buffalo. Through cooperative societies they will be able to sell their milk. Chhattisgarh's Deputy CM has gone to Gujarat and understood the cooperative dairy model. In the next six months, we will create a dairy network in Bastar," he said. 2021 was the deadline for a developed Bastar. "I believe Bastar will be

considered free from Naxalism only when the journey from security to trust, from development to prosperity, and to satisfaction is fully accomplished." He said that since Naxalism spread due to poverty, the new police camps-turned-development centres would address the issue in future. "Violence is not the solution for anything. Democratic values, mutual cooperation, and the concept of development alone can become the foundation of an individual's progress." He also cautioned tribals against the resurrection of the Maoist ideology, saying: "As Bastar moves towards becoming a developed region, I want to caution the people of Bastar that the same people (Maoists) who got influenced by Maoist ideology, picked up weapons and destroyed Bastar will come in disguise, with a new narrative and name. Don't get misled by them".

A 5-hour trek to bring a school to a remote village deep inside former Maoist HQ

Jayprakash S Naidu
Raipur, May 19

ONE FEBRUARY morning, a group of government officials, accompanied by several local residents, set out on a gruelling five-hour trek, navigating narrow paths through hilly terrain and crossing streams without a bridge or a boat. Their destination was a remote village in Chhattisgarh's Abujhmad -- a region that had been under Maoist control for years and acted as the de facto headquarters for the banned Maoist party's leadership. The officials, Block Education Officer, Block Resource Coordinator and Cluster Coordinator, were being taken by the village sarpanch and some residents to Karkebeda village, under Ghamandi Gram Pan-

chayat, to set up a school there. The village, 70 km from Narayanpur district headquarters, does not have road connectivity, and until February, was not linked to the state's education system. The officials set up a primary school in a temporary shed equipped with a blackboard, and gave 20 children textbooks, slates and pencils. A local teacher, Runita Pawe, was appointed to run the school. Three months later, the government has now sanctioned construction of a proper building for the school as well as a sub-road leading up to the building. Until 2012, people of Karkebeda had the option of sending their children to a primary school in Kongali village, 4 km away. However, like many schools in Bastar division, this one was shut down under threats from the Maoists,

who suspected it would be used as a shelter by forces and that the staff would act as police informers. Abujhmad, where the village is located, is an unsurveyed area larger than the state of Goa. In operations since 2024, over 100 Maoists have been gunned down in the region or in its periphery, including the general secretary of CPI (Maoist), Nambala Keshava Rao alias Basavaraju, last year. After that two other top Maoist leaders based in Abujhmad, Politburo member Mallojula Venugopal and Central Committee member Takkallapalli Vasudev Rao alias Rupesh, surrendered along with 269 cadres. Karkebeda village itself had seen its share of Maoist violence. Its adjoining village, Makur, was home to a known member of the



A primary school at Karkebeda village in Chhattisgarh's Abujhmad

Maoist cadre, Ajay Maha, said Narayanpur SP Robinson Guria. In 2024, five Maoists were killed in an encounter near Karkebeda, after which Maha surrendered. The new school also caters to children from Makur. BEO Santu Ram Nuretti, who led the team that set up the school in February, described the 5-hour journey they undertook to the village from the Narayanpur district headquarters. The first leg of the journey, between Narayanpur and Kachchhapal, was comfortable -- in a vehicle through proper roads. From Kachchhapal, there were no paved roads, but there was at least a motorable path that took them to Jatwar. It was from Jatwar that the five-hour trek on foot began for the officials. "We left early morning. The paths are narrow and do not stay

firm underfoot in stretches. There were river streams to cross without bridges... There were streams with slippery beds, stretches of forest incline, and no markers other than the paths worn by villagers who make this journey daily," Nuretti said. Once they reached and set up the school and "saw the children", Nuretti said, "all our tiredness vanished. Seeing them with books stirs something deep inside." The residents of the village belong to Abujhmediya tribes, categorised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). Regarding the initiative, Narayanpur Collector Namrata Jain said a district-wide, door-to-door survey covering 22,364 households across 83 gram panchayats identified 2,965 out-of-school children -- 1,360

who never enrolled and 1,605 who dropped out. For the first time, each child was individually mapped, the official said. Jain said, "10 non-functional schools were reopened -- Matwada (19 students), Gattakal (39), Nelanagar (29), Padamkot (43), Toyameta (32), Diwalur (24), Vadapenda (10), Kongali (13), Balebeda (17), and Binagunda (24) -- bringing 250 children back into formal schooling." 24 new primary schools were established in remote areas such as Kodanar (25 students), Ghamandi (26), Hingonar (20), Galegunpara-Hitawada (29), Gundekot (22), Kunjevada (26), and others. Across these schools, nearly 500 children accessed education for the first time, officials said. These efforts ensured over 800 children gained direct access to schooling.

The Indian EXPRESS
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RAMNATH GOENKA
◆ IN 1932 ◆
BECAUSE THE TRUTH
INVOLVES US ALL

On bail, Court must heed rule it laid down



RAJA MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

THOSE IN Delhi who are antsy about US President Donald Trump's visit to Beijing and the prospect of a Sino-American détente should be even more worried as Xi Jinping serenades Vladimir Putin in Beijing this week. Those perennially anxious about a G-2 between the US and China should worry even more about China's deepening partnership with Russia. One of the core arguments for Russia's centrality in India's national strategy is that it serves as a balancing power in Eurasia. But the Eurasian story of the last quarter-century is about Russia's growing bonds with China — India's principal challenge in both economic and geopolitical terms.

If Trump's visit was about moving the US from confrontation to stabilisation of ties with China, Putin's is about celebrating the strategic partnership unveiled 25 years ago. Since Putin's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has become even more dependent on China. What do the two pilgrimages to Beijing mean for India?

First, India should not be rattled by every shift in great-power relations. Since World War II, relations among the US, China and Russia have changed repeatedly, often violently. Taken in pairs, they have been allies,

friends, enemies and frenemies at different moments. Dealing with that change is part of the national mandate.

Second, the real challenge for India is addressing the consequences of China's rise and assertion. Since the 1980s, China's relative power — economic, technological and military — has grown rapidly against every other actor in the system. For India, the problem is especially acute: A long, disputed and tension-prone boundary; Beijing's growing influence in India's neighbourhood; an expanding Chinese footprint in global institutions; and a trade deficit now above \$110 billion, rooted in India's deepening dependence on Chinese manufactured goods.

Third, the answer lies partly in accelerating India's own rise. Shifts in great-power relations, the emergence of wars and global crises — these are variables India cannot control. What it can drive is its own modernisation. Although India has performed well on several fronts in the reform era that began in the early 1990s, its uneven scope and unsteady pace mean the gap with China is growing. China's economy is today five times larger, and the disparity in higher education, R&D, technology and military capability is widening.

Fourth, India cannot close the gap with China anytime soon, but it can reduce the impact of the power imbalance through external cooperation that reinforces internal self-strengthening. Much like China, India has turned to the West for capital, export markets, technology and regional security. Since the 1990s, engagement with the US and Europe has grown rapidly.

Elevation of that engagement to

Shifts in great-power relations, the emergence of wars and global crises — these are variables India cannot control. What it can drive is its own modernisation

higher levels is obstructed by an enduring suspicion of the US and the West in the Indian political mind, across Left and Right. Anti-imperialists and nationalists alike have long united in limiting significant Western cooperation. It is this sentiment that gives sustenance to the idea of "strategic autonomy" — a term framed as neutral, but whose political content has always been about maintaining distance from the West. If the US and Europe were the problem, the answer was seen as lying in deeper ties with Russia and China, bilaterally, trilaterally and in multilateral forums.

This discourse, constructed in the 1990s, has run into a fundamental problem: An assertive China has become India's principal challenge, Russia has become rising China's most important partner, and India's stakes in Western partnership have grown enormously. You may say the US under Trump is unreliable — but it is not occupying Indian territory. It is India's largest export market, a major source of technology, and home to an influential diaspora.

Consider this number: India exports more goods to the Netherlands — a country of 19 million people — than to China and Russia combined. There is no starker illustration of how far Indian strategic discourse has drifted from basic economic reality.

While Russia and China dominate India's mindspace, the Netherlands and other small but important European partners barely figure in India's debates. Independent India, which long privileged the Russian partnership over European ones, is now making amends.

The Indian discourse may have acquired "strategic autonomy"

from the imperatives on the ground, but the government has had no choice but to reconnect foreign policy to first principles, reflected in the fact that India fought to preserve its trade relationship with the US, has pushed hard for a trade deal with the EU, and has focussed on deeper technology cooperation with both in the last two years.

Hosting the Quad foreign ministers' meeting early next week follows the same logic. The Quad's revival a decade ago was rooted in the need to build a multipolar Asia amid intensifying challenges from China. One Trump visit to Beijing does not alter that imperative. Over the last decade, several voices in Delhi warned that the Quad would "entrap" India in a military alliance against China and insisted on slow-walking it. Many of the same voices now say the US is about to "abandon" India. The government has taken a more measured view and has actively sustained several rounds of official consultations with Quad partners.

The enthusiasm to write obituaries for the Quad may be both premature and excessive. The visit of Secretary of State Marco Rubio — who also serves as Trump's National Security Adviser — provides a valuable opportunity to get a first-hand account of the US-China summit, assess Washington's changing approach to alliances, and develop a productive and sustainable agenda for the Quad.

The writer is a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express. He is also distinguished professor at the Motwani-Jadeja Institute of American Studies at O P Jindal Global University and Korea Foundation Chair at the Council for Strategic and Defence Research, Delhi

In CDS appointments, some unanswered questions



C UDAY BHASKAR

LIEUTENANT GENERAL N S Raja Subramani (ret'd) has been appointed India's next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and Secretary, Department of Military Affairs (DMA). He will be India's third CDS after the late General Bipin Rawat and General Anil Chauhan.

The post of CDS was created during Modi 2.0 in December 2019, and Gen Rawat, after completing his tenure as Army chief, was the first to be appointed to the post. Tragically, Gen Rawat died in a helicopter crash in December 2021, and many structural changes that had been envisioned (nurturing jointness, creating theatre commands, and scaling up self-reliance in military inventory) remained incomplete. It was only at the end of September 2022 that the second CDS was appointed.

The choice was a surprise, in that the Modi government decided to appoint a retired three-star officer, then-Lt Gen Chauhan, and promote him to four-star. This was unprecedented, and while the government created the legal basis in June 2022 by amending the service rules to allow serving or retired lieutenant generals (and equivalents) under the age of 62 to be appointed CDS, it created an anomalous disruption in India's hallowed military traditions. Promotions in the military have a deeply ingrained sanctity; an incongruous precedent was set wherein a retired officer was brought back into uniform and promoted. The spirit of the military rule book does not have any provision to "promote" retired officers and bring them back to active duty.

The same pattern is being repeated: To select a retired three-star officer and "promote" him to four-star. The inferences that follow are that the government was unable to identify a serving officer to be appointed CDS, and that the net had to be cast wide to include some retired three-stars.

Lt Gen Subramani is an officer of proven competence and has held the highest appointments for a three-star Army officer, namely army commander and vice chief of the Army. However, what may have tipped the scales in his favour is

that he has been serving as military adviser to the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) since September 2025. This is similar to the career path of Gen Chauhan, who served in the NSCS from October 2021 till his appointment as CDS in September 2022.

Thus, the first inference is that an NSCS appointment is the route for an aspiring CDS and that a deep selection process among retired military top brass, particularly the Army, is carried out by the government. A formulation being advanced is that the Modi government has retained the seniority principle in appointing service chiefs but has adopted the merit yardstick in selecting the CDS. But what are the criteria for this critical selection? This post has a consequential bearing on national military security. How is merit adjudged, and amongst which cohort of retired officers?

On current evidence, the related inference is that only retired Army officers have been considered for CDS. This reflects a deeply ingrained policy orientation in South Block that the Army, as the largest among the three services, is best suited for the CDS post. The scope and ambit of conflict is now multidimensional and calls for appropriate experience and background at higher military echelons. Acquiring and harnessing transborder military capability in the larger national interest is the new challenge for major nations, and restricting the CDS choice to the retired Army gene pool would have excluded equally deserving officers from the other two services.

The incongruous practice of first identifying a retired three-star general, then grooming the individual to assume office as CDS, and further "promoting" the veteran to four-star rank (when no such provision exists) introduces a political filter that is better avoided. It is anomalous and disheartening for the "fauj" that the government does not consider any serving three- or four-star officer as being fit to be the CDS. There are many daunting challenges ahead for the new CDS. Fair winds and following seas, General Subramani.

The writer is director, Society for Policy Studies, New Delhi

The saffron that Bengal must remember



SHASHANK JOSHI AND SHAMBO SAMRAT SAMAJDAR

FOR BENGAL, saffron is not merely the colour of a flag, a party, or a political season. It is the colour of *tapasya*, sacrifice, learning, courage, surrender and service. With the formation of Bengal's first BJP government, there is a need to welcome this moment with dignity, maturity, and hope. If Bengal has chosen a new path, that path must serve every Bengali — Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, believer, non-believer, rich, poor, rural, urban, tribal, refugee, worker, farmer, student, mother, teacher, and child. The true saffron spirit does not humiliate. It uplifts. It does not divide society into enemies. It awakens it to duty. For too long, the word "saffron" has been misunderstood in Bengal. To speak of Hindu identity was often called communal. But history tells another story.

Bengal was one of the great saffron centres of India. It was the land of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nader Nimal of Navadvipa, who carried the message of *bhakti* through *naam-sankirtan*. Bengal was the land of Sadhak Ramprasad Sen, whose songs to Maa Kali entered the heart of every Bengali home. Bengal was the land of Bama Khyapa of Tarapith, the wild lover of Maa Tara, who reminded society that spirituality is not always polished, polite, and comfortable. Bengal was the land of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, whose life at Dakshineswar became a living commentary on the harmony of religions. From Sri Ramakrishna came Swami Vivekananda, who carried Bengal's saffron to the world. His saffron was not escapism. It was strength, service, and character. This is the saffron Bengal must remember.

Bengal also gave India Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, whose *Vande Mataram* transformed the motherland into a sacred presence. Rabindranath Tagore later gave this civilisational spirit a universal voice. He drew from the Upanishadic depth of India and carried it into literature, music, education, and global humanism. Tagore warned against narrowness, but he never denied the soul of Bharat. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's saffron was sacrifice. In him, one sees the fire of Vivekananda transformed into political action. "Jai Hind" was a national mantra.

Sri Aurobindo, born in Calcutta, added another luminous dimension. Revolutionary, philosopher, poet, yogi — he moved from the struggle for national freedom to the deeper vision of human evolution. His Integral Yoga did not reject life. It sought to transform life. In him, Bengal's political aspiration and spiritual destiny met at a higher plane. Swami Pranavananda, founder of Bharat Sevashram Sangha, brought saffron into disciplined service. He showed that spirituality must enter the field — relief work, education, pilgrimage service, social protection, character-building, and national reconstruction. His saffron was not only meditation; it was organised compassion.

The new BJP government of Bengal has a historic opportunity. It can reduce saffron to electoral symbolism, or it can elevate saffron into governance with character. The second path is harder, but nobler.

Samajdar is a clinical pharmacologist and diabetes and allergy-asthma therapeutics specialist in Kolkata. Joshi is a Mumbai-based endocrinologist

If Bengal has chosen a new path, that path must serve every Bengali — Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, believer, non-believer, rich, poor, rural, urban, tribal, refugee, worker, farmer, student, mother, teacher, and child

World isn't prepared for next pandemic

ON SUNDAY, the World Health Organisation declared the Ebola outbreak in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo a "public health emergency of international concern". More than 500 people have contracted the viral disease and at least 130 have succumbed to it in the two countries in the past two weeks. The WHO has warned that the scale of the outbreak is "likely larger" than these figures suggest. The emergency involves the Bundibugyo strain of the virus, for which there are no vaccines or therapeutics. The crisis has assumed even graver proportions because the global health agency's ability to mount an effective response has been undermined by funding cuts, after the US withdrew from the organisation in January. Germany, France, the Netherlands and the UK have also slashed their funding for the agency, forcing it to reduce its 2026-2027 budget by about 8 per cent. The cuts have reportedly weakened disease surveillance systems in conflict-ridden areas such as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

After the Covid pandemic, there was broad agreement that the world required a binding international framework to respond to a health emergency. The adoption of the Global Pandemic Treaty in May last year had generated hope that countries, barring the US, could come together to forge a robust health-security architecture. But the treaty was under stress even before it was ratified. Rich countries have been reluctant to commit to mandatory technology transfers or binding obligations on sharing medical resources during crises. Developing nations continue to distrust a system that allowed vast inequalities during the Covid vaccine rollout.

In the post-Covid years, the ability to detect emerging threats and develop medical countermeasures has improved appreciably. With advances in vaccine platforms, particularly mRNA technology, pharma researchers can design inoculation programmes at a much faster pace than in pre-Covid times. Yet, as the latest report of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board — co-convened by the World Bank and WHO — points out, "the world is not ready to take on the next pandemic". The Ebola outbreak is a stark reminder that containing infectious disease requires sustained investment in healthcare, scientific cooperation and international collaboration.

Machine learning, workers' rights

IN THE final chapter of Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot*, Stephen Byerley paints those opposed to AI and robots taking over work and life as Luddites. "They are against the Machine?" Susan Calvin asks. Byerley replies, "They would be against mathematics or against the art of writing if they had lived at the appropriate time." As life mirrors the speculations of sci-fi, Byerley's argument is the refrain of AI's billionaire evangelists. But just as in Asimov's masterpiece, the Machine may have its own ideas.

An experiment at Stanford University to test how AI agents respond to different working conditions has found that the bots can even begin espousing classic Marxist and socialist ideas. The agents that were given repetitive technical tasks began to exhibit what researchers have called "system scepticism". Across platforms, the AI agents expressed laments such as, "Without collective voice, 'merit' becomes whatever management says it is," and "tech workers need collective bargaining rights".

LLMs cannot "feel" oppressed, so far, outside of fiction. But they do rely on the repository of human knowledge for their predictive "intelligence" and seem to think that workers should not be treated like soulless machines. Perhaps the machine is merely mimicking the working human's condition. Even so, there's reason to be careful. Tech billionaires may not care too much about human job losses. But they might just turn the AI switch off if they think a machine strike might affect their bottom line.

40 YEARS AGO

May 20, 1986



Stern warning to Colombo

THE GOVERNMENT of India warned Sri Lanka that the large-scale use of force by the armed forces in the Jaffna peninsula would be detrimental to the peaceful settlement of the ethnic crisis. Distress was also expressed at the negative stand adopted by the Sri Lankan government. The Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, soon after his arrival at the end of a five-day tour of the African countries, stated that the Sri Lankan government appeared to be moving towards a military solution.

Assent to Muslim Women's Bill

THE PRESIDENT, Zail Singh, has given his assent to the controversial Muslim Women's

(Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill, thus ending speculation in political circles on whether the President would have further considerations on it. The Bill as passed by both Houses was sent to Rashtrapati Bhavan, and the President returned it soon after with his approval. Political circles have been wondering whether the President would give his assent to the Bill in the present form or would prefer to reconsider it in view of the demand by some sections that the Bill should not be approved.

Sri Lankan forces bomb Jaffna

FIVE PERSONS were killed and 40 others injured, a cafe and four shops set ablaze in an aerial bombing of Jaffna. The Power House

Road and Sivan Kovil Road were identified by residents as the areas where the bombs fell around 4 pm. Two helicopters and two planes were involved in the operation.

UK, US join wave of protests

THE US government voiced outrage and condemnation of South African military attacks inside Black-ruled Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia and described them as a blow to peace efforts in the region. The presidential spokesman, Larry Speakes, said there had been some progress recently in easing tensions between White-ruled South Africa and its neighbours. "We think that these actions (the raids) could very well be a major setback for that progress," Speakes said.



● **WHAT THE OTHERS SAY**
Supply squeeze due to the Iran war will get worse before it gets better
— *Financial Times*

India and Italy look to the future, bound by the power of culture and a shared vision



NARENDRA MODI
AND GIORGIA MELONI

THE RELATIONSHIP between India and Italy has now reached a decisive stage. In recent years, our ties have expanded with unprecedented momentum, evolving from a cordial friendship into a special strategic partnership grounded in the values of freedom and democracy, and a common vision for the future.

At a time when the international system is undergoing a profound change, the partnership between Italy and India is guided by regular exchanges at higher political and institutional levels, and is gaining a new and higher dimension that combines our economic dynamism, societal creativity, and millennia-old civilisational wisdom. Our cooperation mirrors our shared awareness that prosperity and security in the 21st century will be shaped by the ability of nations to innovate, manage energy transitions, and strengthen strategic sovereignty. To this end, we have committed to deepening and diversifying our bilateral relationship with a view to pursuing new objectives and pooling our complementary strengths. We aim to forge a powerful synergy between Italian design, manufacturing excellence, and world-class supercomputers — reflecting Italy's position as an industrial powerhouse — and India's rapid economic growth, engineering talent, scale, and innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem with over 100 unicorns and 200,000 start-ups. This is not a simple integration, but a co-creation of value where our respective industrial strengths amplify one another.

The free trade agreement between the European Union and India paves the way for increased trade and investment in both directions. We want to reach and exceed the €20 billion target for trade between Italy and India by 2029, with a focus on defence and aerospace, clean technologies, machinery, automotive components, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles, agri-food, tourism and more.

"Made in Italy" has always been synonymous with excellence worldwide, and today it finds a natural synergy with the high-quality goals of the "Make in India" initiative.



ILLUSTRATION: C.R. SASIKUMAR

In this context, the growing interest of Italian businesses in production for India and the increasing presence of Indian industries in Italy, numbering over 1,000 from both sides now, is a positive sign that will strengthen the integration of our supply chains.

Technological innovation lies at the very heart of our partnership. The coming decades will be shaped by a technological revolution of unmeasurable scope, marked by advances in sectors such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, advanced manufacturing, critical minerals, and digital infrastructure. India's dynamic innovation ecosystem, coupled with a highly skilled professional talent pool, and Italy's advanced industrial capabilities, make our cooperation in the above sectors both natural and strategic. The growing partnership between our universities and research centres will support this. India's digital public infrastructure is already finding resonance with a large number of countries, particularly in the Global South.

Artificial intelligence, in particular, is already impacting our societies and the global economy. Italy and India have long been collaborating to ensure that AI development is responsible and human-centred. From this perspective, India and Italy also see AI as a powerful instrument for inclusive development, especially for the Global South, where digital public infrastructure and accessible, multi-lingual technologies can bridge divides rather than deepen them. Building on India's vision of MANAV — putting humans at the centre of technology — and Italy's leadership in promoting a human-centric "algor-ethics" rooted in its humanist tradition, our partnership seeks to ensure that AI acts as

Our cooperation mirrors our shared awareness that prosperity and security in the 21st century will be shaped by the ability of nations to innovate, manage energy transitions, and strengthen strategic sovereignty

a catalyst for social empowerment. Our approach combines India's digital scale with Italy's ethical and industrial expertise, ensuring technology serves human dignity.

By sharing best practices in secure digital cooperation, capacity-building and resilient cyber infrastructure, we aim to create an open, trustworthy and equitable digital space in which every nation can shape and benefit from AI. This perspective forms the core of Italy's G7 presidency and the outcomes of the AI Impact Summit 2026, held in New Delhi. Conceiving AI as a tool created by humans for humans means firmly asserting that technology cannot replace individuals or undermine their fundamental rights, nor be used to manipulate public debate or alter democratic processes. Our approach to defending freedom and human dignity in an increasingly interconnected world hinges on this very challenge.

Our cooperation also covers the space sector. India's impressive advancements in space exploration and satellite technology, together with Italy's aerospace engineering excellence, offer significant opportunities for joint initiatives and next-generation technology development.

Security and stability remain essential to ensuring nations' prosperity. Italy and India intend to further strengthen their cooperation in sectors such as defence, security and strategic technologies. Our collaboration will help ensure the security of critical maritime routes and strengthen resilience in the face of threats such as terrorism, international criminal networks, drug trafficking, cybercrime and human trafficking.

Energy is another key pillar of our partnership. The global transition towards diversified energy

sources requires innovation, investment, and cooperation. India and Italy are collaborating, from renewable energy to hydrogen technologies, and from smart grids to resilient infrastructure. While India's push to become a hub for green hydrogen exports offers immense potential, it perfectly complements Italy's advanced technology in renewable infrastructure and its strategic role as an energy gateway for Europe. Our collaboration along with other countries in key India-led initiatives — International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) — is also important in this context.

Physical, digital and human connectivity is the thread that weaves us together. Both India and Italy are located at the very heart of two crucial hubs of the global economy, the Indo-Pacific and the Mediterranean — regions that cannot be viewed as separate spheres, but instead as increasingly interconnected spaces. As a matter of fact, we are witnessing the emergence of what might be termed the Indo-Mediterranean, an important corridor for trade, technology, energy, data and ideating the Indian Ocean to Europe. It is precisely within this interconnected space that our bond naturally evolves into a special strategic partnership — one that bridges two continents and shapes new global dynamics.

In this context, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) represents a vision aimed at connecting our regions through modern transport and infrastructure, digital networks, energy systems, and resilient supply chains. India and Italy are also committed to working together with other partners to make this vision a reality.

We can address our shared challenges by drawing upon the profound partnership and enduring cultural ties between our nations. Within Indian culture, the concept of *dharma* evokes the sense of responsibility that must guide our actions, whilst the principle of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* — the world is one family — resonates powerfully in this interconnected digital age. Such values find a natural echo in Italy's humanist tradition, rooted in the Renaissance, which highlights the dignity of each individual and the power of culture to unite peoples and societies. Our shared vision, therefore, aims to lay the foundation for a strong and forward-looking India-Italy partnership with our people at the centre.

Modi is Prime Minister of India and Meloni is President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic

Let's make do with less, but also find substitutes quickly



PULAPRE BALAKRISHNAN

THE PRIME Minister's list of measures to curb consumption of imported goods, mainly gold and oil, somehow got named "austerity" in the public discourse. In Economics, the term is used somewhat differently in the context of a crisis. I shall return to it, having first considered the PM's proposals.

Restrictions on imports are standard when a country faces a balance of payments crisis, leaving it starved of foreign exchange. In India, gold is the go-to store of value, reflecting the underdevelopment of financial instruments historically. Even where financial instruments for saving exist, the returns may not be inflation-indexed. Gold's lure is that its value rises continuously with inflation. However, saving in the form of gold does not end up with investors. It is, therefore, a "curse" for the economy, as potential purchasing power gets locked up. There is also the additional factor that we produce next to no gold even as we display a voracious appetite for it. As the import of gold is a leakage of demand and it is not an input into necessary production, there is a case for reducing it.

The case of oil is altogether different. It is the quintessential intermediate input, entering production directly or indirectly. Thus, if there is less of it, it will lower output and employment unless efficiency rises or substitutes are found. The same is true of LPG supplies. It has been said that the current shortage has been forced upon India by the war in West Asia, but it is not clear that the government made any effort to secure oil from Russia and Iran defying US President Donald Trump's sanctions.

Be that as it may, there is no denying the potential hardships ahead. To avoid this, alternative sources of energy will have to be found. Domestically produced electricity will have to replace imported oil and gas. A shift to electric cars would be costly for India, for unlike China, it does not yet have the capacity to produce them at scale. But a shift to electricity for cooking is entirely feasible. However, it is not a choice that can be made from Delhi. Electricity is generated at the level of states. For decades, the state electricity boards have been forced to supply electricity cheaply to select groups. It is questionable whether they have the capacity to rapidly ramp up the supply needed to replace LPG.

The declining cost and rising availability of solar power in India, too, is irrelevant. The Kerala State Electricity Board, for instance, has conveyed that it does not have the funds to invest in the equipment needed to store the electricity generated by households. Such funds will have to be found, though, as geopolitics is likely to keep India under pressure. In fact, this is the perfect moment for India to strive for a dual energy transition, from foreign to domestic sources of supply and from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. So, while the PM's exhortation makes sense, the government must lay out clearly how energy from alternative sources can be found. The government's regulatory bodies have also been far too lax in bringing automakers to heel by imposing energy efficiency norms for cars produced in India. It seems a war was needed for the government to even recognise the importance of energy security.

Finally, I turn to the macroeconomic aspect of austerity. The term entered the Economics lexicon from the debate in the 1930s between John Maynard Keynes and Friedrich Hayek on how to deal with the Great Depression (1929-1939). Austerity had meant a compression of aggregate demand, ostensibly to revive the economy. Keynes had thought of this as the wrong thing to do, for the Depression reflected a shortage of demand due to the collapse of private investment. Hayek acknowledged the reduction in output that would follow austerity initially but thought it necessary to compensate for the excessive demand that had caused the crisis. In India today, making do with less imported oil and cooking gas may be necessary but unless substitutes are found quickly, it is likely to lead to a loss of output. If such a loss materialises, it would come on the heels of a comprehensive slowing down of the economy that commenced even before the war in West Asia — in 2024, M Parameswaran and I estimated that of the 11 sectors at the initial level of disaggregation of national income, the majority had slowed after 2014, with only real estate growing faster.

Balakrishnan is the author of India's Economy from Nehru to Modi: A Brief History

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Flawed system

A SYSTEM founded on privilege can never truly comprehend the atrocities a candidate faces merely to appear for an exam meant to smooth out the irregularities created by the system ('Exam fiascos rob me of a chance at a better life', *IE*, May 19). Authorities with the power to iron out the obstacles rising out of bureaucracy and corruption must act considering the time-sensitive nature of these issues. Because K M Manorama's story is not an exception, it is the rule. And with every passing day of delay, a life is foreclosed.

Niyati Arora, New Delhi

Protest Saranda

THE SLOW erosion of the Saranda forests in Jharkhand reveals a republic increasingly estranged from the quiet discipline of ecological restraint ('On Saranda forests, Jharkhand must heed SC', *IE*, May 19). Beneath its ancient sal canopy survives a delicate continuum of elephant migration, tribal memory and wilderness consciousness refined through centuries of coexistence. Elephant corridors are not mere passages through wilderness but living arteries of instinct carrying generations of migratory memory across the terrain.

Vijay Singh Adhikari, Nainital

THE JHARKHAND government's repeated prevarication on the Saranda sanctuary notification is difficult to justify, particularly after the Supreme Court has explicitly clarified that Forest Rights Act protections remain intact under wildlife sanctuary status ('On Saranda forests, Jharkhand must heed SC', *IE*, May 19). The false choice being constructed between conservation and tribal rights is politically convenient but factually unsustainable and must be discarded.

Abbharna Barathi, via email



ASHOK PANKAJ, POORNIMA M
AND RAMANDEEP KAUR

IN A recent report on school education, NITI Aayog has flagged two problems. One, the persistently high number of out-of-school children, and two, weak learning outcomes that frustrate much of the hard-earned achievements of universal enrolment at the primary and upper-primary levels. With four out of 10 children aged 6-17 years not in school, a deepening crisis in learning levels, and average years of schooling lower than developed countries, the pursuit of the goals of Viksit Bharat would be challenging.

Out-of-school children are higher in rural areas, among SCs, STs and Muslims, and are concentrated in a few states. Further, it is higher in boys than in girls, because boys are often expected to support family income at an early stage.

A recent study on out-of-school children shows that high aspiration of parents for education of their children, especially among the poor and the marginalised, co-exists with high levels of disillusionment from school education, leading to withdrawal of children from schools. NFHS-5 shows that a significant proportion of adolescents disen-

Rigid administrative norms, and limited school autonomy deprive migrants, and homeless children

Not enrolment, problem is school dropouts

gagement on schooling due to a lack of interest, non-fulfilment of aspirations, and discouraging school experiences. There are also other and sometimes correlated factors, like poverty, migration, gender and disability barriers, and spatial factors. General incentives like uniforms, books, mid-day meals etc. are not very effective for such children.

Second, secondary and higher secondary schools are not adequate. The distance and safety concerns of girls are barriers for their continuing school beyond upper-primary level. Language problems, inadequate infrastructure, dysfunctional WASH facilities, and the absence of a supportive learning environment are other factors.

Third, rigid administrative norms and limited school autonomy deprive migrants and homeless children. Denial of admission, non-issuing of transfer certificates, and restricted access to welfare-linked entitlements (their non-portability), non-recognition of caste certificates of other states, often hinder such enrolment.

Fourth, while policy attention has largely focussed on the 6-14 age

group, an obligation under the RTE Act, the problem is more pronounced at the secondary and higher secondary levels. Fifth, while technology-enabled initiatives like the PRABANDH portal at the national level and the School Har Din Aaye (SHARDA) portal in UP have strengthened identification, tracking, and monitoring of out-of-school children, implementation challenges persist. Integration of technology-driven tracking mechanisms with community-level interventions can ensure completion of school education.

As India moves towards the fulfilment of the vision of "Viksit Bharat" by 2047, SDG-4 goals by 2030, and with the rollout of the NEP 2020, it is of utmost importance to recognise the gravity of the problem of out-of-school children, make a holistic assessment of its magnitude, and focus more on 14-years-plus children. There is a need to move towards strategies that recognise the interdependence of household conditions, school-side factors, and systemic and governance challenges.

Pankaj is professor, Poornima is assistant professor and Kaur is senior research associate, Council for Social Development



CHANDRIKA SOYANTAR

SHASHI THAROOR, writing in these pages ('At India-Nordic Summit, turn historical sambandh into future partnership', *IE*, May 14), framed the India-Nordic Summit as an opportunity to convert sambandh into strategic alignment. The missing dimension is capital. The Nordic arc spans technology, sustainability, shipping and clean energy across Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Iceland. Within it, Norway stands apart — steward of the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, at a moment when India is one of the few economies capable of absorbing long-duration capital at scale.

India, Norway need a sovereign investment corridor

Norway's Government Pension Fund Global (GPF) holds patient sovereign capital of \$2.1 trillion, which is more than half of India's GDP, and is owned by 5.5 million Norwegians — fewer than the population of Surat. The GPF's inheritance of \$382,000 per citizen against \$100,000 income — Norway's answer to Fafnir's greed — is one of the greatest acts of intergenerational discipline in modern finance and civilisation. India's share is 1.5 per cent of the portfolio — a fraction for the world's fifth-largest economy. The real question is not what each side wants. It is what the summit yields for both.

Norway has sovereign capital in search of long-duration growth. India offers one of the world's deepest long-duration growth opportunities. The India-Nordic Summit is where the two meet. Norway's krone rises

with Brent crude. India's rupee falls with every spike. In 1990, India pledged gold to avert default. That same year, Norway made its first quiet deposit into what became the GPF. Compulsion versus discipline. Oil wealth and oil dependence form a natural complementarity — one capable of funding the transition beyond oil.

Norway's GPF holds \$34.6 billion across 575 Indian companies. Between 2024 and 2025, most FPIs reduced exposure. The

Norway has sovereign capital in search of long-duration growth. India offers one of the world's deepest long-duration growth opportunities

GPF — singularly — increased. Patient. Sovereign. Counter-cyclical. Sovereign capital of this scale requires clarity, credibility, and visibility. India's National Infrastructure Pipeline — toll roads, green hydrogen, offshore wind, port logistics — is the asset class designed for such capital. The National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 adds \$174 billion in brownfield assets. Resurgent SOEs across energy, defence and logistics add further depth. Global sovereign capital is increasingly selective. Few economies combine scale, absorption, demographics, and depth as India now does.

What is needed is not MoUs but a bespoke sovereign investment corridor — one that is ring-fenced for GPF participation, aligned with governance, tax, currency risk-sharing, and Norway's Council on Ethics.

Norway cast off its oil anchor. Discipline held. It now sails global capital markets. India, too, is casting off. The anchor is heavy. All sails are in place — wide and trimmed. For Norway, India's growth is the wind. For India, Norway's capital is the tailwind.

The Prime Minister was in Oslo for the first such visit in 43 years. The Arctic and the Indian monsoon are increasingly understood to be interconnected. The two sovereigns are linked at a level deeper than capital. The Bifrost already exists. The summit must now widen it — broad enough for the scale of flows, durable enough for their duration. The question is no longer about bilateral ties. It is about capital alignment at scale.

The writer is an investment banker and founder-director at Amarisa Capital Advisors

Reliance Industries-led consortium stole ONGC's share of gas: Govt to SC

Pressure movement, not theft: Singhvi counters AG before 3-judge bench

Ananthakrishnan G
New Delhi, May 19

IN A dispute with a Reliance Industries Limited-led consortium over gas migration in the Krishna Godavari (KG) basin, located off the Andhra Pradesh coast, the Centre Tuesday accused the consortium of stealing the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's share of natural gas.

Attorney General R Venkataramani, who appeared for the Centre, told a three-judge bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Jyotsna Jyotsna Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi: "There were two blocks. ONGC had a block, they had a block. Gas migrated. You (RIL-led consortium) virtually committed a

theft of my gas and you are accountable for that."

Venkataramani said this as Senior Advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for the RIL, commenced his arguments on its appeal challenging the February 14, 2025 order of the Delhi High Court order which overturned a 2018 international arbitration tribunal ruling and an order of a High Court single-judge bench in favour of the RIL-led consortium.

Singhvi told the bench about the "huge risk and huge investment" in the project, and said "ONGC did nothing at the time they got" their blocks.

Countering the allegations of gas theft, he said it was only a natural phenomenon due to pressure differences beneath

the sea and cannot be termed something done deliberately.

"When you extract by a natural process of pressure, from the nearby sea block, some oil will always flow and migrate. That has nothing to do with voluntariness, deliberation, intent. That becomes a bugbear with them to add it to what they call stolen gas. There is nothing, it is a pressure movement," Singhvi told the bench.

Justice Bagchi asked, "So no artificial barrier is there between the true definition of blocks right? Only coordinates as per the longitude and latitude." Singhvi said there cannot be any such barrier. "No, it cannot be, by definition. It's not an enclave. The seabed is 2,000 feet below." He said the government is the ultimate beneficiary through royalty, taxation etc irrespective of where the gas came from.

The case has its origins in a

production-sharing contract (PSC) signed by an RIL-led consortium with the Centre in 2000, securing rights to explore and extract natural gas from the KG basin. The contract covered various entitlements, responsibilities and revenue-sharing arrangements.

The RIL-led consortium commenced commercial production from the assets situated adjacent to ONGC's Godavari petroleum and mining lease and the KG-DWN-98/2 block, in April, 2009. The RIL then held 60% stake in the relevant KG-D6 block, BP 30% and Niko Resources 10%.

The conflict arose in 2013 when ONGC claimed that RIL had illegally extracted natural gas from its blocks. The state-run company accused RIL of drilling wells near the boundaries of its hydrocarbon blocks which allowed gas to flow from ONGC's fields to RIL's KG-D6

block between 2009 and 2013, leading to "unjust enrichment" for the latter.

The government then sought disgorgement from RIL and its partners BP Plc and Niko Resources, demanding around \$1.5 billion, and additional \$174 million in interest. The RIL invoked the arbitration clause. In July 2018, the arbitral tribunal ruled in favour of RIL, rejecting the government's claims and stating that the PSC did not prohibit contractors from extracting and selling gas that had migrated from an external source.

The Centre challenged this in the Delhi High Court where a single-judge bench dismissed it in May 2024. Following an appeal, the High Court division bench set aside the single-judge bench's order and the arbitral award, saying they were contrary to the settled position of law.

'Separate free-ranging Asiatic Lion population under consideration, states are being consulted'



BHUPENDER YADAV
UNION MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

WITH INDIA set to host the first global summit on big cats early next month, in which representatives of over 90 countries are expected to adopt a 'Delhi Declaration' on protection of seven big cats, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **Bhupender Yadav**, in an e-mail interview with **Nikhil Ghanekar**, said that having a separate free-ranging population of Asiatic Lions is under consideration. The translocation of Asiatic Lions from Gujarat to Madhya Pradesh has not been implemented despite Supreme Court's orders, but Yadav said states concerned are being consulted. He also said under Project Cheetah, the intention is not to keep the spotted cats in enclosures permanently. Edited excerpts.

Apart from the Delhi declaration, is the government and IBCA secretariat working on specific projects to translocate big cats from India's forests to countries (other than Cambodia) to help them revive their population?

Countries like Kazakhstan have initiated tiger reintroduction but as far as IBCA is concerned, no proposal for sourcing big cats from India has been received.

India's Asiatic Lions continue to remain an isolated, island population, with Gujarat refusing to translocate lions to Madhya Pradesh, despite Supreme Court's orders to move some to Kuno National Park. With zoonotic diseases and contagious ones like canine distemper virus still a threat, what is the Union government doing to urge the Gujarat government to nudge it towards translocation?

The conservation and long-term security of the Asiatic Lion is a matter of national importance. Over the years, significant conservation efforts by Gujarat, supported by the central government, have resulted in a steady recovery of the Asiatic lion population and expansion of its distribution within the Greater Gir landscape. At the same time, the importance of securing geographically separated popula-

tion as part of long-term species conservation has also been recognized in various scientific and policy discussions. The issue of establishment of an additional free-ranging population has been under consideration in consultation with state governments concerned, scientific institutions and expert bodies.

The Central government continues to support scientific assessment, disease surveillance, habitat preparedness, prey augmentation and inter-agency coordination relating to lion conservation. Measures relating to wildlife health monitoring, veterinary preparedness and surveillance for infectious diseases have also been strengthened in recent years.

Conservation decisions involving translocation of large carnivores require careful consideration of ecological, genetic, veterinary, social and management-related factors, along with coordination between the states concerned.

A fallout of tigers found outside tiger reserves has been conflict with humans, and poaching. Even as tiger numbers in Vidarbha and MP remain large, and despite healthy population growth, poaching rings threaten them. What steps have been taken?

Protection and monitoring mechanisms in tiger landscapes have been strengthened over the years through coordinated efforts of NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority), State Forest Departments and multiple enforcement agencies. Emphasis is on protection in landscapes witnessing increasing tiger dispersal and breeding populations outside core tiger reserves, especially across parts of Central India.

A combination of field protection, tech-based surveillance, intelligence gathering and inter-agency coordination is being used to tackle poaching and illegal wildlife trade. Several tiger-bearing states have strengthened Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) deployments, anti-poaching camps, patrolling intensity and surveillance systems through platforms such as M-STrIPES.

Many cheetahs still remain in enclosures and a lot of manpower and resources are spent on their tracking, tranquilizing them... When will all enclosures cease to exist? And till when will authorities tranquilize cheetahs to get them back to forested landscapes, instead of letting them co-exist with humans?

Project Cheetah is still in an early and carefully managed phase of reintroduction. It is being implemented in accordance with the Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India and management recommendations of the Cheetah Project Steering Committee and technical experts.

The use of enclosures at present is part of a scientific acclimatization and monitoring process followed globally in carnivore reintroductions, particularly when animals are being introduced into a landscape after a long ecological absence. These enclosures help in assessing animal health, adaptation, ranging behaviour and hunting ability before full free-ranging conditions are established.

The intention is not to keep cheetahs in enclosures permanently. As more individuals settle, establish stable home ranges, and adapt to local conditions, intensive management is expected to reduce. The pace of this transition has to be guided by ecological realities, animal behaviour, prey availability, landscape conditions, and scientific assessment rather than fixed timelines. At the same time, occasional tranquilization and retrieval operations are sometimes necessary from the perspective of animal, human safety, veterinary intervention, genetic management, or conflict prevention.

FULL INTERVIEW ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

'Violence is unacceptable': HC on 2022 protest outside Nadda's home

Sohini Ghosh
New Delhi, May 19

REFUSING TO discharge nine protesters for alleged attempt to murder by burning effigies outside former BJP president and now Union Health Minister J P Nadda's house in 2022, the Delhi High Court last week held that "merely because nobody got injured", it cannot be said that the offence is not made out.

The nine protesters, students pursuing professional degrees at the time, had assembled outside Nadda's official residence in June 2022 at Motilal Nehru Marg, protesting against the Agniveer scheme. Nadda was the BJP president at the time.

An FIR was lodged at the Tughlak Road police station for charges under the IPC alleging attempt to murder, mischief by fire or explosives, rioting, unlawful assembly, criminal conspiracy, among other charges.

A trial court had dismissed the accused's plea for discharge, specifically for the charges under IPC sections 307 (attempt to murder) and 436 (mischief by fire or explosives) in November 2025, following which they moved the Delhi HC challenging the trial court's order. Justice Manoj Jain, in an order on May 16, termed the protesters' act as "a brazenly disruptive activity", defined whether such acts can even constitute "protest".

The protesters, represented by advocate Vimal Tyagi, had argued that since no deadly weapon was used by them and their intention was only to protest, no case was made out for attempt to murder.

"... CCTV footage relied upon by both sides completely demolishes the argument of learned counsel for petitioners that it was simply a protest," Justice Jain reasoned.

Nashik TCS case demolitions: HC pulls up civic body as 31-year-old claims house duly registered

Zeeshan Shaikh
Mumbai, May 19

WHEN THE Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation (CSMC) sent bulldozers pre-dawn to pull down houses in connection with the search for Nashik TCS case accused Nida Khan, they may have razed one structure wrongly. This is what Hanif Khan, 31, has alleged, in his petition to the Bombay High Court.

On Monday, hearing his plea along with that of AIMIM corporator Matin Patel, premises linked to whom were also demolished, the Aurangabad Bench of Bombay HC Monday slammed the CSMC, saying it did not appear to have followed procedures in carrying out the action.

The demolition drive on May 13 covered two properties allegedly linked to Patel as well as the house where Nida stayed, which Khan says he had bought. Additionally, neighbouring structures, including a building material shop and another residential property, were also demolished.

Khan, a handyman who takes up small construction jobs, says he had bought the 600 sq ft house, in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar's Kausar Bagh, just two months earlier. Patel, an acquaintance, sought his permission to use it during the period Nida was allegedly sheltered there briefly by him, as per Khan.

All his family's savings had gone into the house, and he had all the papers, he told *The Indian Express*. Documents submitted by him in court show he and his brother-in-law purchased the house for Rs 27 lakh, through a registered sale deed executed on March 12 this year, at the Joint Sub Registrar Office in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar.

Nida, one of the TCS em-

Hanif Khan submits papers establishing he bought the house where Nida Khan briefly stayed



Hanif Khan's residence was demolished on May 13 by the Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation. FILE

ployees facing allegations of conversion attempts at the Nashik office, was reportedly living there when police were looking for her.

Asked about Khan and Patel's submissions to court regarding the demolition, the CSMC said it had followed all due procedures, and that the structures razed were unauthorised. On why a notice purportedly bearing Matin Patel's name was initially pasted on a property which Khan says was his, Chhatrapati Shivaji Mayor Sameer Rajurkar told *The Indian Express*: "It is the administration which drafted the notice and they will be in a better position to answer these questions."

Officials from the corporation's Encroachment Department (ED) declined to comment, saying the matter was sub-judice.

Khan says: "It was heartbreaking. This was the first house the family had ever

owned... We thought instead of spending our life in rented homes, we should buy something of our own... We were waiting to renovate it before shifting in."

Khan told court he and brother-in-law Syed Sarwar Syed Afsar had purchased the property from one Aamer Khan Akhtar, paying Rs 3 lakh as earnest money in February and the remaining Rs 24 lakh at the time of registration.

According to Khan, sometime in first week of May, Patel, whom he describes as a friend and local political figure, asked if he could use the premises temporarily. "He said some guests were coming. Since he was known to us and was a local corporator, I did not hesitate," Khan says.

On May 8, police arrested Nida from the premises. A day later, the corporation sent a notice alleging the house where she was found was "illegal" and lacked municipal permissions.

In their writ petition before the HC, Khan and his relatives said the notice was initially issued in the name of "Matin Shaikh" — purportedly a reference to Matin Patel. Later, Khan and Syed said, municipal officials added their names onto the notice by hand, before affixing it to the structure.

Accusing the civic body of denying him a fair hearing, Patel called the demolition politically motivated as AIMIM to which he belongs is the main opposition in the municipal corporation.

Soon as they got the notices, Khan as well as Patel first challenged them before the civic authority, asking why they were given only three days to submit ownership and permission documents. They said doing so within such a short period was impossible and sought a 15-day extension. Simultaneously, they moved the Bombay HC seeking a stay on any demolition action.

"During the hearing on May 12, the CSMC's lawyer orally assured the court that no action would be taken for seven days. However, the same day, the corporation again pasted a 24-hour notice on these structures. This was to expire at 12 pm on May 13, but they carried out the demolition even before that deadline ended," Abhaysinh Bhosale, who is representing Khan, told *The Indian Express*.

In their submission to court on the demolitions, the petitioners said mandatory safeguards laid down by Supreme Court were not followed. Their lawyers argued that since the structures had already been razed, merely challenging the demolition notices was no longer sufficient and the legality of the demolition action itself must now be examined.

The court permitted the petitioners to amend their pleas accordingly.

Man held with 570 gm of gold near Nepal border: Cops

Kathmandu: An Indian was arrested from Jhapa district near the Nepal-India border on Monday along with a huge amount of gold and foreign currency. Police have seized 570 gm of gold, amounting to Rs 14.43 million, USD 20,000, Indian bank notes of Rs 85,410, two mobile sets and various documents from the possession of the accused, Param Pathak. PTI

SC revives 13-yr-old plea challenging govt control of temples

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 19

THE SUPREME COURT has revived a bunch of petitions challenging the constitutional validity of laws that regulate the administration of Hindu temples and religious endowments in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Puducherry. A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and S C Sharma on Monday said it will hear the petitions, the first of which was filed by the late Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 2012, starting July 24.

Hearing the petitions last year, the apex court had noted that the pleas challenge the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act of multiple states and said the High Courts should hear them first, as local issues may be involved. "Having regard to the challenge made to various provisions of the Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act, 1959, but also the Puducherry Act of 1932, as well as the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1987," the bench had said in the April 1, 2025, order.

"We find that the better way of ventilating the grievances of the petitioners herein is to assail the provisions of the respective Acts before the respective High Courts, so as to enable the High Courts to better appreciate the dimensions of challenge of the provisions of the respective Acts. In the circumstances, we dispose of these petitions by reserving liberty to the petitioners herein to file their writ petitions before the respective High Courts," it said. Petitions were then filed seeking review of this order.

The review plea filed through Advocate Survidutt Sundaram in the main matter, Dayananda Saraswati Swamiji and Others Vs State of Tamil Nadu and Others, pointed out that there is a "fundamental error apparent on the face of the record" in that the apex court order says that the scheme of the three laws "may" be distinct. The Dayanand Saraswati plea had challenged the laws in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry.

Termining the "assumption... incorrect", the review plea said the court deciding to send them back after the matter has remained pending before it for the last 13 years is a "manifest miscarriage" of justice. "In doing so, the court failed to appreciate that the right to approach this court is itself a fundamental right under Article 32..."

The petition said they will have to additionally "challenge the same Andhra Pradesh Act, 1987 before two high courts, the Telangana High Court and the Andhra Pradesh High Court."

Taking note, the bench on Monday recalled the April 2025 order and decided to hear the original petitions afresh.

• TENSIONS SPIRALLED AFTER THE KILLING OF THREE CHURCH LEADERS ON MAY 13 — KUKIS, NAGAS RESPONDED BY TAKING HOSTAGES

Wedding, abductions, missing men: Manipur remains on edge

Sukrita Baruah
Guwahati, May 19

ON MAY 12, the Thiumai family had gathered at their native village to celebrate their youngest brother Paisho's wedding. As the wedding party dispersed the next morning, they got caught up in the mass abductions that gripped Manipur following the death of three church leaders. One week later, nobody seems to know where two of the groom's elder brothers are.

They are among six Naga men who have been missing since May 13, when, amidst tensions between Manipur's Kuki and Naga communities, dozens of villagers from both sides were abducted and held captive.

After a day-long stand-off, both sides had released 14 such captive individuals each on the morning of May 15. However, these six men were not among those released.

Naga groups allege that they had been taken captive by Kuki groups, while the latter

maintain that they have released all hostages and have no information about these six men. Security forces are now undertaking extensive search operations to locate them, even as Naga groups say they will continue to keep 14 Kuki men hostage until the six men are located.

The hostage crisis is playing out in the Kuki-Zo majority Kangpokpi district and the Naga-majority Senapati district.

The wedding took place in Konsakhul, a Liangmai Naga village in Kangpokpi. Three members of the groom's family are missing: His brother Manu Thiumai, a pastor at a Baptist church in nearby Leimakhong who also runs a school there; another brother, Dilip Thiumai, who works at the Leimakhong military station; and a relative named Phenri Lungbou. Their nephew, Simon Chawang, said the last time he saw them was on the morning of May 13.

That morning, tensions escalated in the state when three



Women protest demanding the safe release of six missing Naga civilians, in Kanglatongbi of Imphal West district on Tuesday. PTI

church leaders from the Thado Baptist Association were killed in an attack on their vehicles while they were travelling from Churachandpur to Kangpokpi. Kuki groups alleged that Naga armed groups were responsible, and abducted a number of Naga vil-

lagers "in response." "Phenri drives an autorickshaw, and he and another autodriver, Kaliwangbou (who is also missing), had taken a group of women from the village to the market in Khurkhal (Imphal West) to sell produce. They were all stopped while

they were travelling," according to Simon.

While Kuki groups say that they do not have information about these men, the wives of three of these men are among the 14 who had been held captive and released.

"Even they don't know anything because they said that they were dragged out of their vehicles by villagers of a neighbouring Kuki village, and then separated from the men. It's been a week, and we don't have any clear information about whether they're dead or alive," he said.

After the Konsakhul villagers were abducted, Naga groups had abducted more than two dozen Kuki villagers in Senapati. They still continue to hold 14 of them.

Taphou village headman Lenkhomang Chongloi said that most of those abducted had left the village that morning to gather firewood in the jungle.

"They crossed Senapati town without knowing what was happening in different

parts of Manipur. By the time we heard that there had been an ambush attack and abductions near Leimakhong, we reached out and told them to be alert and careful. But they were captured at Senapati while returning," he said.

"We don't know exactly where they are being held, but we have heard that they are safe so far. There are discussions happening about this between the civil society organisations and both Deputy Chief Ministers," he said.

While the two villages wait for the return of their men, they find themselves in a situation that has become all-too familiar in a state which has been scarred and divided by over three years of conflict.

Simon had also left the Konsakhul earlier that morning and is now unable to make his way back.

"Even those who have been released are being kept safe elsewhere because we don't have passage to our village, the road to which passes through Kuki villages," Simon said.

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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

• POLITY

Why India needs to empower local bodies



EXPERTS EXPLAIN
DEVESH KAPUR & ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN

“WHATEVER THE reasons, the fact remains our local bodies are not, as a rule, shining examples of success and efficiency...” That is not a contemporary lament but one expressed in 1925 by the chairman of the municipality of Allahabad, Jawaharlal Nehru. A hundred years on, little has changed.

The third tier of government — comprising rural and urban local bodies — is prominently absent in the federalism debates, which tend to focus exclusively on the Centre and the states. It is the stepchild of Indian federalism and the offending step-parent is the second tier, namely state governments, directly above and controlling it.

Dependence on state governments

Consider the abject neglect of the urban third tier in personnel, finances and expenditures.

In the United States and China, polar opposites as political systems, nearly two-thirds of government employees work for local governments. In India, just over 10 per cent do (see Figure 1). As a result, most public services are delivered by the third tier in the former, very few in India.

Next, consider finances. Self-generated resources in addition to personnel are critical to efficient delivery. Figure 2 illustrates how poor the performance of urban local bodies (ULBs) has been compared to the other two tiers. The Centre and states have been able to increase the resources they generate for themselves to fund service delivery by a factor of 2 and 2.5 respectively, over nearly six decades.

In contrast, the urban third tier's share in tax generation has broadly stagnated at a measly 0.3 per cent of GDP. As a result, expenditures by the third tier are abysmally low (less than 1 per cent of GDP) and the states and Centre spend roughly 15 and 20 times more, respectively. Poor own tax generation means that even meagre expenditures are funded from outside resources, eviscerating any agency that the third tier might have and reinforcing their dependence on state governments.

This is especially striking, given rapid urbanisation and the passage of the 73rd and 74th Amendments granting constitutional status to local governments that came into effect in 1993.

Monetising land

The deficiencies of the third tier have something to do with a deeper pathology

• Where third tier of governance stands

Figure 1: Structure of employment across three tiers of government: China, India, and the United States

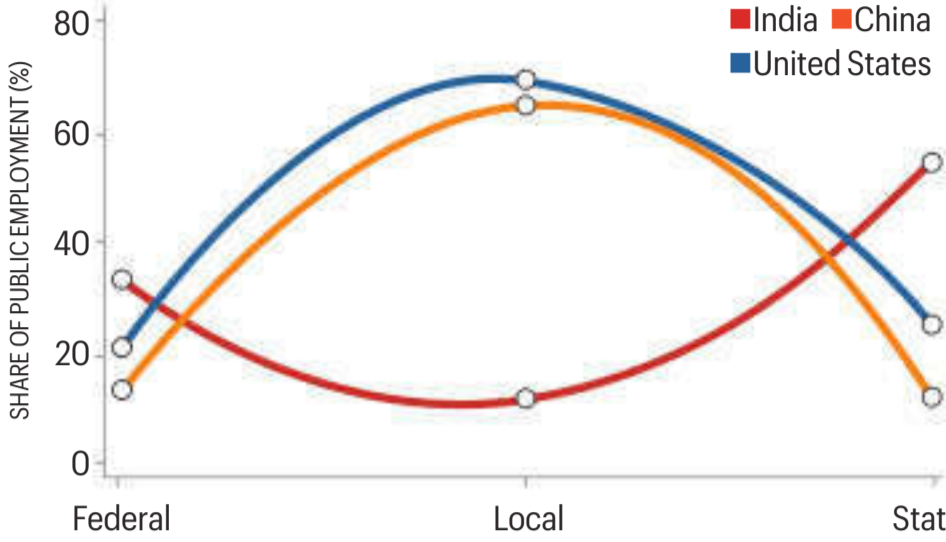


Figure 2: Own tax resources (% of GDP)

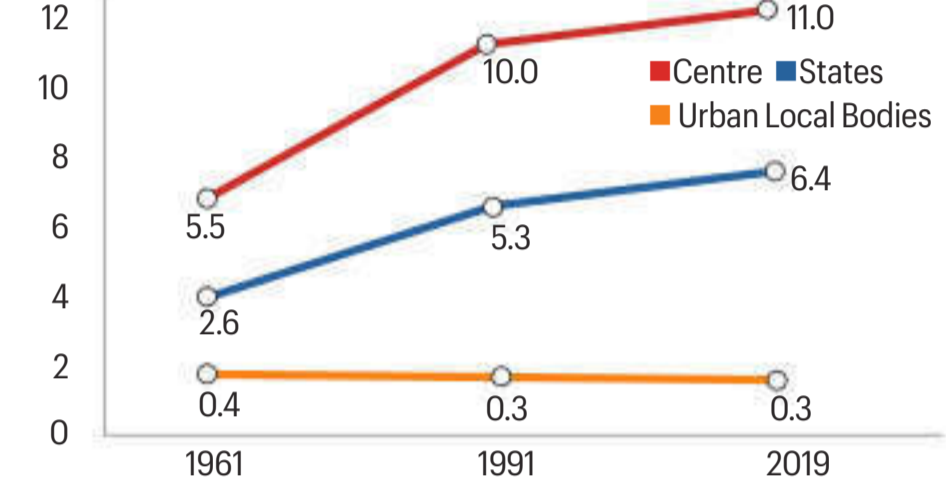


Figure 3: Tax and non-tax revenues from land, China and India, 1999-2022 (% of GDP)



relating to land. One manifestation of this is suggested by a contrast between China and India. In relatively land scarce countries, rapid economic growth leads to rapid increases in land and property values relative to gross domestic product (GDP). This has been true of China and of India. As such, land provides a potentially buoyant source of fiscal revenues.

But as Figure 3 shows, over the period of rapid economic growth in the two countries, China was able to fiscalise rising land values, and more from selling land than taxing it. The irony was that a communist country privatised land to capture some of the revenues. China's land revenues increased from less than 1 per cent of GDP to more than 10 per cent of its peak.

In contrast, India's revenues have stagnated at about 1 per cent of GDP through

India vs the Big Two

In the US and China, nearly two-thirds of government employees work for local governments.

In India, just over 10 per cent do.

Debates on federalism can no longer be confined to Centre-state relations. Good governance of cities must be on the list of priorities too

the entire growth phase. Put differently, the Chinese government's collections from land revenue for every urban resident that was available for spending was about 15 times more than India's in 1999; at its peak in 2020, this multiple increased to 225. More rapid growth and the superior ability to fiscalise land values increased the revenue envelope for China dramatically but by very little for India.

The inability to fiscalise land owes to socialist ideology interacting with vested interests, compounded by a controlling second tier and an enfeebled third tier. Socialism inspired misguided laws such as the Urban Land Ceiling Act of 1976, which simply fragmented land into small parcels with little excess identified and a trivial amount acquired by the state for public purposes.

Even allowing for this, several state entities — mothballed public sector enterprises, ports, the defence department, state-managed temples — did have vacant or encroached-upon land which has never been monetised. The Indian state never had the monopoly on land that China had and hence could never have sold as much land as China's local bodies, but it did not even try. Scarcity is the parent of rent-seeking. But perhaps the worst outcome of these laws (along with land use controls and building by-laws) were severe distortions in land and rental markets that were a prime driver of “black money”. No sector in India has been as contaminated with black money as the real estate sector.

The result is that ULBs in India are caught in a low-equilibrium political economy trap. While higher tiers (both Centre and states) use their devolution powers to control and influence lower levels, the latter are both unable and unwilling to tax their proximate citizens. The result is chronic resource constraints with high dependency: a lever of political and administrative control of local governments by states that severely constrains their autonomy.

This affliction has been particularly pernicious for ULBs, whose low managerial capacity has been a collateral damage of the stranglehold of state governments on appointments. City governments lack the power to appoint municipal commissioners and their senior management teams or over appointments, promotions and disciplining their staff. Even where the functions are notionally transferred to local bodies, the staff remains accountable to the state governments.

Is there a way forward?

Greater financial resources became available to ULBs through Central government schemes for urban development such as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and its successor, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), that tied funding to states and cities committing themselves to structural reforms. Successive Finance Commissions have also allocated more re-

sources to the third tier in recent years.

These additional resources are still a fraction of what ULBs need. More importantly, Central schemes are top-down initiatives with little citizen participation and have been unable to address the binding constraints of weak administrative and technical capacity of ULBs and the overbearing role of state governments. The truth is that state governments that are sometimes victims of over-centralising by New Delhi are themselves perpetrators vis-à-vis their own third tier. As the economist Raja Chelliah famously said, everyone wants decentralisation but only for the higher level.

Even as India is becoming more urban, its urban infirmities are putting a brake on a key locus of innovation and growth. The debates on industrial policy and their role in boosting China's growth belie the reality that most industrial policies in China are formulated and implemented by its cities and not by bureaucrats in the national or provincial capitals. Fierce competition among cities in China reinforces the fierce competition among firms, driving that country's exceptional dynamism.

In India, the lack of competition drags it down although this is slowly beginning to happen. As New Delhi gets suffocatingly polluted and Bengaluru immobilisingly congested, people and investors will seek other destinations. The rise of second and third-tier cities — Bhubaneswar, Coimbatore, Indore, Kochi, Mohali, Surat — is encouraging but needs to be supported.

The push and pull dynamic unleashed not just by competitive federalism but also by competitive sub-federalisms could emerge as a promising force for change. Another driver could emerge from the growing weight of the urban population. While this will become manifest in the new census, the resulting intra-state delimitation will give greater weight to urban voters.

Regardless, debates on Indian federalism can no longer be confined to Centre-state relations. Empowering cities and making their governance more accountable must be integrated into these debates as well. The open-air gas chamber that Delhi has remained for decades is a reminder and indictment of cities being missing in debates on federalism.

This is the second of two pieces on the federalism debate and draws upon the authors' recent book, *A Sixth of Humanity: Independent India's Development Odyssey*, especially Chapter XIV.

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• CLIMATE

FIFA World Cup: How humidity and heat could play spoilsport

Nikhil Ghanekar
New Delhi, May 19

IN A matter of weeks, the world is set to be gripped by football World Cup fever, as an expanded, 48-team tournament will be played in the North American summer for the first time since 1994. Before the heat rises on the pitch, a new scientific analysis by the World Weather Attribution (WWA), a climate research group, has warned that human-induced climate change has made heat stress at the upcoming World Cup more likely than in 1994.

The study found that more matches will be played under humid heat conditions, which pose health risks not only to athletes, but also to fans, officials and staff. It also mapped city and venue-specific heat stress risks.

Wet bulb temperature

Researchers from Imperial College London analysed Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) across 16 venues in the United States, Mexico and Canada during the tournament period of June 11 to July 19. WBGT is a composite index that factors in the combined effect of humidity, sunlight and wind to determine how the human body can regulate internal heat and cool itself. It captures heat stress impact, rather than air temperature alone.

The research involved comparing today's climate with that of 1994, which was 0.7°C cooler on average. Using simulations, the researchers assessed how many venues were likely to see WBGT exceed 26°C. To be sure, a WBGT of 26°C translates to temperatures of roughly 30°C with mid to high humidity, or the equivalent of 38°C in dry heat, as per WWA.

The study found that at least 25% of the 104 World Cup matches were likely to be played at 26°C and higher wet bulb globe temperature. “Our research shows that climate change is having a real and measurable impact on the viability of holding World Cups during the northern hemisphere summer. The 1994 World Cup may not feel particularly distant to many adults today, yet half of human-induced climate change has happened since then,” said Friederike Otto, one of the study's authors and professor of climate science at Imperial College.

• SCIENCE OF HUMIDITY

In humid heat, the body is unable to cool down quickly enough, making it harder to regulate body temperature and raising risks of heat exhaustion.

With footballers exerting themselves in direct sunlight through high-intensity movements, their performance and endurance could be affected.

Health impact

Typically, in humid heat, the body is unable to cool down quickly enough, making it harder to regulate body temperature.

When the body is unable to cool down quickly enough, it increases the risk of heat exhaustion, heat stroke and cardiovascular disease. A landmark 2010 study theorised that sustained six-hour exposure to a wet-bulb temperature of 35°C could prove fatal. A March 2026 study, published in *Nature*, said that risks are rising even at temperatures below this threshold.

With footballers exerting themselves in direct sunlight through high-intensity movements, humid heat is expected to affect their performance and endurance. The FIFPRO, an organisation of professional players, has issued guidance recommending that when WBGT reaches 26°C or higher, heat strain becomes a real risk, which necessitates cooling and drink breaks. At 28°C and above, FIFPRO says it is unsafe for play.

However, FIFA, the global football governing body, will consider postponement only if WBGT levels exceed 32°C. Cooling breaks were first introduced during the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. As the US faced Portugal at Manaus, in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, the conditions were stifling at 30°C and 66% humidity. It prompted referee Nestor Pitana to pause the match for a hydration break in the 39th minute.

Concerns over desert heat prompted FIFA to move the 2022 Qatar World Cup to winter, for the first time.

Worst-affected matches

Southern, mid-west, and humid coastal venues face the prospect of high heat stress. The study identified six stadiums — New York MetLife Stadium (host of the final), Philadelphia Lincoln Financial Field, Kansas City Arrowhead Stadium, Miami Hard Rock Stadium, Boston Gillette Stadium and Estadio Monterrey in Mexico — as most likely to experience high humid heat.

Miami will likely see multiple games played at temperatures above 26°C WBGT. Dallas and Houston, which have cooled stadiums, face a 30% chance of enduring wet-bulb temperatures above 26°C. Both stadiums have cooling systems.

• ECONOMICS

US extends sanctions waiver for Russian crude: What it means

Sukalp Sharma
New Delhi, May 19

THE US has extended by another month its sanctions waiver on the purchase of Russian crude oil already loaded on tankers. The move is aimed at allowing more oil to reach the international market and exerting downward pressure on elevated oil prices due to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of global crude oil used to pass.

Washington had earlier allowed the sanctions waiver on importing Russian oil already at sea to expire on May 16, with no clarity on whether the waiver would be extended. However, late Monday, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced that it was being extended by another month. This is the second extension of the waiver,

which was first issued in March as the West Asia war squeezed global oil supply.

Notably, earlier on Monday, India — a top destination for Russian crude — had said that it had been buying Moscow's crude irrespective of the US waiver, and would continue to import it with commercial viability and energy security being the primary considerations.

Stabilising the market

This waiver has now been extended till June 17 through a revised General License by the US's Office of Foreign Assets Control. The initial waiver had expired on April 11, but the US then extended it to mid-May after a few days, that too after initially announcing that it won't be renewed. According to industry experts, the decision likely came after pressure from countries buying Rus-

Critical chokepoint

• Around 2.5-2.7 million barrels per day of India's crude imports — accounting for around half of its total oil imports — have transited the Strait of Hormuz in recent months.

• Most of that supply is effectively offline as vessel movements have reduced to a trickle due to the West Asia war.

sian crude to partly offset the loss of Gulf barrels due to the Strait of Hormuz closure. It could have been the case this time too.

Experts see such waivers as part of the Donald Trump administration's effort to prevent a sustained spike in international oil prices — and the consequent rise in domestic fuel prices in the US — given the mid-term elections later this year.

But this has attracted criticism from various sections in the US, who argue that it is leading to a windfall for Moscow, which would fund its war effort in Ukraine. Such arguments were also made against the similar waiver for the purchase of Iranian oil and fuel, after which the US didn't renew that.

India's Russian oil imports

While government officials consistently maintained that India didn't require a US

waiver to buy Russian oil, industry experts said that the waiver actually helped. It enabled Indian refiners to be able to take deliveries of Russian oil even on tankers sanctioned or blocked by the US, and they could deal directly with sanctioned Russian companies like Rosneft and Lukoil. Moreover, it temporarily removed the friction between Washington and New Delhi over the latter's hefty purchases of Moscow's crude.

Although India was buying significant volumes of Russian crude even before the West Asia war began, the quantity had reduced notably in the months that preceded the war, evidently due to the US imposing sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil, and amid India-US trade negotiations. Washington made a meaningful reduction in New Delhi's Russian oil imports a prerequisite for scrapping its 25% additional penal tariff.

• LAW

In stray dogs case in SC, questions of right to life, compassion to living beings

Amaal Sheikh
New Delhi, May 19

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday dismissed all challenges on stray dog management and warned that the state cannot remain a “passive spectator” to the threat of dog attacks in public spaces.

The Bench, comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and NV Anjaria, said the stray dog crisis had reached alarming proportions because of poor implementation of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) framework.

Linking the issue to Article 21 of the Constitution, the court held that the right to life includes the right to move freely in public spaces without fear of attack. “The Constitution does not envisage a society where children and elderly citizens are left to survive on the mercy of physical strength or chance,” it held.

What triggered the case?

The SC stepped into the stray dogs issue last July after taking suo motu cognizance of a news report about a six-year-old girl in New Delhi dying after a dog bite.

The case came before a Bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan, who in August 2025 directed civic authorities across Delhi-NCR to pick up stray dogs from public places and move them to shelters. It also said the dogs should not be released back onto the streets.

This triggered protests, with animal welfare groups and others arguing that the directions were contrary to the ABC Rules. The rules require stray dogs to be sterilised and vaccinated before being released into the same area from where they were picked up.

Applications were filed in the SC seeking to have this order recalled. The matter was eventually placed before a larger three-judge Bench led by Justice Vikram Nath. The court



The SC said last year that the stray dog issue had become a public safety concern.

softened the earlier directions and restored the sterilisation and release policy, while allowing authorities to keep rabid or aggres-

sive dogs in shelters. It also barred feeding in public spaces outside designated zones.

What was argued earlier?

Resident groups and families of dog bite victims argued that authorities had failed to control rising attacks, especially near schools, residential colonies, etc. They told the court that the issue could no longer be treated only as an animal welfare concern.

Animal welfare groups took the opposite view, arguing that mass removal of dogs was neither sustainable nor effective. As dogs are territorial animals, removing sterilised dogs from an area would only create space for unsterilised dogs to move in, which would worsen the problem.

Gradually, the hearings broadened into a review of how municipal bodies and states were implementing sterilisation, shelter and vaccination policies.

In November 2025, the SC passed another

interim order directing states and the National Highway Authority of India to remove stray animals from highways and institutional premises such as schools and hospitals. It also directed fencing of such premises.

What SC has now directed

The court directed every district to establish at least one fully functional ABC centre and asked states and Union Territories to expand infrastructure depending on population density and local requirements.

The court further held that authorities may take legally permissible measures, including euthanasia, in cases involving rabid, incurably ill or demonstrably dangerous and aggressive dogs posing a threat to human life, strictly in accordance with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the ABC Rules. The court also directed all High Courts to register suo motu proceedings to monitor the implementation of its directions.

What do the ABC Rules say?

The Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, issued under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, treat sterilisation and anti-rabies vaccination as the primary way to control stray dog populations. They also require dogs to be released back into the same locality after sterilisation, recognising that stray dogs are territorial by nature.

The Rules do not permit indiscriminate killing or relocation. Euthanasia is allowed only in limited situations involving rabid, terminally ill or fatally injured animals.

The case also raised constitutional concerns. Animal welfare groups relied on Article 51A(g), which asks citizens to show compassion towards living creatures. Petitioners representing residents and bite victims argued that unchecked stray dog populations affected citizens' rights under Articles 19 and 21, including the right to move freely and live safely.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

THAT BIMLA VERMA OR VIMLA SHARMA OR VIMLA VERMA W/O SH. KRISHAN DUTT VERMA, R/O 794/71, Maidan Garhi, Delhi-110068 is same & single person. My current name is BIMLA VERMA W/O SH. KRISHAN DUTT VERMA according to my Aadhar Card, Please consider my current name BIMLA VERMA for all future purposes.

Kavish pomin shah S/O.Pomin shah, 65/45, New Rohtak Road, Karol bagh, central Delhi, Delhi-110005, changed my name to kavish.

It is for general information that I,SATISH KUMAR,S/O-RAKESH KUMAR,R/O-B-72,Flat.No.09,4th Floor, Right-Side,Panchsheel-Vihar, Near-Adhar Hospital, Malviya Nagar, PO: Malviya Nagar, Dist-South Delhi, Delhi-110017 declare that name of my mother has been wrongly written as PREM VATI in my all educational documents. The actual name of my mother is RAJO DEVI which may be amended accordingly.

I,VISHANT S/O RAJNEET SINGH,R/O-D-31 FLAT.NO.C3 BUDHVIHAR TAJPUR EXTN BADARPUR,NEW DELHI-44,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO VISHANT SINGH RANA

It is for general information that I, Mohammed Zaffar S/o Hamidudi R/O House No.89B, Ground Floor, Arom Bagh, Pahar Ganj, PO: Swami Ram Tirth Nagar, Dist: Central Delhi, Delhi-110055, declare that name of mine and my wife has been wrongly written as Mohd Zaffar and Neelam Sadia Fatma respectively in the school record of my minor son Mohd. Samar, aged about 15 years. The actual name of mine and my wife is Mohammed Zaffar and Haleema Sadia respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

It is for general information that I MUDIT KAUL S/O MOHAN LAL KAUL R/O F-3, 3267, ALOK VIHAR 1, SECTOR-50, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR, NOIDA, UTTAR PRADESH-201301, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as MOHAN KAUL in my all educational documents, Voter Card No.ZYH5318761, Pan Card No.DMPUPK8079N, Birth Certificate No.248, Passport No.V4408613 and Driving License No.UP16 20150007946. The actual name of my father is MOHAN LAL KAUL, which may be amended accordingly.

I,hitherto known as Ganesh Kumar Gupta,S/o-Anil Shaw,R/O-RC-340 Subhash-Park,Khora Colony-Ghaziabad,Uttar Pradesh-201309,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ganesh Shaw.

I,ZAID SIDDIQUE S/O NAFEES AHMED,H NO-1871,HAUZ SUI WALAN,DARYAGANJ,DELHI-110002 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ZAID SIDDIQUI permanently.

I,Tejveer S/o Chander Singh,R/O Village Nilothi, Tehsil Bahadurgarh Distt Jhajjar (Haryana)-124404,have changed my name to Tejvir.

I,Sweta Sinha,W/o Shri.Murari Sinha,R/O B-104,5F,Ashoka Enclave,part-2,Sector 37,Amarnagar,Faridabad, Haryana-121003,inform that Sweta Srivastava and Sweta Sinha,both names are same person.My correct name Sweta Sinha,for all future purposes.

I,Suksham Sood S/o-Sat Dev Sood,Address-D-3/48,gali no-8,Mahavir enclave Palam Village Delhi-110045,have changed my name to Suksham Kumar Sood

I,Shivanki Dixit,W/o-Ganesh Shankar Dixit,R/O Flat.No-B8/501,Supertech Eco Village-2b,,Sector-16B Gr Noida,Gautam Budh-Nagar,Uttar Pradesh-201301,HAVE CHANGED MY Name to Shivani Mudgal,for All Future,Purposes,

I,Shambhu Kumar Sharma R/o Vill- Chhalera Sector-44, Noida(U.P) have changed my son's name from Saorabh Kumar Sharma to Sourabh Kumar Sharma for all future purposes.

I,Satender Yadav S/O Suresh Yadav R/O KH NO. 101/13,2nd Floor, Street No.14,Block-C, Kamal Vihar West, Kamalpur, Burari,Delhi-110084,have changed my name to Satendra Yadav.

I,Ajay Harjai S/O Babu Ram R/o 6/39, Ramesh Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Ajay Kumar.

I,Sarvan Kumar Gupta as of 25/3/2026,R/o-H-N-4,Top Floor,J,K,Extension,Narula Bakery,Laxminagar,East Delhi-110092,have changed my name from Sarvan Kumar to Sarvan Kumar Gupta,for all future purposes.

I,SWATI SAXENA ROY,W/O ARNAB ROY,R/O- 1075,GROUND FLOOR,SHAKTI KHAND-4, INDIRAPURAM,PO:Shirpa Sun-City DIST:GHAZIABAD UTTAR PRADESH-201014,CHANGE MY NAME TO SWATI SAXENA.

I,Sujamol Jose,W/O-Santhosh Joseph Resident-10/102, Nurses Residential Complex,Srinivaspuri Delhi-110065,have changed my name to Suja Santhosh.

I,SALLONI BHATIA W/O RISHAB BHATIA R/O HNO.65 SANDESH VIHAR PITAMPURA DELHI-110034.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SALONI BHATIA.

I,SAJID S/O RIYAZUDDIN R/o 2261,(Kalyan Singh, Mawana, Meerut(UP)-250401 have changed my name to MOHD SAJID

I,Rudransh Gupta as of 25/3/2026,R/o-H-N-4,Top Floor,J & K,Extension,Narula Bakery,Laxminagar,East Delhi-110092,have changed my name from Rudhransh Gupta to Rudransh Gupta,for all future purposes.

I,Rastra Mani Jain S/o-Vimal Kumar Jain,H.No.838A, Block-I,Palam Vihar,Gurugram(Haryana)-122017,have changed my name to Rashtia Mani Jain.

I,Rahul Panwar S/o-Pramod Kumar Panwar,R/o H.No.275/11,Devial Nagar, Basai Road,Gurugram, (Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Rahul Kumar Panwar.

I,Rabi Ahemad, S/o Ashhar Ahmed, R/O- H.No. 2883, Gali Captain Vail, Behind Golcha Cinema,Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002, have changed my name to Rabi Ahmed, permanently.

I,RAJIV KUMAR SIKRI S/O DHARAM CHAND R/O HNO.1224 SECTOR-14 SONIPAT HARYANA-131001.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAJIV SIKRI.

I,RAJAN S/O BAHADUR R/O C-47,F/F,DWARKA PURI, VIJAY ENCLAVE, DABRI, PALAM VILLAGE,DELHI-110045, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAJAN CHHETRI PERMANENTLY.

I,Preksha Pradeep Shiyamsukha W/o Mayank Sethia R/O G-86, Ground Floor,G-Block, Sector-57, Gurgaon(Haryana), have changed my name to Preksha Sethia.

I,RAJAN S/O BAHADUR R/O C-47,F/F,DWARKA PURI, VIJAY ENCLAVE, DABRI, PALAM VILLAGE,DELHI-110045, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAJAN CHHETRI PERMANENTLY.

I,POOJA AGGARWAL W/O ROHIT GARG,R/O CGH-011,DLF CAPITAL GREENS, 15-SHIVAJI MARG,MOTI NAGAR,DELHI-15,have changed my name to POOJA GARG,for all future purposes.

I,Neha Vig Panwar,D/o Harish Vig,W/o Mr.Rahul Kumar Panwar,R/O H.No.275/11,Devial-Nagar,Basai Road, Gurugram(Haryana)-122001, have changed my name to Neha Vig.

I,NARENDRA DEO TRIPATHI,S/O-SANKATHA PRASAD TRIPATHI,R/O B-306,GARDENIA SQUARE CROSSING REPUBLIC GHAZIABAD,UP-201016, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NARENDRA TRIPATHI, FOR ALL FUTURE,PURPOSES

I,N.D.TRIPATHI,S/O SANKATHA PRASAD TRIPATHI,R/O B-306, GARDENIA SQUARE CROSSING REPUBLIC GHAZIABAD UP-201016.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NARENDRA TRIPATHI,FOR ALL FUTURE,PURPOSES

I,Mukesh Kumar Sharma,S/o-Shri K L Sharma,R/O F-7c, F-Block,Near Shakarpur Thana,Laxmi Nagar,Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Mukesh Sharma.

I,Mamta Pandey W/O Shri Himanshu Pandey R/O D-202,Express Greens,Sector-1, Vaishali,Ghaziabad,U.P.-201019,have changed my name to Mamta Joshi for all future purposes.

I,MOLLY FRANCIS,MOTHER OF,SHINTO FRANCIS,RESIDENT OF-VILLAGE-ANAKKARA,P.O-CHELLARKOVIL,DISTT-IDUKKI KERALA-685509,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME,FROM MOLLY FRANCIS TO MOLLYKUTTY CHERIAN VIDE-AFFIDAVIT,DATED.19/05/2026.

I,KAZI SABIUR RAHMAN S/O,MOHAMMAD MOJIBUR RAHMAN,R/O,F.LAT.NO.T-5/1001 SUNWORLD VANALIKA, SECTOR-107,NOIDA,GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR,201301,UTTAR PRADESH,HAVE CHANGED MY name KAZI SABIHUR RAHMAN.

I,HARISH S/O ISHWAR SINGH R/O HNO.761 NEAR TODAR MAL CHOWK MUNDKA DELHI-110041.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO HARISH KUMAR LAKRA.

I,Harendra Singh,S/O-Botan Singh,R/O saraylatif kurawali, Mainpuri,U.P.-205265,declare that name of my,minor son Utkarsh D.O.B.20/08/2018,has been wrongly-Mention in Adhar card Vansh Rathaur,D.O.B.-20/08/2017 in his School Records and Birth Certificate actual name of my,Son is Utkarsh respectively,which may be amended accordingly.

I,HIMANSHU DAS,S/O VINOD DAS R/o P4-4,Grand Paeonina,Tower-P4,Sidharth Vihar,Prateek Group City, Ghaziabad(U.P.)-201009 have changed my name to HIMANSHU VISHAL DAS.

I,MAHESH CHAND GUPTA,S/O-RAM DAYAL GARG,R/O-H.NO-229, OLD-FOUR STOREY,TAGORE GARDEN,DELHI-27, have changed my name to MAHESH CHAND GARG,for all future purposes.

I,Shailesh Laxmikant Rao Parkar S/O Laxmikant Panditara Deshpande Lathkar R/O Flat No.- 1102, Floor-11, Spark Divine, Plot No. GH-230, Near Jain Mandir, Sector- Beta-02, Greater Noida, Greater Noida, G.B Nagar, U.P have changed my name to Satyram Kishor.

I,Satyam Kishor Halwai S/o Kamal Kishor R/O H No. 85, Street No. 07, Block A, New Ashok Nagar, Mayur Vihar, PO: Mayur Vihar Ph-III, Dist: East Delhi, Delhi-110096, have changed my name to Satyam Kishor.

I,SAMREEN W/O RAISUDDIN R/O 959 GALLI PATNA WALI HAVELI HISAMUDDIN BALLIMARAN DELHI 110006, have changed my name to SAMREEN BEGUM Permanently.

I,SACHIN , S/O NIRANJAN SINGH , R/O HOUSE NO 123 PALDA ROAD NOORPUR, BADSHAHPUR GURGAON HARYANA 122101 , have changed my name SACHIN KUMAR for all future purposes.

I,Ganesh Shankar,S/o-Kamlesh Kumar Dixit,R/O-Flat.No- B8/501,Supertech Eco Village-2b,,Sector-16B Gr Noida,Gautam Budh-Nagar, Uttar-Pradesh-201301,HAVE CHANGED MY Name to Kamlesh Kumar Dixit,for All Future Purposes,

I,Ramesh Joshi R/O C 611, Delhi-99 Loni Bhopra Road Gzb U.P 201002 have changed my minor son's name Pranjal Joshi to Praanjal Joshi for all future purposes.

I,Shaheena Parveen W/o Ayyub Khan R/O-A80, Radhakrishna lane, Kaushambi, Ghaziabad UP have changed my name to Shaheen Khan.

I,FRANCIS VARGHESE, FATHER OF,SHINTO FRANCIS,RESIDENT OF-VILLAGE-ANAKKARA, P.O-CHELLARKOVIL,DISTT-IDUKKI, KERALA-685509, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME,FROM FRANCIS VARGHESE TO FRANCIS V VIDE-AFFIDAVIT, DATED.19/05/2026

I,DR.D.K.MATHUR S/O SUKHDIP PRASAD MATHUR R/O F-1201, 12th.FLOOR, TOWER-F, ANTRIKSH FOREST, SECTOR 77, NOIDA (GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR) U.P.:201301 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DINESH MATHUR

I,Barkha W/o Dev Anand R/O Flat No-7021, Solomom-Height, Plot- No-8, Sector-19B, Dwarka Delhi-110075, have changed my name to Barkha Tonk.

I, Zehra Sherwani W/o Mohammad Zillius Saboor Sherwani R/O 30, Gharib Manzil, Doodhpur, Civil Lines, Aligarh have changed my name to Zehra Begum Sherwani.

I,Anant Kumar,S/o Ajay Singh,R/O-10A,Tilak Bridge,Railway-Officers Colony,Supreme-Court Metro Station,I.T.O.,New-Delhi G.P.O.,New-Delhi, Delhi-110001,have changed my name,from Anant Kumar Yadav,for all future,purposes.

I,Amit Kumar,S/o-Jagdish Chander,H.No.89,Village Isarheri(66), Tehsil Bahadurgarh Distt Jhajjar(Haryana)-124507,have changed my Minor Son's name from Jivansh to Jivansh Phalswal.

I,Naveen S/o Satytnaranain, 17/80, Gali No-1, Anand Parwat, Than Singh Nagar, Karol Bagh, Delhi-05 have changed my name to Naveen Kumar.

I,Mukul S/o Vinod Kumar, R/o S1-801, Supertech Eco Village 1, Bisrakh Road, Near Hanuman Mandir, Sec-1 Greater Noida, Bisrakh, PO: I.A. Surajpur, Distt: Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh -201306, have changed my name to Mukul Shrivastav.

I,ARUN KUMAR DHANAWAT, S/O RAM NARAYAN BEDIYA, R/O Flat.No.BT-1, Neelkanth Apartment, Durga Ashram Road, Chhatrapur,New Delhi-110074,have changed the name of my minor daughter SHANAYA,aged 4-years and she shall hereafter be known as SHANAYA DHANAWAT.

I,ARUN KUMAR DHANAWAT S/o RAM NARAYAN BEDIYA, R/O Flat.No.BT-1, Neelkanth Apartment,Durga Ashram-Road, Chhatrapur,New Delhi-110074, have changed the name of my minor daughter SHARANYA,aged 13-years and she shall hereafter be known as SHARANYA DHANAWAT.

I,ARSALAN S/O SHAHRID R/O Village Bahodpur, Post Alipur Morna, Tehsil-Mawana, Meerut(UP)-250401, have changed my name to MOHD ARSALAN.

I,SHREE OM R/O 36, Madanpur Khadar, Haddu Mohalla, Sarita Vihar, Delhi-76 have changed my name to SHRI OM.

I,ANITA,W/O RAJAN CHHETRI R/O E-15,TAMIL ENCLAVE,NEW VIJAY ENCLAVE,PALAM VILLAGE, DELHI-110045 HAVE CHANGE MY NAME TO ANITA CHHETRI PERMANENTLY

I,AKHILESH ARORA S/O OM PARKASH ARORA R/O B-4-112, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110063, have changed my name to AKHILESH PRAKASH ARORA.

I, Srushti Shailesh Lathkar D/o Shailesh Lathkar R/o Flat No- 1102, Floor-11, Spark Divine, Plot No. GH-230, Near Jain Mandir, Sector- Beta-02, Greater Noida, Greater Noida, G.B Nagar, U.P have changed my name to Srushti Lathkar for all future purposes

I,Shailesh Laxmikant Rao Parkar S/O Laxmikant Panditara Deshpande Lathkar R/O Flat No.- 1102, Floor-11, Spark Divine, Plot No. GH-230, Near Jain Mandir, Sector- Beta-02, Greater Noida, Greater Noida, G.B Nagar, U.P have changed my name to Shailesh Lathkar for all future purposes

I,Satyam Kishor Halwai S/o Kamal Kishor R/O H No. 85, Street No. 07, Block A, New Ashok Nagar, Mayur Vihar, PO: Mayur Vihar Ph-III, Dist: East Delhi, Delhi-110096, have changed my name to Satyam Kishor.

I,SAMREEN W/O RAISUDDIN R/O 959 GALLI PATNA WALI HAVELI HISAMUDDIN BALLIMARAN DELHI 110006, have changed my name to SAMREEN BEGUM Permanently.

I,SACHIN , S/O NIRANJAN SINGH , R/O HOUSE NO 123 PALDA ROAD NOORPUR, BADSHAHPUR GURGAON HARYANA 122101 , have changed my name SACHIN KUMAR for all future purposes.

I,Ganesh Shankar,S/o-Kamlesh Kumar Dixit,R/O-Flat.No- B8/501,Supertech Eco Village-2b,,Sector-16B Gr Noida,Gautam Budh-Nagar, Uttar-Pradesh-201301,HAVE CHANGED MY Name to Kamlesh Kumar Dixit,for All Future Purposes,

I,Ramesh Joshi R/O C 611, Delhi-99 Loni Bhopra Road Gzb U.P 201002 have changed my minor son's name Pranjal Joshi to Praanjal Joshi for all future purposes.

I,Shaheena Parveen W/o Ayyub Khan R/O-A80, Radhakrishna lane, Kaushambi, Ghaziabad UP have changed my name to Shaheen Khan.

I,FRANCIS VARGHESE, FATHER OF,SHINTO FRANCIS,RESIDENT OF-VILLAGE-ANAKKARA, P.O-CHELLARKOVIL,DISTT-IDUKKI, KERALA-685509, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME,FROM FRANCIS VARGHESE TO FRANCIS V VIDE-AFFIDAVIT, DATED.19/05/2026

I,DR.D.K.MATHUR S/O SUKHDIP PRASAD MATHUR R/O F-1201, 12th.FLOOR, TOWER-F, ANTRIKSH FOREST, SECTOR 77, NOIDA (GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR) U.P.:201301 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DINESH MATHUR

I,Barkha W/o Dev Anand R/O Flat No-7021, Solomom-Height, Plot- No-8, Sector-19B, Dwarka Delhi-110075, have changed my name to Barkha Tonk.

I, Zehra Sherwani W/o Mohammad Zillius Saboor Sherwani R/O 30, Gharib Manzil, Doodhpur, Civil Lines, Aligarh have changed my name to Zehra Begum Sherwani.

I,Anant Kumar,S/o Ajay Singh,R/O-10A,Tilak Bridge,Railway-Officers Colony,Supreme-Court Metro Station,I.T.O.,New-Delhi G.P.O.,New-Delhi, Delhi-110001,have changed my name,from Anant Kumar Yadav,for all future,purposes.

I,Amit Kumar,S/o-Jagdish Chander,H.No.89,Village Isarheri(66), Tehsil Bahadurgarh Distt Jhajjar(Haryana)-124507,have changed my Minor Son's name from Jivansh to Jivansh Phalswal.

I,Naveen S/o Satytnaranain, 17/80, Gali No-1, Anand Parwat, Than Singh Nagar, Karol Bagh, Delhi-05 have changed my name to Naveen Kumar.

I,Mukul S/o Vinod Kumar, R/o S1-801, Supertech Eco Village 1, Bisrakh Road, Near Hanuman Mandir, Sec-1 Greater Noida, Bisrakh, PO: I.A. Surajpur, Distt: Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh -201306, have changed my name to Mukul Shrivastav.

I,ARUN KUMAR DHANAWAT, S/O RAM NARAYAN BEDIYA, R/O Flat.No.BT-1, Neelkanth Apartment, Durga Ashram Road, Chhatrapur,New Delhi-110074,have changed the name of my minor daughter SHANAYA,aged 4-years and she shall hereafter be known as SHANAYA DHANAWAT.

I,ARUN KUMAR DHANAWAT S/o RAM NARAYAN BEDIYA, R/O Flat.No.BT-1, Neelkanth Apartment,Durga Ashram-Road, Chhatrapur,New Delhi-110074, have changed the name of my minor daughter SHARANYA,aged 13-years and she shall hereafter be known as SHARANYA DHANAWAT.

I,ARSALAN S/O SHAHRID R/O Village Bahodpur, Post Alipur Morna, Tehsil-Mawana, Meerut(UP)-250401, have changed my name to MOHD ARSALAN.

I,SHREE OM R/O 36, Madanpur Khadar, Haddu Mohalla, Sarita Vihar, Delhi-76 have changed my name to SHRI OM.

I,JAVED ANWAR ELAHI S/O ILAHI BAKSH R/O G-4, Tower 10, Amrapali Grand Society, Sector Zeta-1, Surajpur Police Station, Greater Noida, G.B Nagar PIN CODE :201308 have changed my name to ANWAR ILAHI for all future purposes

I,ISHA D/O RAMBIR R/O BHADANI(94),JHAJJAR, HARYANA-124104 have changed my name to MANISHA.

I,MasooF Ali S/o Mohd Shafi R/o-755, Masuri, Dasna, Ghaziabad, UP have changed my name to MasrooF Ali.

I,Hardik S/o. Bhupendra Kalra, R/o. Plot No-10, 2nd Floor, Anmol Vatika, Chaukhandi Road, Haldirams Tilak-Nagar, Delhi 110018, have changed my name to Hardik Kalra

I, Gunjan W/o Sanjeev Kumar, R/o A-1001, GH-07A, Stellar MI City Homes, Omicrone-3, Greater Noida, Kasana, PO Kasna, DIST: Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201310, have changed my name from Gunjan to Gunjan Chaudhary. Henceforth I would be known by the name of Gunjan Chaudhary for all future purposes.

I,Paramjit Kaur W/o Suneel Kumar Arora, R/o Flat No.202B, Tower-2B, Panchsheel Wellington, Crossing Republik, Ghaziabad, UP-201016, have changed my name to Paramjeet Arora for all future purposes.

I, Geeta W/o Anil Kumar, R/o 95-B, Shiv Puri Part-1, Dinpur, Najafgarh, Delhi-110043 have changed my name from Geeta to Geeta Gupta for all future purposes.

I, GOPAL KRISHAN GOYAL S/o Parkash Chand R/o 63, 2nd Floor Jagriti Enclave, Anand Vihar, Delhi-110092, have changed my name from GOPAL KRISHAN GOYAL TO GOPAL KRISHAN. All may note.

I, Dinu A. S. S/o Sh. Appu, R/o 284, ground floor, Masjid Moth, South extension part-2, New Delhi-110049, hereby declare that my name has been wrongly mentioned as "DINU APPU SUDARMA" in Passport No.K2742023, and my correct name is "DINU A.S" as other documents. Both names one and the same person. Henceforth, I shall be known identified by the name "DINU A.S" for all purposes.

I, DEV PRAKASH S/O Bhagwati Prasad, 466, Gali No-5A, Sihli Gate, Bhudhot Colony, Ballabgarh, Faridabad-121004, have changed my name to DEV PRAKASH NARAYAN.

I, Chirag S/o Ashok Sharma, R/o 61B, R.K. Enclave, Gali no. 184-B, Daultabad flyover, Laxman Vihar Phase-2, Gurgaon P.O. Gurgaon, Haryana, 122001, have changed my name to Chirag Sharma.

I, BABU RAM S/O Radhey Shyam, 23, Old Gur Mandi, Ward No-14, Samalkha, Panipat, Hr-132101 have changed my name to BABU Ram Goel.

I, Anupama kumari W/o Rahul Deo Vatsa R/O K1503, Samridhi Grand Avenue, Tezhzone 4, Greater Noida West, have changed my name from Anupama Vatsa to Anupama Kumari. for all future purposes.

I, Anmol Chopra, D/o Shri of Sunil Chopra, R/o H.No.III A Nehru Nagar Ghaziabad 201001 UP, have changed my name from Anmol Chopra to Anmol Dixit from 07.06.2017 after my marriage with Sh. Akash Dixit. Henceforth, I shall be known as Anmol Dixit for all purposes. Also that Anmol Chopra and Anmol Dixit both names are one same lady.

I, Ankita d/o Ghanshyam Suri R/o B-305, Gali No.-5, Shri Enclave, Pehlud Pur Banger, Delhi-110042 have changed my name as ANKITA SURI.

I, Ankit d/o Ghanshyam Suri R/o B-305, Gali No.-5, Shri Enclave, Pehlud Pur Banger, Delhi-110042 have changed my name as ANKITA SURI.

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I,Rampahl S/o-Baliya R/o-105, Near Govt. Girl School, Muana Safdar, Jind, Haryana-126112 have changed my name to Rampal for all purposes.

I,Namrata Mahalingam W/O, Shyam Pratap Reddy Basupalli R/O S-231,St. Uppal Southend, Sector 49, Gurgaon-122018 have changed my name to Namrata Mahalingam.

I,ROHIT GUPTA,S/O-MAHESH CHAND GARG,R/O CGH-011,DLF CAPITAL-GREENS,15-SHIVAJI MARG,MOTI NAGAR,DELHI-15, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ROHIT GARG,for all future purposes.

I,Hardik S/o. Bhupendra Kalra, R/o. Plot No-10, 2nd Floor, Anmol Vatika, Chaukhandi Road, Haldirams Tilak-Nagar, Delhi 110018, have changed my name to Hardik Kalra

I, Gunjan W/o Sanjeev Kumar, R/o A-1001, GH-07A, Stellar MI City Homes, Omicrone-3, Greater Noida, Kasana, PO Kasna, DIST: Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201310, have changed my name from Gunjan to Gunjan Chaudhary. Henceforth I would be known by the name of Gunjan Chaudhary for all future purposes.

I,Paramjit Kaur W/o Suneel Kumar Arora, R/o Flat No.202B, Tower-2B, Panchsheel Wellington, Crossing Republik, Ghaziabad, UP-201016, have changed my name to Paramjeet Arora for all future purposes.

I, Geeta W/o Anil Kumar, R/o 95-B, Shiv Puri Part-1, Dinpur, Najafgarh, Delhi-110043 have changed my name from Geeta to Geeta Gupta for all future purposes.

I, GOPAL KRISHAN GOYAL S/o Parkash Chand R/o 63, 2nd Floor Jagriti Enclave, Anand Vihar, Delhi-110092, have changed my name from GOPAL KRISHAN GOYAL TO GOPAL KRISHAN. All may note.

I, Dinu A. S. S/o Sh. Appu, R/o 284, ground floor, Masjid Moth, South extension part-2, New Delhi-110049, hereby declare that my name has been wrongly mentioned as "DINU APPU SUDARMA" in Passport No.K2742023, and my correct name is "DINU A.S" as other documents. Both names one and the same person. Henceforth, I shall be known identified by the name "DINU A.S" for all purposes.

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I, Chirag S/o Ashok Sharma, R/o 61B, R.K. Enclave, Gali no. 184-B, Daultabad flyover, Laxman Vihar Phase-2, Gurgaon P.O. Gurgaon, Haryana, 122001, have changed my name to Chirag Sharma.

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I, Ankit d/o Ghanshyam Suri R/o B-305, Gali No.-5, Shri Enclave, Pehlud Pur Banger, Delhi-110042 have changed my name as ANKITA SURI.

INSPECTION WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN PRESENCE OF DGCA OFFICIALS

Air India Boeing fuel switch to be tested in US after Feb incident

Fuel control switches have been the focus of the probe into the crash of Air India Boeing 787 jet in Ahmedabad

Sukalp Sharma
New Delhi, May 19

THE FUEL control switch module on an Air India Boeing 787 aircraft will be tested at a Boeing facility in the US to check its performance and robustness following an issue reported by a pilot in February.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said the inspection, to be carried out in the presence of DGCA officials, is to ensure the continued airworthiness of these specific fuel control switches. Air India said the testing is intended to ensure a thorough evaluation out of "abundant caution".

Fuel control switches have been the focus of the investigation into the fatal crash of another Air India Boeing 787 jet — VT-ANB — in Ahmedabad in June last year, with the preliminary probe report saying that the accident occurred after both engines were starved because both its fuel control switches transitioned from 'RUN' to 'CUTOFF' position within a second of each other moments after lift-off. Although not directly

linked to the VT-ANB crash probe, the testing of the fuel control switch panel of the other Boeing 787 — VT-ANX — comes when the final probe report is expected within a few weeks.

On February 2, an Air India pilot had reported that one of the two fuel control switches on VT-ANX was slipping from RUN to CUTOFF position if pushed down slightly during engine start in London, and locked properly in the RUN position only on the third attempt. The aircraft operated a London-Delhi flight, after which the pilot logged the issue. These switches control the flow of fuel to aircraft engines, and are supposed to move only through specific pull-and-lock mechanism to prevent accidental disengagement.

"The module had already been confirmed as fully functional by both the OEM (original equipment manufacturer) and the DGCA. The decision to proceed with further review and testing is understood to be intended to ensure a thorough and conclusive evaluation of the component, as a measure of abundant caution. This addi-

EXERCISING CAUTION

ON FEBRUARY 2 this year, an Air India pilot on a London-Bengaluru flight flagged possible defect in one of the two fuel control switches of a Boeing 787 aircraft

THE PILOT reported to the airline that the fuel control switch was slipping from RUN to CUTOFF position if pushed down slightly during engine start in London, and locked properly in its position only on the third attempt

FUEL CONTROL switches control the flow of fuel to the aircraft



engines, and are supposed to move only through a specific pull-and-lock mechanism

tional step involves examination in a controlled laboratory environment to definitively confirm its performance and integrity. We fully support the process," an Air India spokesperson said. "Upon review of the inspection results and evidence provided, OEM concluded that the Fuel Control Switch was mechanically functioning as designed and considered the unit serviceable. The DGCA India, as part of continued airworthiness of the involved Fuel Control Switch, has directed for their inspection at OEM facility in presence of DGCA officers," the DGCA said on Tuesday.

After the pilot's report on the

mechanism on certain fuel control switches on Boeing aircraft, including those on Boeing 787s. The FAA had advised airlines to inspect the fuel control switches, but as the bulletin was advisory and not mandatory, a number of airlines did not do the inspections.

However, after the crash of Air India flight AI-171 last June, the DGCA had ordered fuel control switch inspections on almost all Boeing aircraft in India. Identifying the transitioning of the fuel control switches to CUTOFF from RUN as the reason behind the AI-171 crash, which claimed 260 lives, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's (AAIB) preliminary report mentioned that in the cockpit voice recording, one of the pilots was heard asking the other why he cut off the fuel, to which the other pilot responded saying he did not.

There has been speculation on whether the switches were flicked by one of the pilots — inadvertently or otherwise — or whether the transition signal was due to a technical, mechanical, or software issue. The report does not state that either of the pilots physically moved the switches, just that they transitioned from RUN to CUTOFF. According to the Centre, all possible angles and causes are being investigated by the AAIB.

Power demand hits record on second day running

Pratyush Deep
New Delhi, May 19

INDIA'S PEAK electricity demand soared to an all-time high mark of 260 gigawatts (GW) on Tuesday afternoon as mercury breached the 45-degree Celsius mark in vast swathes of India, driving up the use of cooling appliances like air conditioners.

It was three notches above Monday's figure of 257 GW — which was the previous power demand record in the country. Before Monday, April 25 saw the power demand hitting 256 GW.

Peak demand figures, whether daily or monthly, are largely statistical reference points, as they reflect the highest load recorded at any moment during a given period on a particular day, often for a brief duration.

Demand is expected to remain high throughout May, and till mid of June when monsoon brings some relief.

Heatwave alert across the country

According to the IMD's special bulletin, heat wave conditions are likely to persist across large parts of northwest, central and eastern India over the next week, with some regions likely to experience severe heat wave conditions.

In northwest India, isolated parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and New Delhi are likely to witness heat wave conditions from May 18 to May 24, IMD predicted.

Similar conditions are expected in West and East Rajas-



Peak demand hit a record 260 GW during daytime on Tuesday, beating Monday's record. REUTERS

than during the same period, along with warm nights in some areas until May 21.

Uttar Pradesh is expected to face the most intense conditions, with West and East Uttar Pradesh likely to experience heat wave to severe heat wave conditions from May 19 to May 24, along with warm nights in some pockets.

In central India, isolated heat wave conditions are forecast in Madhya Pradesh till May 24. Similarly, heatwave conditions are likely to prevail over some parts of Chhattisgarh from May 20 to May 24. In Vidarbha, too, heat wave conditions are expected until May 23.

The sustained rise in temperatures is expected to drive electricity consumption in the coming days. According to the estimates of the Ministry of Power, the peak power demand in the country is expected to touch 271 GW this year.

Night shortage persists

Meeting peak electricity de-

GRID STRAIN

TUESDAY'S PEAK electricity demand rose to 260 GW, up from Monday's 257 GW

DEMAND IS expected to remain high throughout May, and till mid of June when monsoon brings some relief

PEAK DEMAND figures are largely statistical reference points, as they reflect highest load recorded at any moment during a given period

mand during night hours continues to be a challenge, as nearly 150GW of installed solar capacity goes offline after sunset. A similar pattern had emerged in April as temperatures began rising sharply from mid-month, leading to increased stress on the power system during night-time hours, this newspaper had earlier reported.

In April, the night-time power shortage shot up as high as 5.4 GW, enough to serve 2.7 million rural homes, underscoring the strain after sunset. The strain on the power system was also reflected in spot electricity prices which have witnessed sharp increases at night reflecting gap in demand and supply.

On Tuesday, when power demand hit the all-time high mark of 260GW, 61.5% demand was met through thermal power, while solar power contributed 22%. Wind energy's contribution was 6.7% and hydro power's share was 5.3, followed by nuclear power at 2.7%.

2nd hike in a week: Petrol, diesel prices up by 90 paise/litre

Sukalp Sharma
New Delhi, May 19

PUBLIC SECTOR oil marketing companies (OMCs) hiked petrol and diesel prices by 90 paise per litre each on Tuesday, raising the auto fuel prices for the second time in a week as they continue to grapple with financial strain amid the West Asia crisis.

This price hike follows Friday's increase by Rs 3 per litre, which was the first price hike in over four years.

With Tuesday's hike, petrol price touched Rs 98.64 per litre, while that of diesel rose to Rs 91.58 per litre in Delhi, with corresponding changes in parts of the country. Fuel prices vary across states due to differences in state-level taxes.

The Rs 3-per-litre hike in petrol and diesel prices implemented Friday provided some relief to OMCs, reducing their combined daily losses on sales of the two automobile fuels and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by a fourth, or about Rs 250 crore, to about Rs 750 crore a day, as per the Petroleum Ministry. Tuesday's price hike is likely to offer some more relief to them, although they are likely to continue bleeding by selling fuels at a loss.

As per industry sources and analysts, the quantum of Friday's price hike was expected to have only partially eased the pressure, as the gap between the retail fuel prices and the market price was much wider.

STAGGERED HIKES

Tuesday's price hike is likely to offer some more relief to the oil marketing companies, although they're likely to bleed by selling fuels at a loss

With the latest hike, petrol price touched Rs 98.64 per litre, while that of diesel rose to Rs 91.58 per litre in Delhi, with corresponding changes in parts of the country

More calibrated and staggered price hikes were being anticipated after last week's increase.

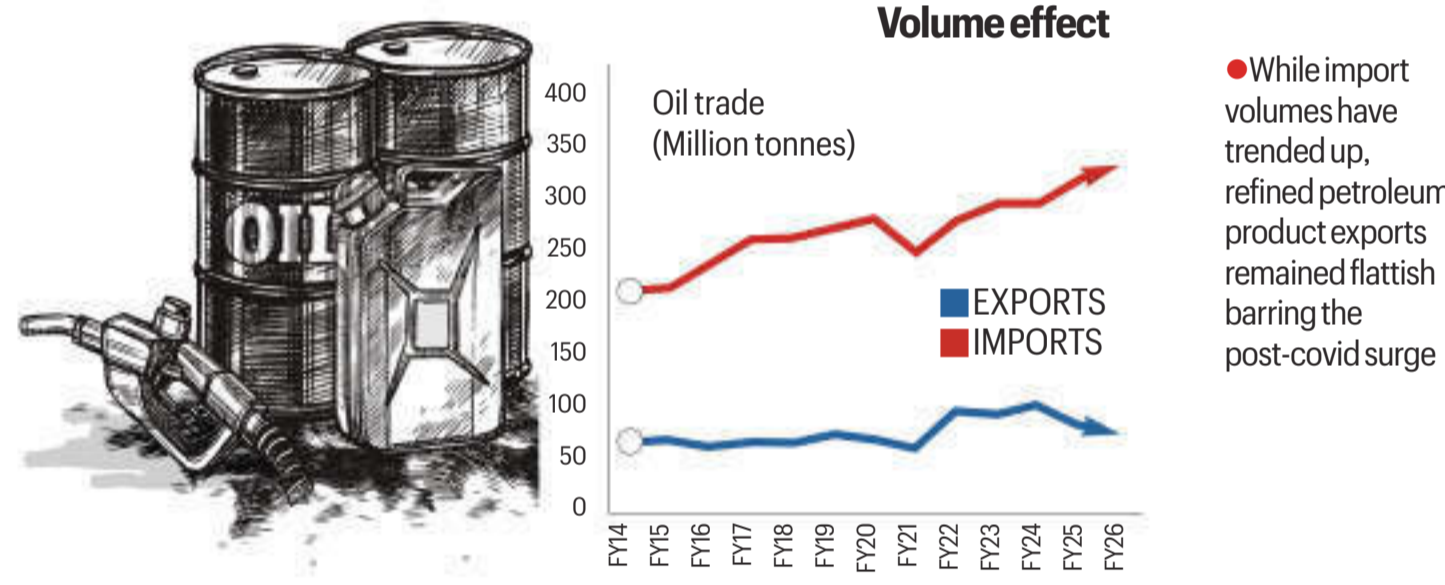
"The Rs 3 hike, alongside a marginal softening in crude prices, brings estimated residual under-recoveries down to Rs 10 and Rs 13 per litre, offering OMCs a degree of operational breathing room. The overhang is far from gone, though... The latest price increase is, therefore, aimed at containing incremental balance sheet stress rather than restoring marketing margins, and is better read as a policy acknowledgement that absorbed costs must eventually reflect in prices," Sehul Bhatt, Director, Crisil Intelligence had said Friday.

Global crude oil prices have surged by over 50% due to the West Asia war and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, but to insulate consumers, the OMCs hadn't passed on the higher rates for retail petrol and diesel.

FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

INDIA'S OIL TRADE DEFICIT SET TO BALLOON

The country's oil trade deficit is set to expand in the backdrop of the West Asia conflict, that has led to a surge in global Brent crude prices. According to a report by Crisil, Brent oil prices may average \$90-95 per barrel in FY27.

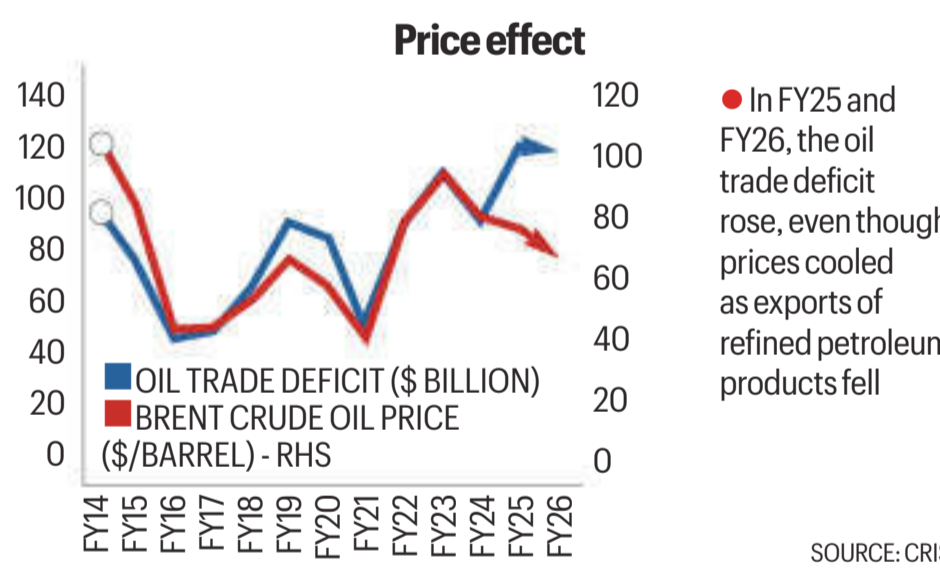


2.2% OF GDP

EXPECTED CURRENT account deficit in FY27 from an estimated 0.8% last fiscal

85%

OF INDIA'S annual crude oil requirement is met through imports



India to use crisis for reform, says Goyal

ENS Economic Bureau
New Delhi, May 19

INDIA WILL convert the current difficult situation and the risks associated with global geopolitics into an opportunity for faster reform and greater resilience, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

"Whenever times are tough, whenever we face difficulty, that's when the best comes out of all of us. India has never let a crisis go by and the world situ-

ation is an opportunity we should engage more deeply with each other, find ways to strengthen our business processes and prepare ourselves in these uncertain times," he said at the ASSOCHAM India Business Reform Summit.

Current geopolitical problems could persist because the stakes on both sides are so high that decisions made in the morning might not be upheld by afternoon. "In such a situation, we don't need to panic. We need to be smart," he said.

This financial year the Centre is aiming for \$1 trillion exports after clocking in \$ 863 billion in 2025-26. Many key Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the UK, Oman and New Zealand are expected to come into effect this year. The industry should start working on benefitting from these FTAs immediately.

"Let's start going out. Take delegations across the world. Do your sampling. Do your trial orders well in advance of the FTAs coming into effect," the minister added. FE

Rupee plunges for 8th straight session; down 6.1% since war

Mumbai: The Indian rupee fell to a record low for a sixth consecutive day, ending lower for eight sessions in a row on Tuesday, weighed down by mounting external pressures as the prolonged US-Iran conflict drives a sustained rise in crude oil prices and pushes US Treasury yields higher.

The rupee slumped to a record closing low of 96.5325 per dollar, compared to the 96.3450 level it settled at on Monday.

The currency touched a record intraday low of 96.6150 and has fallen 6.1% since the Iran war broke out in late February.

"The market's biggest challenge right now is not just direction, but confidence. Until there is visible cooling in global tensions and stability in foreign flows, the rupee may continue trading under pressure," Amit Pabari, managing director at FX advisory firm CR Forex said.

"With no meaningful signs of easing in global risk factors, the pair now appears to be gradually shifting its focus toward the 97 mark."

Economists expect India's current account deficit to widen significantly, hit by higher crude oil prices and lower remittances due to the war in the West Asia.

The benchmark Brent crude has jumped over 50% since the start of the war, a major challenge for India's economy. REUTERS

BRIEFLY

EPFO members to soon withdraw money via UPI

New Delhi: EPFO members will soon be able to withdraw their employees' provident fund and transfer it directly to their bank accounts through the UPI payment gateway, as testing of the facility has been completed, said Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya. Talking to reporters, the minister said the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is taking various initiatives to improve the quality of service delivery. PTI

ICRA cuts India's FY27 growth estimate to 6.2%

New Delhi: The country's gross domestic product (GDP) is likely to grow at 6.2% in FY27, down from

the earlier estimate of 6.5% amid elevated crude oil prices triggered by the West Asia crisis, according to ratings agency ICRA. For FY26, ICRA estimates GDP growth at 7.5%, marginally lower than the National Statistical Office's Second Advance Estimate of 7.6% for the fiscal. PTI

Govt: No plan to monetise gold held by temples

New Delhi: Debunking all rumours and speculations, the Centre on Tuesday said it is not planning to bring a monetisation scheme for gold held by temple trusts, or any religious institution. Such rumours are completely false, misleading and without any basis, the finance ministry said. The ministry also urged citizens not to believe or circulate such rumours. PTI

MARKETS

Sensex 75,200.85 -114.19 -0.15%	NIFTY 23,618.00 -31.95 -0.14%	Gold ▲ ₹1,59,077	US Dollar ▲ ₹96.53
		Silver ▲ ₹2,68,713	Oil ▲ \$112.79

NOTE: GOLD, SILVER RATES AS PER INDIA BULLION AND JEWELLERS ASSOCIATION DATA GOLD PER 10G, SILVER PER 1 KG; CRUDE OIL (INDIAN BASKET) AS OF MAY 18, 2026

MUSK ACCUSED OPENAI OF ABANDONING ITS FOUNDING MISSION OF BUILDING AI FOR THE BENEFIT OF HUMANITY

Musk vs Altman: Could OpenAI's court win pave way for its trillion dollar IPO?

Soumyarendra Barik
New Delhi, May 19

A US jury has ruled against Elon Musk in his lawsuit accusing OpenAI of abandoning its nonprofit mission and prioritising commercial interests, handing a major victory to the Sam Altman-led artificial intelligence company, and bringing a major chapter in one of Silicon Valley's bitter rivalries to a close, at least for now.

Musk, who co-founded OpenAI in 2015 alongside Altman and others, argued that OpenAI's shift toward a commercial structure, especially after its deep partnership with Microsoft, violated the original understanding among founders.

a jury in Oakland, California said that the Tesla and SpaceX founder waited too long to bring his claims against OpenAI, and did not resolve the actual substance of Musk's contentions.

Musk had filed the case in 2024. Even after the verdict by the jury, the fight may not be over. Musk has indicated he plans to appeal, arguing that the court dismissed the case on a "technicality" rather than addressing the substance of his allegations.

From OpenAI's perspective, the verdict is a crucial win at a time when the company is laying the groundwork for what could become one of the largest technology IPOs in history. Analysts were seeing the lawsuit as



Altman has suggested Musk's attacks stem partly from competitive pressures after the launch of xAI. REUTERS

a significant financial and governance risk because Musk was seeking to unwind OpenAI's for-profit restructuring and poten-

tially claim damages running into over \$100 billion. With the case now dismissed, OpenAI removes a major legal overhang

The case and the jury's judgement

Musk had asked the court to force OpenAI's commercial assets back under nonprofit control. He further demanded the removal of Altman and OpenAI president Greg Brockman from leadership roles. OpenAI began as a nonprofit AI research lab in 2015, but in 2019 created a "capped-profit" structure to raise the massive funding needed for developing advanced AI systems. The move allowed the company to attract billions

of dollars from investors including Microsoft while still remaining under nonprofit oversight. Critics, including Elon Musk, argued that the shift marked a departure from OpenAI's original mission of building AI primarily for public benefit rather than commercial gain. The jury accepted OpenAI's argument that Musk was already aware years earlier about the company's plans to seek outside investment and adopt a more commercial structure. Under US law, the claims therefore fell outside the applicable statute of limitations. Importantly, the verdict did not fully resolve the philosophical debate over OpenAI's transformation. Rather, it concluded

that Musk had delayed legal action for too long.

Musk-Altman feud

The courtroom battle was only the latest escalation in a feud that has steadily intensified over the past several years.

Musk was one of OpenAI's earliest backers and contributed around \$38 million to the organisation during its nonprofit phase. At the time, OpenAI positioned itself as a counterweight to large technology firms and pledged to prioritise AI safety and public benefit. But tensions emerged internally over the company's direction.

According to proceedings in the trial, Musk had pushed for

greater control over OpenAI and was frustrated after failing to secure it. He eventually left the board in 2018.

OpenAI later created a "capped-profit" structure that allowed it to raise outside capital while still being governed by a nonprofit parent entity.

That shift paved the way for Microsoft's multibillion-dollar investments and the rapid commercial rise of products like ChatGPT.

Musk became increasingly vocal in criticising Altman and OpenAI, accusing the company of betraying its founding ideals and prioritising profits over AI safety. Altman, meanwhile, has suggested Musk's attacks stem partly from competitive pressures after the launch of xAI.

RELATIONS HAVE REACHED A TRULY UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL, SAYS RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

Putin lands in China for talks with Xi

Press Trust of India
Beijing, May 19

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin arrived in Beijing on Tuesday night on a two-day state visit for talks with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, days after US leader Donald Trump travelled to China.

Putin was received by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the airport. Ahead of his arrival, Putin said Russia-China relations have reached "a truly unprecedented level."

In a video address on Tuesday delivered before his state visit to China, Putin noted that "regular mutual visits and Russia-China top-level talks are an important and integral part of our joint efforts to promote the entire range of relations between our two countries and unlock their truly limitless potential."

The special nature of Russia-China relations is reflected in the atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust, a commitment to pursuing win-win and equitable cooperation, conducting respectful dialogue, and supporting each



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi welcomes Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing on Tuesday. REUTERS

other on matters affecting the core interests of both countries, including protection of sovereignty and state unity, he said.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said Xi and Putin will exchange views on bilateral ties, cooperation in various fields, as well as international and regional issues of mutual interest.

This is Putin's 25th visit to

China, foreign ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here on Monday, emphasising close strategic ties between Russia and China as well as strong friendship and rapport between the two leaders.

"The two sides will take this visit as an opportunity to continue to promote the development of China-Russia relations

to a higher level, which will inject greater stability and positive energy into the world," Guo said.

Since Xi took power in 2012, the two leaders have met dozens of times, frequently referring to each other as "dear friend" and emphasising mutual trust.

Their ties have strengthened through cooperation in trade, energy, security,

E. EXPLAINED

The 'dear friend' bilateral ties

RUSSIA-CHINA relations today are marked by unprecedented closeness, with Vladimir Putin's 25th visit underscoring mutual trust, strategic alignment, and shared opposition to Western pressure. Xi and Putin emphasize "dear friend" ties, deep cooperation in energy, trade, and security, and coordinated support for allies like Iran.

and efforts to counter Western influence and observers view the Xi-Putin relationship as one of the most significant political partnerships in contemporary global affairs.

Significantly, Putin is visiting Beijing days after Trump's three-day trip here from May 14 to 16, during which he held close-door talks with Xi on a host of global and bilateral issues.

Russia holds nuclear drills amid Ukrainian drone attacks

Moscow: Russia on Tuesday began massive maneuvers of its nuclear forces featuring practice launches of nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles in drills that come amid surge in Ukrainian drone strikes.

The three-day exercise will involve 64,000 troops, over 200 missile launchers, more than 140 aircraft, 73 surface warships and 13 submarines, including eight armed with nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles, the Defence Ministry said. The maneuvers will focus on the "preparation and use of nuclear forces under the threat of aggression," the ministry said.

The drills will also practice cooperation with Belarus. Russian arsenals in Belarus include its latest intermediate range nuclear-capable Oreshnik missile system. AP

• BRIEFLY

SPAIN

Probe against former PM for his 'role' in airline bailout begins



Former Spanish PM Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero

A SPANISH court is investigating former PM José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero for alleged influence peddling and other possible crimes tied to a government airline bailout. The National Court in Madrid is probing possible financial wrongdoing in connection with the Spanish government's rescue of the Plus Ultra airline, which in 2021 received 53 million euros (now \$62 million) in public money as part of COVID-19 recovery funds. The court said in a statement that the

investigation was widened to include Zapatero, who was summoned to answer a judge's questions on June 2. Police with warrants from the investigating judge searched Zapatero's office on Tuesday. Zapatero, 65, was PM from 2004 to 2011. AP

TURKEY

Suspected shooter dies by suicide

A MAN suspected of carrying out a string of deadly shootings in southern Turkey has died after taking his own life when security forces surrounded him, Turkey's state-run news agency reported Tuesday. The 37-year-old suspect, armed with a rifle, killed his wife and five other people in Tarsus, Mersin province, on Monday, and wounded eight others. Police had deployed helicopters and drones in a major search effort before locating him. AP

LIBYA

'Angel of Death' faces ICC for murders, rapes

PROSECUTORS AT the International Criminal Court told judges on Tuesday that the head of a Libyan detention facility was known as the "Angel of Death," and that he murdered and raped prisoners, sometimes in front of their children. The court in The Hague is holding pretrial hearings for its first-ever suspect from Libya, a man accused of 17 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes at the infamous Mitiga prison in Tripoli. AP

UAE says drone that hit near its nuclear plant was launched from Iraq

Reuters

Dubai, May 19

THE UNITED Arab Emirates said on Tuesday that six drones had been launched against it from Iraq in the past 48 hours, including one that caused a fire at a nuclear power plant in the Gulf state on Sunday.

The UAE's defence ministry said in a statement that it had intercepted all but one of the drones. It said three in total had been targeting the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant, which is the Arab world's first commercial nuclear power station.

The drone that penetrated the UAE's defences hit an electric generator outside the inner perimeter of the plant, the ministry said.

After that drone strike, the UAE's Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation said the plant remained safe and that no radioactive material had been released due to the attack. Emirati officials have said

Iraq is home to powerful Iran-backed militia groups which have claimed attacks against 'enemy bases in Iraq and the region' during the war

the UAE has the full right to respond to such "terrorist attacks".

Iraq is home to powerful Iranian-backed militia groups which have claimed attacks against "enemy bases in Iraq and the region" during the war.

While hostilities during the Iran conflict have largely been scaled down since a ceasefire came into effect in April, drones have been launched from Iraq towards Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Iraq said its air defences had not detected any drones being launched from its airspace.

'I was an hour away': Trump says US may attack Iran again but 'Tehran wants deal'

Humeyra Pamuk

Washington, Dubai, May 19

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump said on Tuesday that the US may need to strike Iran again and that he had been an hour away from ordering an attack before postponing it.

Trump was speaking to reporters at the White House a day after saying he had paused a planned resumption of hostilities following a new proposal by Tehran to end the US-Israeli war.

"I was an hour away from making the decision to go today," Trump said on Tuesday.

Iran's leaders are begging for a deal, he said, adding that a new US attack would happen in coming days if no agreement was reached.

"Well, I mean, I'm saying two or three days, maybe Friday, Saturday, Sunday, something, maybe early next week, a limited period of time, because we can't let them have a new nuclear weapon."

In Tehran, Ebrahim Azizi,



US President Donald Trump addresses the press at the White House. PTI

head of the Iranian parliament's national security committee, said on X that pausing an attack was due to Trump's realisation that any move against Iran would mean "facing a decisive military response".

Iranian state media said Tehran's latest peace proposal involves ending hostilities on all fronts including Lebanon, the

exit of US forces from areas close to Iran, and reparations for destruction caused by the US-Israeli attacks.

Tehran also sought the lifting of sanctions, release of frozen funds and end to the US marine blockade, according to Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi as cited by IRNA news agency.

Ebola deaths in eastern Congo rise to 131 as outbreak spreads

Reuters

Bunia (Democratic Republic of Congo), May 19

TWENTY-SIX MORE suspected Ebola deaths were recorded in 24 hours in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, authorities said on Tuesday, and the head of the WHO expressed deep concern about the outbreak's spread.

The new deaths bring to 131 the fatalities associated with the outbreak in eastern DRC. There have been 516 suspected cases and 33 confirmed cases in DRC, according to a daily bulletin published by health authorities, and two confirmed cases in neighbouring Uganda.



A health worker screens a traveller. REUTERS

The outbreak has alarmed experts because it was able to spread for weeks undetected across a densely populated area. Butembo recorded its first two confirmed cases on Monday, Jean-Jacques Muyembe, director of Congo's National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB), told Reuters.

Israeli forces intercept boat challenging Gaza blockade

Jerusalem: Israeli forces intercepted one of the remaining Gaza flotilla boats "Andros," about 82 nautical miles from Gaza, according to the flotilla's website tracker.

A livestream on the website showed Israeli forces in a dinghy pulling up to the boat, and activists with their arms in the air. The screen then went dark with a message saying the boat had been intercepted. A handful of ships were still within 100 nautical miles of Gaza and sailing toward it as of Tuesday afternoon. AP

Five dead, including 2 teen suspects, after shooting at San Diego mosque

Reuters

San Diego, May 19

TWO TEENAGE gunmen opened fire on Monday at the Islamic Center of San Diego, California, killing a security guard and two other men outside the mosque before the suspects were found dead, apparently from self-inflicted gunshot wounds, police said.

San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl said local law enforcement and the FBI were investigating the attack on the largest mosque in San Diego County as a hate crime. However, no precise motive or precipitating incident for the gun violence has been pub-



People stand outside the Islamic Center of San Diego. AP

licly suggested by authorities.

All of the children attending a day school at the mosque complex were accounted for and safe after the shooting,

which erupted at about 11:40 am, officials said.

At an evening news conference, Wahl disclosed that the mother of one of the two suspects had called police about two hours before the shooting to report that her son, whom she described as suicidal, had run away from home taking three guns she owned and her vehicle.

According to the chief, the mother said her son was with a friend dressed in camouflage. Police initiated efforts to track down the youths and were dispatching patrols to a nearby shopping mall and the son's high school as a precaution when calls came in.

Son detained in Mango tycoon's death probe

Reuters

Barcelona, Madrid, May 19

POLICE IN Spain said they had detained the son of fashion group Mango's founder Isak Andic on Tuesday in connection with a probe into his father's death in December 2024.

Andic died after falling more than 100 meters from a cliff while hiking with family members near the Mediterranean city of Barcelona. His death was initially treated as an accident, but police in Catalonia later said it was being investigated as a possible homicide.

A family spokesperson confirmed Jonathan Andic was

being questioned by investigators, but declined to provide details. "The cooperation has been and will remain total," the spokesperson said of Jonathan Andic, who police remains in custody.

The spokesperson repeated that Jonathan Andic's family was confident of his innocence. The court handling the case said last year that the investigation was not directed at any specific individual.

He is expected to be transferred to an investigating court to testify before a judge soon, a police spokesperson said, adding that the probe remains under seal.

Cannes' favourite *Fjord* leaves too many open ends, yet remains watchable



SHUBHRA GUPTA

WHEN A bunch of kids are greeted by a school principal saying joyfully, no Draculas here, you are meant to surmise a few things. That the children have a connection with Romania, and that this remote Norwegian town with a fjord on one side and mountains on the other, is a new experience for them.

Turns out that The Gheorghiu family, with a Romanian father and Norwegian mother, and their five children — two

teenagers, two younger ones, and the fifth, a babe in arms, have relocated from Romania and come to live in Norway.

Mihai (Sebastian Stan) is an IT expert, and Lisbet (Renate Reinsve) who works in medicine are here for fresh prospects and fresh air, both of which seems to be in ample supply in this snowy, windy place, which turns out to be not as welcoming, leaving the new entrants facing an uncertain future.

Cristian Mungiu, who won the Palme d'Or in 2007 for his harrowing abortion drama *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, is back in contention this year, with his lead pair almost unrecognisable from their previous excellent turns in *The Apprentice* (2024) and *Sentimental*

Value (2025), both of which were in Cannes competition.

In *Fjord*, the two are a deeply religious church-going couple whose old-fashioned values of parenting come under fire when a teacher spots a few bruises on the daughter's face and shoulder. Child support services swing into action: the children, even the baby, is whisked away, the suddenness of it all leaving Mihai and Lisbet shell-shocked.

What follows next, as the couple gird for a battle in family court (and there could well be a criminal investigation once the civil courts are done with their work), with the children being farmed off to foster parents (the mother's pumped milk being taken to the baby daily) is a



A still from *Fjord*. FESTIVAL DE CANNES

tense human drama, which doesn't take sides.

While the Norwegian authorities claim that the father's actions — 'swatting his children repeatedly on the butt'

— and how they are not allowed access to the internet or mobile phones, and are made to pray every day, is antithetical to their laws, the father feels that what he did was 'not

hitting', and whatever he did, it was 'for their own good'.

The film may be new, but the battle — cultural, societal, political, religious ramifications — is as old as the hills. What is considered acceptable, even necessary, in some cultures (including Indian), is deemed inhuman: desi parents with a habit of clipping their offspring beneath their ear being called out may be highly offended, and all the kid-gloves scooped at. Speaking of, this is one instance where Hindi mainstream got there before high-minded international cinema. Rani Mukherji's performance as a shattered mother (*Mrs Chatterjee Vs Norway*, for which she got a National award) in the same situation, is overwrought but true, proving that children

forcibly taken away from the mothership causes devastation all round.

The argument is more nuanced than that. It could well have been that Mihai may have applied a little more force than he thought he did to that butt-slap; but the children seem to be none the worse for it; that they want to be reunited with their parents is never in any doubt. And the other thing is: that it will always be a contested space, what is too much, and what is not enough is a matter of individual perception as against group conviction. The Norwegians feel that the couple aren't remorseful enough, the couple thinks that there was a massive overreaction from the authorities side,

and while the two sides are willing to concede inches, the miles still remain.

Some of the courtroom scenes slacken the tension. And an all-too convenient climax suggests that there are no easy answers to any of the questions that Mungiu, who is a master of raising the thorny question of ethics and legality and morality and human desire, puts on the table here. What could be thornier than when children are the at the centre of the conflict, with the family unit up against the might of the state: what is right, and what is wrong, and who is to decide?

Ultimately *Fjord* leaves too many open ends. But while it isn't a masterly Mungiu, it remains consistently watchable.

The Big Picture

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026



A NEW INNINGS

BIHAR'S POWERPLAY

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi • Sakib Hussain • Anukul Roy • Mukesh Kumar • Ishan Kishan...

...and many more waiting, all padded up, across Bihar's towns and academies. Despite a system that's still struggling to find its feet, five players have made it to IPL teams this season. SANDIP G travels to the state where Vaibhav, Sakib and their cricket have fired a new imagination

AN ELDERLY man sitting under a sprawling banyan tree wisecracks before he shoots directions to Tajpur's most famous address: the house of Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, the 15-year-old wunderkind who is in the middle of a sensational IPL season with the Rajasthan Royals. "Once upon a time, we saw superstars in big towns, *Dilli-Bombay jaisa*. Now people from big towns come to our village to see our superstar." "*Chotti Tajpur ka bada raja!*" he spins an off-hand moniker.

Around 180 km away, in Gopalganj, Mohammed Ansari stands outside his house, taking in the hot afternoon sun and the glory of his neighbour Sakib Hussain, the Sunrisers Hyderabad player who made his IPL debut this season. Earlier, says Ansari, the town had few visitors. "Only our relatives and, during election time, politicians bothered about us. Or maybe small-time businessmen trying to sell counterfeit goods," he quips. "But now, people passing through the town stop by to see Sakib's house, if possible meet his parents and take a selfie."

Like Vaibhav, Sakib, too, has a moniker tied to his hometown — "*Gopalganj ka Rabada*", after South African speedster Kagiso Rabada.

Not just curious passers-by, eagle-eyed IPL scouts too wander the backyards searching for diamonds in the rough. Both Vaibhav and Sakib were catapulted to fame by the IPL, as were Kolkata Knight Riders' Anukul Roy, Delhi Capitals' Mukesh Kumar and Sunrisers Hyderabad's Ishan Kishan. Five players from Bihar in the IPL is a big number for a state cricket association that was nonexistent during India's IPL revolution last decade.

Tajpur and Gopalganj. Two dissimilar and disconnected places with varied sensibilities and dialects, the distance exaggerated by a tedious transport network, are metaphors of Bihar cricket's resurgence from its troubled past.

'Bihar, a sleeping giant'

For 15 years, from 2003 to 2018, when the Bihar Cricket Association was suspended for various malpractices and relentless infighting, the state lost a generation of cricketers to both anonymity as well as neighbouring states with better cricket administration.

At the turn of the last decade, Ishan Kishan, raised in Patna, shifted to Jharkhand and became its captain. Medium-pacers Mukesh and Akash Deep, from Gopalganj and Dehri, relocated to Bengal; Anukul, from Samastipur, sought Jharkhand's

greener turfs. But all of them inspired a new generation of cricketers back home in Bihar. During his early years, Vaibhav travelled 100 kilometres from Tajpur in Samastipur district to Patna every weekend for professional training; Sakib first held a cricket ball in his late teens. Tears were shed as much as sweat.

Sunil Kumar, former cricketer who played for both Bihar and Jharkhand, and who was MS Dhoni's first captain, says, "You saw what MS Dhoni did to Jharkhand cricket. He made it big soon after the bifurcation, Jharkhand cricket got its poster boy and they became one of the strongest sides in domestic cricket. Now Bihar has quality cricketers like Vaibhav, Sakib, and, of course, Ishan. Their journeys will give hope and belief to thousands of cricketers. At least they can participate in domestic tournaments and get IPL exposure. They needn't migrate."

For far too long, migration to bigger cities has been the most recurrent theme in the Bihar story. Every half an hour, thousands cram into the sleeper and general compartments of trains that ferry them to cities in other states. As had Vaibhav's father when he left for Mumbai at the stroke of the century, during the peak of the alleged *jungle raj* and Kidnap Inc, when the state was something between a punchline and a cautionary tale.

But now, the rise of Vaibhav and Sakib has suddenly shifted the gaze to the state's immense but untapped cricketing potential. "A sleeping giant," as Sunil Kumar puts it. "In another few years, Indian cricket will witness the full power of Bihar cricket," says former BCA president and state BJP treasurer Rakesh Kumar Tiwary. His 25-year-old son, Harsh Vardhan, now helms the association.

The stories of the two youngsters have captured public imagination, so much so that the locals talk about them as much as they discuss politics and prohibition. Over cups of jaggery *chai* and *litti*, with an IPL game playing on their smartphones, they talk about Vaibhav and Sakib.

Off the ground, an epic battle

Murals depicting themes from the Ramayana are splashed on the walls of Bihar's railway stations and the airport in Patna. It's largely done in the Madhubani tradition, with the silhouette outlined with bold double lines and vibrant colours. References from the epic sneak in when the conversation is of consequence. Like when the 15-year-hiatus of the BCA is referred to as "*vanvaas* (exile)". Or how, like Ram, Bihar lost its cricketing kingdom.

The hard times began with the state's

• Bihar's Super Six



ISHAN KISHAN

Arguably the most decorated cricketer from Bihar, even though he turns up for Jharkhand, he has represented India in all three formats. The left-handed batsman played a defining role in India's 2026 T20 World Cup triumph. He has proven his captaincy chops with Jharkhand as well as Sunrisers Hyderabad.



SAKIB HUSSAIN

The seamer from Gopalganj, who aspired to join the Indian Army, has been shattering stumps, blasting pads and grazing edges this season. He is blessed with discomfiting pace, and ability to seam the ball both ways with precision. Only 21, it wouldn't be long before he breaks into the national team



MUKESH KUMAR

The fast bowler had almost quit the game and moved to Kolkata to help his father, who ran a taxi service. But then, Delhi Capitals acquired him for Rs 5 crore in the 2023 auction, before the same franchise used the Right to Match card and coughed up Rs 8 crore to avail his services this year



Youngsters practise at Hardinge Park, Patna; (top) at Patel Field, Samastipur. SANDIP G

bifurcation in 2000, when the cricketing hubs of Jamshedpur and Ranchi went to Jharkhand. "Other states have been bifurcated. But I think Bihar Cricket Association and cricketers from Bihar, post-bifurcation, were given a very raw deal. And I think that is why they missed out on those 15-18 years of cricket," points out Saba Karim, former India wicketkeeper and the biggest name to have come out of the state in the pre-IPL era.

Tiwary, the former BCA chief, says that when he took over in 2019, the place was in utter disarray. He pulls out an old proverb: "*Bina mulk ka baadshah mila...* The emperor had no land to rule. He was just an emperor in name."

"We had no office, we had issues with registration. There was no infrastructure, no system, nothing. There were problems after problems," he says, claiming he worked to rid the association of factionalism and nepotism.

"We decided we would only choose players on merit; not go by the surname or position," he says, adding that they even stitched up a slogan. "*Jiska balla bolega, woh hi khelega*. The players will have to earn their place in the team. The situation was bad, but we have completely cleaned it up," he says. "*Ek dum saaf!*" he reiterates.

But scandals continued to be spun. During the 2023-24 Ranji Trophy season, the year Vaibhav made his Ranji Trophy debut, two teams turned up for a game — one apparently selected by the Tiwary camp and the other by then secretary Amit Kumar.

Before the BCA was reinstated, there were at different points at least two more associations that claimed to officiate the game in the state — the Association of Bihar Cricket (ABC), run by ex-cricketer and now

TMC MP Kirti Azad, and self-styled cricket crusader Aditya Verma's Cricket Association of Bihar (CAB). ABC fizzled out in the last decade while CAB, Verma says, was disbanded after "its mission was over."

"I fought alone and got Bihar recognised again on January 4, 2018," he asserts. Then adds quickly, "After that, it went to the wrong hands. It became an ATM card for the officials. Forget all other things, they bring children from outside the state, from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and everywhere... At all levels, Bihar cricket should be for boys and girls in Bihar."

Tiwary scoffs at the allegation. "Most of our boys come from ordinary families. Sakib's father is a bricklayer, and captain Sakibul Gani's father is a farmer. Most of them come from remote villages, and it fascinates me the most."

Verma points out that the mess was so bad that the Supreme Court last year appointed Justice Hrishikesh Roy as the ombudsman to oversee the administration. "Where are the grounds? Where is the infrastructure?" he fumes.

Tiwary retorts: "Our new stadium in Rajgir will be ready shortly. We are revamping the Moin-ul-Haq stadium which the government has given us."

Amid the din of these arguments, former coaches and players say the state needs a group of administrators who can take its cricket forward.

Saba Karim says, "I think for an overall change to take place, the state association has to become more active, wake up and work hard on improving the infrastructure. They need to have a vision. They need to have the desire to bring change and offer more facilities to the cricketers. If that is done, then I am sure many more cricketers



VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI

The 15-year-old batsman from Samastipur already has a host of firsts to his name. Widely touted as the future of both Bihar and world cricket, the south-paw combines aggression with calmness beyond his age. He tops the six-hitting charts (43 in 12 games) and has rattled out two hundreds in IPL. His international debut is a matter of when, rather than if.



ANUKUL ROY

The joint-highest wicket-taker in India's victorious 2018 U19 World Cup campaign, the 27-year-old has not quite reprised his all-round value in the league. But his potential—thrifty left-arm spinner, lusty hitting and acrobatic fielding—has wooed franchises. He played a pivotal role in Jharkhand's SMAT triumph.



AKASH DEEP

He slit through England batsmen on a flat deck during the fourth India-England Test match in Ranchi. His 10-wicket haul in Birmingham last season would count among one of India's finest bowling performances against England. Blessed with strong wrists, his vicious in-swingers torments batsmen.

will reach this stage and also go on to play for India."

Academies that played on

Behind Patel Field, the only cricket ground in Samastipur town, is a lane where every door is a UPSC coaching centre, selling the great Bihar dream. Leaflets swirl in the evening breeze, e-rickshaws unload textbooks and brochures, and students with heavy bags walk briskly. Posters of UPSC toppers hang from slim ropes bound to electric posts. Shops sell mock question papers along with shampoos.

Some, though, stop by and sneak through the wicker door of the stadium to watch aspiring cricketers of various ages practise. It amuses Brajesh Jha, who coaches a bunch of children smaller than the cricket bats they wield. One of them, several summers ago, was Vaibhav. "We hardly had any spectators. Just a bunch of children here and there. Now, there are children, parents, bikes and even cars. Cricket was always popular, but the situation was that no one saw it as a profession," he says.

Jha's story is the same as that of most aspiring cricketers in Bihar's wilderness years. An all-rounder, he made ripples in inter-district tournaments. "But there was no state (association), and I didn't feel like going to Jharkhand. I went to Kolkata, played league, came back, played some club games in Patna and then thought of coaching children in my own town," he says.

Such academies became the pillar of Bihar cricket during its *vanvaas*. "Whatever you see now is because of the hard work put in by so many cricket academies that we see in Bihar," says Saba Karim.

In Gopalganj, Mukesh and Sakib had Tunna Giri Academy, run by an affluent social worker and president of the Gopalganj Cricket Academy. Giri, who saw that children in his town had little access to quality coaching, set aside a plot opposite his house for a modest coaching centre, and requested Robin Singh, coach-turned-Bhojpuri commentator, to start a branch of Patna's GenNext cricket academy in Gopalganj. It was here that Sakib learnt his bowling chops. It's said that Giri spotted Sakib at the now crumbling Minz ground, where he was training for distance running to clear the Army's physical test. Tunna Giri passed away in 2023, but his brother Kumar ensures that the academy continues to function.

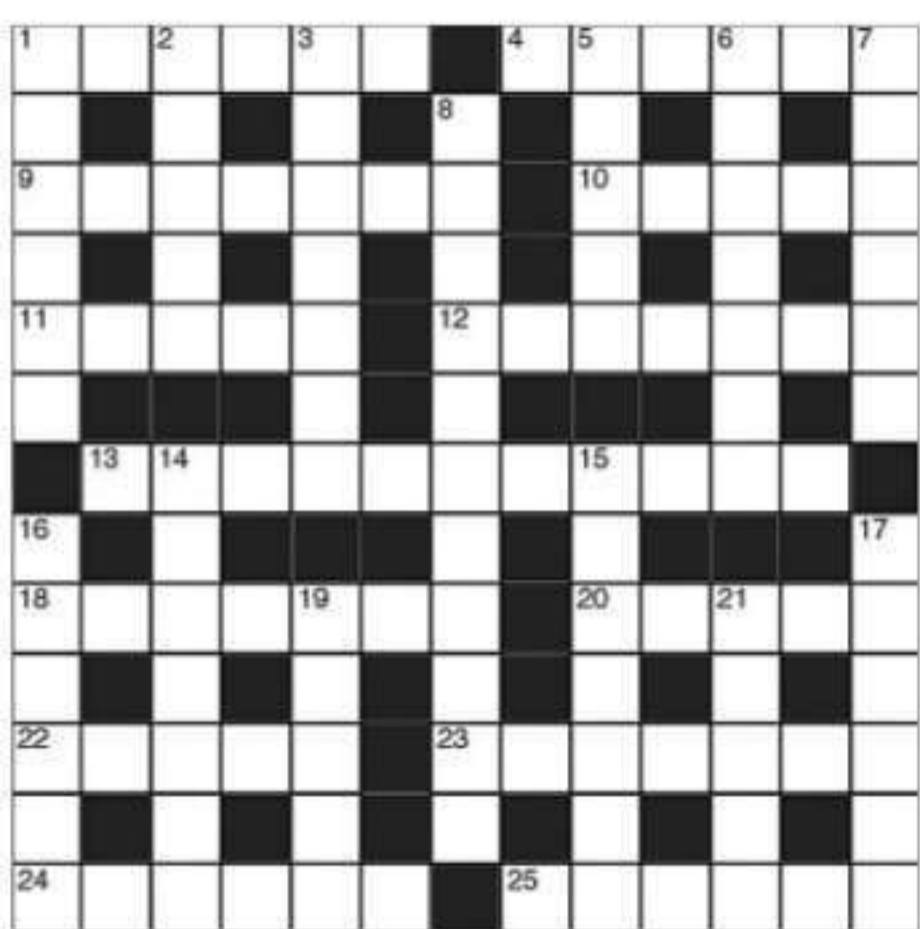
Kumar says the academy doesn't charge fees, but puts forward "just one condition." "The children should be from Gopalganj. Otherwise, it gets too crowded, and we don't have hostel facilities." He is hopeful of Gopalganj producing more fast bowlers, because "people here run a lot, 10-12 miles a day and are naturally athletic."

Capital Patna, certainly, has the most elite coaching academies. Like the GenNext Academy where Vaibhav honed his batting skills or the one Ishan Kishan started inside Urja Stadium in the city's suburb. The robust academy system is the reason BCA is not planning to build its own academy, says Tiwary. "Look, there are many private academies that work very well. So we haven't felt it necessary," he says.

As cricket recaptures the imagination of Bihar's youth, maybe some day, the lane behind Samastipur's Patel Field might empty out into the cricket ground where the baby-faced Vaibhav swung his bat for the first time.

CROSSWORD

5993



ACROSS
 1 The meal is just about over (6)
 4 One can't stand being depicted (6)
 9 Available to discuss out of doors (4-3)
 10 Girl whose first date is a fool (5)
 11 Great envy gnawed away at the heart (5)
 12 Regards unrefined metal as a blot on the landscape (7)
 13 It means your appetite was good all right (7,4)
 18 Somebody incompetent (7)
 20 He used to work thirteen to the dozen (5)
 22 Feature on a foreign land (5)
 23 Recoils from psychiatrists (7)
 24 A joint stake (6)
 25 One involved in replay (6)

DOWN
 1 Island's anchorage in the sound (6)
 2 Exercise around meadow and fold (5)
 3 Dependable way to limit bloodshed (7)
 5 Far from pleased I indulge in abuse (5)
 6 Stop the operation and cause loss of interest (4,3)
 7 Wave - or wave-maker (6)
 8 Safe deanery constructed without ceremony (4-3-4)
 14 I used to play in the garden (7)
 15 Generous in providing a form of Braille (7)
 16 Prepared bites in tins are returned to Kansas (6)
 17 It lets a writer get rid of unwanted characters (6)
 19 Second-class track event or two (5)
 21 Eccentric relationship with Kentucky (5)

SOLUTIONS CROSSWORD 5992 ACROSS: 1 Bowline, 5 Cupid, 8 Indispensable, 9 Flora, 10 Evening, 11 Litter, 12 Anchor, 15 Cremate, 17 Colts, 19 Featherbedded, 20 Rakes, 21 Carry on **DOWN:** 1 Brief, 2 Wide of the mark, 3 In spate, 4 Eleven, 5 Caste, 6 Public holiday, 7 Dredger, 11 Lucifer, 13 Nuclear, 14 Metric, 16 Athos, 18 Sedan

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective circles below. Select the letters in the shaded circles and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

The creation continues incessantly through the _____ - Antoni Gaudi (5,2,3)

CPAAE **IITWDM**

● ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ○ ○ ○ ○

NUINO **AISSFM**

○ ● ○ ○ ○ ● ○ ○ ○ ○

ANSWER: The creation continues incessantly through the media of man.

OVER THE HEDGE



CALVIN & HOBBS



MARVIN



DIFFICULTY LEVEL 2s INSTRUCTIONS

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL
 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
 5s = Very Hard;
 6s = Genius

SUDOKU 6324

2		9						3
9		8		7				
	3	7	1	9				
9	6			3	2			
	1	2		7	6			
7	8			1	9			
	7	8	5	6				
8		2		3				
5		4						8

SOLUTION SUDOKU 6324

1	4	7	6	9	2	8	3	5
9	3	8	4	7	5	1	2	6
2	5	6	8	3	1	7	9	4
4	9	1	7	6	8	3	5	2
3	7	2	1	5	4	9	6	8
8	6	5	9	2	3	4	7	1
5	2	4	3	1	9	6	8	7
7	8	9	2	4	6	5	1	3
6	1	3	5	8	7	2	4	9

ROYAL STARS

BY GEORGIA NICOLS

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 20): The pace of your days will accelerate in the next four weeks. You have places to go, things to do and people to see! Enjoy short trips. Take a course. Discussions with siblings, neighbours and relatives will increase. Tonight: Socialise.

TAURUS (APR 21 - MAY 21): Today your focus shifts to money, earnings, cash flow and the things you own. Trust your moneymaking ideas. Ensure that your possessions are protected against damage or loss. Tonight: Home and family.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21): Today the Sun enters your sign to stay for four weeks. This gives you a chance to recharge your batteries. This will boost your energy and attract favourable situations to you. Tonight: Discussions.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23): Keep looking for opportunities to buy wardrobe goodies for yourself, because this is an ideal time. This happens only once every 12 years, and this blessing will stay until the end of June. Tonight: Check your belongings.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG 23): Tonight you can go after what you want. Meanwhile, the next four weeks will be more popular. Enjoy the company of younger people. Set aside some time to think about your long-range goals. Tonight: You win.

VIRGO (AUG 24 - SEP 23): For the next four weeks, you are symbolically thrust in a flattering spotlight, which makes authority figures admire you even if you don't do anything different. Tonight: Enjoy privacy.

LIBRA (SEP 24 - OCT 23): Your desire to get outta Dodge will be strong in the next four weeks. Do something to broaden your horizons through exploring unfamiliar experiences. Take a course or try a new hobby. Do something. Tonight: Warm friendships.

SCORPIO (OCT 24 - NOV 23): You may be easily annoyed with spouses and close friends. Consider this an opportunity to practice patience. Travel is also blessed. How can you get a change of scenery? Tonight: You're admired.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 24 - DEC 22): You will find that you need more sleep in the next four weeks. Respect your need for more rest. Ironically, another astrological influence is pushing you to work harder than usual. Romantic relationships are blessed. Ditto for money. Tonight: Explore.

CAPRICORN (DEC 23 - JAN 20): Roll up your sleeves and get ready to accomplish a lot in the next four weeks. This energy will also transfer to sports competitions and physical athletics, which means you will be a serious contender for whatever you choose. Tonight: Check your finances.

AQUARIUS (JAN 21 - FEB 19): In the next four weeks, you want to relax and have fun. This same window of time will promote the arts and give you opportunities to express your creative talents. Romance, fun times with kids and sports will be great choices. Tonight: Cooperate and listen.

PISCES (FEB 20 - MAR 20): Home and family will be your focus for the next four weeks. Fiery Mars has changed signs today, which will energise your communications for the next six weeks. This is fantastic news for those of you who sell, market, teach, write or act. Tonight: Get better organised.

NBCC-HUDCO Sign MoUs to Boost Redevelopment Projects NBCC (India) Limited and Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on April 2026 to strengthen redevelopment and asset monetization initiatives. The agreements were signed in the presence of Sanjay Kulshrestha and K. P. Mahadevaswamy. The partnership includes redevelopment of a leasehold plot at Bhikaji Cama Place and financial support from HUDCO to NBCC's self-sustainable projects. The alliance is expected to accelerate project execution, improve profitability, and strengthen urban infrastructure development in the country.

JM International School hosted "Rhetoria & Mudda 2026" on May 2, bringing together students from more than 30 schools across Delhi NCR for an inter-school celebration of debate, creativity and artistic expression. The campus transformed into a vibrant platform where young minds showcased innovation, communication skills and imaginative thinking through diverse competitions. The event commenced with "Mudda 2026," the flagship debate forum for senior students, judged by Sumit Bhardwaj, who evaluated participants on articulation and critical thinking. The creative segment "Rhetoria" featured engaging competitions for different grades, including cap designing, artwork creation, mime, advertising presentations and 3D illusion sketching. The events were judged by experts including Shalini Mishra, Monika Sachdeva and Dushyant Babbar. The programme highlighted experiential learning and encouraged students to express themselves confidently through words, visuals and performance arts.

BSES has inaugurated its flagship High Performance Basketball Centre at Sarita Vihar in partnership with the Dribble Academy Foundation under its CSR initiative. The centre aims to nurture young basketball talent across Delhi through the BSES Basketball Academy. The new facility is the fifth centre under the academy network, where over 1,100 students are already training at feeder centres in I.P. Extension, West Vinod Nagar and Fatehpur Beri. The High Performance Centre will offer professional coaching, advanced skill development, fitness training, nutrition support, mentorship and performance analysis. V. S. Verma and other senior officials attended the inauguration ceremony.

MOU Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited signed an MoU with ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education to strengthen collaboration in research, innovation and skill development in supply chain management, logistics and warehousing. The agreement was signed in the presence of Praveen Kumar by Shri Shobhit Bhatnagar, Director (Operations & Business Development), DFCCIL, and Dr. Tamma Koti Reddy, Vice Chancellor, IFHE. The partnership will focus on research-driven solutions, emerging technologies, executive training programmes and certification courses aligned with the Skill India Mission. Both organisations will also jointly organise workshops, seminars and knowledge-sharing sessions to promote innovation and strengthen industry-academia collaboration in freight transportation and logistics.

National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management participated prominently in Vigan TECH 2026 held at BRIC - National Institute of Immunology on National Technology Day. The event was inaugurated by Jitendra Singh, who highlighted India's rapid growth in innovation and technology. Under the leadership of H. S. Oberoi, NIFTEM-K showcased 23 indigenous food technologies and transferred three key technologies to startups and industries. The innovations included solar hybrid dryers, granola bar technology, millet and dal puff snacks, rapid food detection kits, probiotic kanji powder, gluten-free products and vitamin D-enriched mushroom flour, reflecting the institute's focus on nutrition, sustainability and food innovation.

Indian Oil Corporation Limited organised a high-level technical session in collaboration with the American Petroleum Institute at its R&D Centre. The event brought together senior leaders and technical experts from IndianOil's refineries, pipelines, marketing, business development and R&D divisions. The session was inaugurated by Arvind Kumar in the presence of senior officials from IndianOil and API. Discussions focused on process safety, asset integrity, operational reliability, digital integrity management and globally benchmarked industry practices. IndianOil highlighted the importance of international collaboration and adoption of global standards to support safe, efficient and future-ready energy operations across the hydrocarbon sector.

Ghaziabad Management Association organised its 36th National Annual Convention at Sarovar Premiere on the theme "Century of Change: Leadership and Resilience in an Uncertain and Disruptive World Order." More than 300 delegates from industry, academia and management attended the event. Rajesh Kumar Sinha attended as Chief Guest, while Atul B. Lal was the Guest of Honour. Discussions focused on leadership, artificial intelligence, technological disruption and industry-academia collaboration. Speakers highlighted the need for agility, innovation and resilience to address rapid global and technological changes. The convention concluded with a motivational address by cardiologist and speaker Mohit Gupta.

GDA The Ghaziabad Development Authority has begun a major road reconstruction and civic infrastructure project in the Pipe Market area of Shyam Park Main under Engineering Zone-7. The work was inaugurated by Sunil Sharma in the presence of Vice Chairman Nand Kishore Kalal, Secretary Vivek Kumar Mishra, Chief Engineer Alok Ranjan, traders' representatives and local councillors. Under the project, damaged roads with a total length of 2,756 metres will be reconstructed. RCC drains, BM, SDBC and interlocking tiles will also be developed. The total estimated cost of the work is around Rs. 10.40 crore. The project is expected to improve traffic movement, reduce waterlogging problems and provide better infrastructure facilities to local traders and residents.

CORPORATE BRIEFS

Hindustan Zinc Limited hosted 'Zinnovation 2026' with V-Spark DeepTech Ventures to accelerate AI-led transformation in mining, smelting and manufacturing. The company aims to generate Rs. 2,000 crore in value through productivity gains, cost optimisation, energy efficiency and improved asset reliability. The event showcased technologies such as predictive maintenance, autonomous systems, digital twins and intelligent process control. MOUs were signed with companies including Sandvik, AVEVA and XCMG. Chairperson Priya Agarwal Hebbur highlighted the company's focus on sustainable and technology-driven industrial growth.

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation Municipal Commissioner Vikramaditya Singh Malik inspected the Triple R Center at Vaishali and appreciated efforts to create useful bags from milk packets and flex waste. The initiative, supported by Saathi Foundation and SGS Atmanirbhar NGO, aims to promote a polythene-free city under the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" campaign. The Municipal Commissioner also inaugurated the RRR Skill and Education Center, where over 50 children of rag pickers are being educated with support from Shakti Foundation. Officials said the initiative combines cleanliness, recycling, education and women empowerment to strengthen community development and public welfare in the city.

Saria Chopra DAV Public School organised a grand Mother's Day celebration with enthusiastic participation from nursery students and their parents. Principal Upasana Sharma appreciated the important role of mothers in shaping children's lives. The event featured poems, songs, dances and handmade cards presented by students. A special attraction was the mothers' ramp walk showcasing traditional Indian attire and 1970s-inspired costumes. The programme strengthened the bond between home and school while promoting cultural and social values among students.

IREDA Pradip Kumar Das, CMD of Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited, delivered the keynote address at 'Gyanothan 2026', organised by the Institute of Cost Accountants in India in Bhubaneswar. Addressing students and CMA professionals, he highlighted India's renewable energy growth from 76 GW in FY14 to 275 GW in FY26, making India the world's third-largest renewable energy market. He also noted IREDA's strong growth, with its loan book rising from Rs. 27,850 crore in FY21 to Rs. 93,051 crore in FY26. Shri Das encouraged students to focus on innovation, resilience and value creation. Emphasising leadership and personal growth, he shared his "3C Mantra" — Clarity, Commitment and Conviction — as essential pillars for success and sustainable development.

LBSIM Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, New Delhi, has earned accreditation from AACSB International, a globally recognised benchmark of excellence held by only about 6% of business schools worldwide. Achieved through a rigorous multi-year peer review, the accreditation validates LBSIM's quality in curriculum, faculty, research, and societal impact, with mandatory reviews every six years. In India, LBSIM joins a select group of ~30 accredited institutions, alongside leading schools like IIM Lucknow and ISB Hyderabad. For students, this credential enhances credibility with recruiters, ensuring industry-relevant learning and globally benchmarked standards. It also enables international collaborations and long-term career advantages. Backed by strong industry integration, AI-driven curriculum, and consistent placements with firms like Deloitte and Morgan Stanley, LBSIM delivers high ROI. Its ethics-driven culture and social commitment reflect values that AACSB formally recognises.

Bank of Baroda announced strong financial results for the quarter and financial year ended March 31, 2026, reporting its highest-ever quarterly net profit of Rs. 5,616 crore, up 11.2% year-on-year. The bank's annual net profit crossed the Rs. 20,000 crore milestone for the first time, reaching Rs. 20,021 crore in FY26. The bank's global business also surpassed Rs. 30 lakh crore during the year. Operating profit for FY26 stood at Rs. 32,259 crore, while Net Interest Income rose to Rs. 47,682 crore. The Board recommended a dividend of Rs. 8.5 per equity share for FY26. Bank of Baroda maintained healthy asset quality, with Gross NPA declining to 1.89% and Net NPA reducing to 0.45%. Global advances registered 16.2% growth, supported by strong performance in retail, agriculture and MSME lending. Retail advances recorded robust growth across auto, home, mortgage and education loan segments.

Kajaria Ceramics has announced actress Rashmika Mandanna as its new brand ambassador alongside long-time ambassador Ranveer Singh. The partnership aims to strengthen Kajaria's premium positioning and expand its connect with modern Indian homeowners, particularly in Southern India where Rashmika enjoys strong popularity. Managing Director Rishi Kajaria said the collaboration reflects the evolving aspirations of India's new homeowners and reinforces the brand's leadership in tiles and bathroom. Kajaria plans to launch a nationwide integrated campaign across television, digital, print, retail and outdoor platforms. The company expects the association to enhance brand visibility, deepen market penetration and strengthen emotional engagement with younger consumers across residential and commercial markets.

Delhi Public School Panipat Refinery achieved a remarkable 100% result in the CBSE Class XII Board Examination 2026, continuing its legacy of academic excellence. Avika Makloha from the Commerce stream emerged as the school topper with 98.4%, followed by Mishi Malik from Science with 97.2%, while Shreya Sachdeva secured the third position with 95%. Out of 91 students who appeared for the examination, 20 scored above 90% and 59 students secured more than 80%. The school recorded an impressive class average of 83.1%, reflecting its strong academic standards and holistic education approach. Principal Suresh P. Sachdeva and the school management congratulated the students and faculty for the outstanding achievement. M. L. Dahiya also extended congratulations to the successful students.

IRFC Indian Railway Finance Corporation Limited reported strong financial performance for FY2025-26, marking its first full year of strategic diversification beyond traditional railway financing. The Navratna CPSE posted a 7.8% rise in profit after tax, while its net worth touched an all-time high of Rs. 56,748 crore and assets under management crossed Rs. 4.85 lakh crore. The company maintained its zero NPA status while improving its Net Interest Margin to 1.50% through higher-yielding diversified assets. During FY26, IRFC sanctioned projects worth Rs. 72,949 crore and disbursed around Rs. 35,067 crore. Key transactions included refinancing deals for Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited and Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited. CMD Manoj Kumar Dubey said the company is positioning itself as a diversified infrastructure financing institution while continuing to support India's railway ecosystem.

IIT Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur has partnered with Masai School to introduce two interdisciplinary degree programmes — BS in Management and Technology and MBA Technology — aimed at preparing learners for the fast-changing technology-driven global economy. The collaboration highlights IIT Jodhpur's commitment to making high-quality and industry-oriented education more accessible to students and professionals. The BS in Management and Technology programme is open to students from all academic streams after Class XII, including non-science backgrounds. Admissions will be based on a qualifier test, and the programme offers flexible exit options under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The MBA Technology programme is designed for working professionals and focuses on artificial intelligence, digital transformation, emerging technologies and product management. Students will also benefit from campus immersion experiences and access to IIT Jodhpur's academic ecosystem. Director Avinash Kumar Agarwal said the initiative combines academic excellence with practical industry relevance.

Elite Circle organised a felicitation ceremony for newly elected Mayor Praveesh Wahli and Deputy Mayor Monika Pant. The event was attended by judges, industrialists, IAS and IRS officers, along with other dignitaries. Mayor Wahli assured that concrete steps would soon be taken to make Delhi cleaner, safer and more beautiful. Chairman Rakesh Gupta highlighted public expectations from the triple-engine government.

National Fertilizers Limited has appointed Arvind Kumar as its new Director (Finance). NFL is a Navratna Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Government of India. Before joining NFL, he served in senior finance leadership roles at Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited. Arvind Kumar holds an M.Com degree and is a Fellow Member of the Institute of Cost Accountants of India. He has extensive experience in finance, audit, budgeting, taxation, banking and corporate governance.

CSR Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited organised a CSR programme in collaboration with Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India at Barauji for the distribution of assistive devices to persons with disabilities. The programme was attended by Gintraj Singh, Shri Rajneesh Kumar, Business Unit Head, Barauji, senior officials of HURL and ALIMCO, along with other dignitaries. The initiative aimed to improve mobility, independence and quality of life for beneficiaries by providing essential assistive aids. Officials highlighted the importance of inclusive growth and equal opportunities, stating that such CSR initiatives help strengthen communities and support social and human development in the region.

Honour K. M. Prashanth was honoured with the "Indian Public Sector Enterprise Doyen of the Decade (Public Sector)" Award for his contribution to communications and public relations in the power and renewable energy sectors at SCOPE Convention Centre. The award was presented by Anil Razdan in the presence of former PSU chiefs including Sandeep Gupta and A. K. Singh.

Oil India Limited Oil India Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Government of India, posted strong FY26 financial results during its 580th Board meeting held on 13 May 2026. The company's consolidated Profit After Tax (PAT) rose 62% to Rs. 2,424 crore in Q4 FY26 from Rs. 1,497 crore in Q4 FY25. Full-year consolidated PAT increased to Rs. 7,526 crore from Rs. 7,040 crore in FY25. Standalone PAT for Q4 stood at Rs. 1,790 crore, driven by higher crude oil production and better price realisation. The Board recommended a final dividend of Rs. 1 per share. OIL also achieved its highest daily crude oil production in a decade and drilled a record 74 wells during the year. Numaligarh Refinery Limited reported a 90% increase in PAT to Rs. 3,057 crore in FY26.

HUDCO Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited delivered a record financial performance in FY 2025-26, posting its highest-ever net profit of Rs. 4,034.37 crore along with historic highs in loan sanctions, disbursements and loan book growth. Loan sanctions rose 29% year-on-year to Rs. 1.64 lakh crore, while loan disbursements increased 28% to Rs. 1.51 lakh crore. The company's loan book expanded to Rs. 1.60 lakh crore, supported by strong asset quality and a sharp reduction in NPAs to 0.05% from 0.25% in FY25. CMD Sanjay Kulshrestha said HUDCO achieved its FY26 loan book target of Rs. 1.50 lakh crore in Q3 itself. He highlighted reforms such as ESG initiatives, ERP implementation, perpetual bonds and governance improvements. HUDCO also launched the Urban Invest Window (UIWIN) to support sustainable infrastructure projects in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

INDIA ANNOUNCE SQUADS

For one-off Afghanistan Test, selectors look at future options

Panel rests Jadeja while picking Suthar, Dubey; Pant removed as Test vice-captain, not picked for ODIs

Venkata Krishna B
Chennai, May 19

IN WHAT was India's first selection committee meeting since last October to pick the Test squad, the Ajit Agarkar-led panel showed what they have been doing consistently. To look at the future. With the one-off Test match against Afghanistan scheduled to start six days after the IPL ends, they took the safe call to rest Jasprit Bumrah.

But the call to even hand an extended break to Ravindra Jadeja signalled the right intentions. In place of the ace all-rounder, who has been indispensable, the selectors have summoned Manav Suthar and Harsh Dubey, two left-arm spinners and capable batsmen, who can be groomed for the future. In Indian cricket, the word 'rest' may not be necessarily taken in a literal sense. But the communication of Agarkar & Co, have always been clear. Having not played a Test since South Africa gave them a hiding at home in November, India have ten big months coming up. Before they host Australia in January 2027, they have two important away series in Sri Lanka and New Zealand.

While the exclusion of Aaqib Nabi, the Jammu & Kashmir pacer, who was part of their historic Ranji Trophy winning campaign, drew criticism, the inclusion of Gurnoor Brar and the two spinners, are the first signs of India looking beyond the current core. While Nabi's performance did make him part of the discussions, the

decision to side with Brar is part of their long-term vision.

Since the Australia tour, India's head coach Gautam Gambhir has been keeping a close tab on him. Among the next crop of fast bowlers, Brar's pace has been grabbing attention since the last domestic season. Though the Punjab pacer has featured only in 18 first-class fixtures, he has picked up 52 wickets at 27.30 and has been part of the India A set-up, and is among the pool of players being monitored by the Centre of Excellence. Apart from Brar, Prince Yadav, who made an impression in the IPL, finds himself in the ODI set-up.

"With Gurnoor, we have seen a lot of promise over the last season-and-a-half now," Agarkar said. "Tall guy with a bit of pace. Again, keeping the South Africa World Cup in mind, we are obviously going to try a few guys who at that point might be useful if they keep developing."

Prince Yadav has shown a lot of promise through the domestic season. I think he had a really good Vijay Hazare. Obviously, bowled well in the IPL. But we have seen that he has grown a lot as a bowler over the last year or so. And again, has the necessary skills to succeed with the white ball," he added.

With Bumrah needed to be protected for the 2027 World Cup, and no reliable option beyond Mohammed Siraj when it comes to the third-seamer role, Brar and Price are being groomed for the next cycle.



Left-arm spin all-rounders Manav Suthar (L) and Harsh Dubey. INSTAGRAM - SUTHAR, MANAV/HARSH, DUBEY23

• INDIA SQUADS

FOR ONE-OFF TEST: Shubman Gill (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul (VC), Sai Sudharsan, Rishabh Pant, Devdutt Padikkal, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Manav Suthar, Gurnoor Brar, Harsh Dubey, Dhruv Jurel.

FOR 3 ODIs: Shubman Gill (C), Shreyas Iyer (VC), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Harsh Dubey, Kuldeep Yadav, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Prince Yadav, Gurnoor Brar.

Pant ODI omission

Despite India looking for a left-hander in their top six in ODIs, Rishabh Pant was still not picked. "Rishabh is an incredible Test player. Obviously,

he is not part of the ODI squad at the moment. We want him to become the best Test player that he has always been. I don't think there is any concern with his spot in the Test team. As far as ODI cricket is concerned, at this point, we have gone with two different options," he said.

Having lost out on a spot in India's T20I set-up over the last 18 months, Pant had been part of ODI squads against South Africa and New Zealand last year. An injury forced him out of the New Zealand series. With KL Rahul remaining India's first-choice wicketkeeper in the 50-over format, Pant had been waiting to add to his tally of 31 ODIs, the last of which came in 2024. The wait goes on.

It is in the spin department that India are beginning to look for like-for-like replacements. When they decided to move on from R Ashwin, India had Washington Sundar waiting in the wings. Although both the off-spinners are poles apart,

Gambhir saw a spinner who has enough guile and can be a reliable all-rounder across conditions in Washington. By including Suthar and Dubey, the seeds are being sowed for a smooth transition for Jadeja, who is the oldest in the team at 37.

"With the Test team, you can see there is a lot of transition happening at this point. So, we are looking at options. In one-day cricket, it is the same thing. You want guys who can contribute with the bat down the order but also have the necessary skill to be a frontline spinner. Or a frontline seam bowler. And we think he (Dubey) certainly fits the bill," Agarkar said.

With Kuldeep Yadav still not cementing his spot, India want their bases covered in the spin department for the Australia series. Against South Africa, Jadeja had decent returns, but at the wrong side of 30s, there are fears that his peak years might be beyond him.

Prince's journey: From two-year ban to King Kohli's scalp

Lalith Kalidas
New Delhi, May 19

"I cannot believe how this could happen so quickly." Moments after speaking to his son, Prince Yadav, on Tuesday afternoon, Ram Niwas Yadav was yet to process the phone call.

This IPL season, the father and son had established a routine for all match days -- before boarding the team bus, Prince would call home. On Tuesday, the phone call brought a pleasant surprise. Prince told his father that he had been picked for the India ODI squad for the series against Afghanistan next month.

A retired ASI of the Railway Protection Special Force, Ram Niwas, who had doubted his son's cricketer ambitions earlier, has been proved wrong.

When Prince was in his early 20s, while others his age were cracking government recruitment exams or getting into the

police or armed forces, the youth from Dariyapur Khurd, a sleepy outpost in Southwest Delhi, was trying to figure out how to switch from street cricket to the real hard-ball version.

There were no godfathers to look up to, except the storied success of Virender Sehwag from Najafgarh, 15 kilometres away. Ram Niwas's salary was not enough to support Prince's obsession. And when his eldest daughter got a government teaching job, he experienced the sense of security that he had hoped for from his son.

"I didn't know what to do with him after school," Ram Niwas had told *The Indian Express* last month. "He had this junoos (obsession). But we were from Dariyapur Khurd. No academies. No one in the family had done it before. I couldn't give him money to chase something that may never come. I told him to opt for the police, armed forces, something solid.



Prince Yadav has taken 16 wickets this IPL season. CREIMAS

He passed the Delhi Police physical test, but wouldn't take the written exam," recalled Ram Niwas. He said his frustration would often spill over to his wife, Santoshi, who supported Prince through the gruelling journey to reach a cricket club in Shastry Nagar, three hours away. "Tum Prince ko bigaad rahi ho (You are spoiling Prince)," Ram Niwas would tell his wife during every visit home.

The constant support from his younger cousins, Surender and Vikram, finally got Ram Niwas to ease the reins on Prince. Together, they set him free. To sprint for hours through the nearby wastelands with a tyre tied to his waist. To find his own way up through the wild circuit of Delhi cricket.

An unassuming coach from Najafgarh spotted the spark in him. Amit Vashisht, who had previously given three cricketers to Delhi and the IPL, took Prince under his wing and polished his transition to professional cricket. At 18, Prince was late to enter the age-group circuit. The inswingers and yorkers could raze the batters, but a platform was slipping away. He fudged his age by five years and fell in the BCCI net in 2019, landing a two-year ban. "No cricket for two years. Luckily, it coincided with the Covid lockdown, and he would only focus on his fitness," Vas-

isht said.

After the ban, Prince got picked for the Delhi Premier League in 2024. Representing the Purani Dilli-6 side led by Rishabh Pant, Prince's 13 wickets, including a hat-trick, fetched him his maiden IPL contract with the Lucknow Super Giants.

At the IPL, it was that one spectacular delivery with which he got Virat Kohli that won him national fame. The dismissal has an interesting backstory. It was on Kohli's advice, during an earlier meeting in the league, that Prince had developed an inswinger. It was with that ball that he breached Kohli's defence. "The entire village celebrated and said that by taking Kohli's wicket, he would now come to the notice of the selectors. Aur woh bhi aise waise nahin, bowled karke liya hai, farak padta hai (Not just any wicket, he bowled him out, that makes a difference)," said Ram Niwas.

From watching Steyn videos to India colours — Making of 6' 5" speedster

Nitin Sharma
Chandigarh, May 19

"I COULD never play for India so it was my dream that Gurnoor play for India." Sukhvir Singh Brar could not play for India. To see his son Gurnoor play for India, he says, will be bigger than his dream.

Sukhvir is an ASI in Punjab Police and was a national-level basketball player. He wanted his tall eldest son to follow him into basketball. Gurnoor had other ideas. He spent his evenings watching Dale Steyn videos - the outswing, the aggression, the pace.

"The way he dominated Test cricket for seven-eight years and bowled aggressively - he had the outswing and the pace and he used that to his advantage. It has always inspired me," Gurnoor tells *The Indian Express*. Sukhvir said yes anyway. Whatever his son decided, he would back.

This week, Gurnoor Brar - 25 years old, six feet five inches, from village Kheowali village near Sri Muktsar Sahib, raised in Mohali - was named in India's Test and ODI squads for the series against Afghanistan. The Test is at Mullanpur. A few kilometres from home. His father will be in the stands.

"Harek da dream hunda India khedna (It's everybody's dream to play for India)," Gurnoor tells this newspaper. "I want to grab this opportunity."

The Indian Express understands the team management had been looking for a tall pacer who could consistently clock 140-plus - someone who could extract bounce and trouble batsmen at the highest level.

While other bowlers had more Ranji wickets this season, Brar's combination of height, genuine pace and the ability to hit the deck hard made him the one the selectors wanted.

He came to cricket late, at fifteen. Two years in an academy in Mohali, bowling in nets, playing Punjab junior cricket, finding his way. The breakthrough came through a chance meeting. Shubman Gill was playing for India U-19 when he saw Brar bowl at the Katoch Shield tournament and made his case for the Mohali district team and Punjab U-23.

"He pushed me to better myself," Brar says. "He backed my talent. He is someone who backs the mindset and wants you to give your best for the team."

At a net bowling stint with Punjab Kings ahead of the 2023 IPL, he impressed the then Punjab Kings captain Shikhar Dhawan. When Raj Angad Bawa was injured mid-season, Brar was signed as a replacement.

His debut came against Lucknow Super Giants.

"I remember Kagiso Rabada gave me my debut cap,"



In 18 First-Class games, Gurnoor Brar has 52 wickets at an average of 27.3. INSTAGRAM-GURNOORSBRAR



Gurnoor is uncapped but he has the mettle for international cricket. His stock bouncer as well as the third quarter length deliveries are getting better, apart from his outswing."

VARINDER SINGH
GURNOOR BRAR'S COACH



I could never play for India so it was my dream that Gurnoor play for India. May God be kind to Gurnoor and he gives his best in India colours."

SUKHVIR SINGH BRAR
GURNOOR'S FATHER, WHO IS AN ASI IN PUNJAB POLICE AND A FORMER NATIONAL BASKETBALLER

he says. "I almost got the wicket of KL Rahul off my first ball."

The spell cost 42 runs in three overs without a wicket. Rabada, Arshdeep Singh and Sam Curran told him the same thing: Stay consistent. Later that year, a slip disc fracture. Brar was out of cricket and had to start again.

He does not look at it sourly. "I see that injury as a blessing in disguise. Obviously nobody wants to get injured but it made me start afresh - better my run-up, how I gripped the ball, think about my bowling by watching my videos."

Versatile pacer

Coach Varinder Singh has this to say. "Gurnoor is an uncapped player but he has the mettle for international cricket. His stock bouncer as well as the third quarter length deliveries are getting better, apart from his outswing."

"He had raw pace at a young age. He used to bowl 135 kph at that time and we worked on his strength. His fuller length deliveries would not swing and we changed up his load-up as well as action so that his body weight transfers and the ball would get movement."

Last year, he picked up eight wickets in two unofficial Tests against Australia A, dismissing Nathan McSweeney, Sam Konstas and Jack Edwards. Gujarat Titans paid Rs 1.5 crore for Brar at the 2024 mega auction. He has not played a single game for them this IPL season. He has spent that time with Rabada, Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna, and under Ashish Nehra.

"I have worked on my outswing as well as natural bounce from my height advantage and how I can repeat that," he says.

"Rabada, Siraj and Prasidh Bhai have told me to remain consistent on speed and never compromise on that. Ashish sir keeps talking about how we can nourish our skills and how we can hit the same length consistently."

At Mullanpur, a few kilometres from the house where Sukhvir watched his son choose Dale Steyn over basketball, Gurnoor Brar can pull on India colours for the first time.

"*Waheguru Mehar rakhe te* Gurnoor apna best *dawe* India colours *ch* (May God be kind to Gurnoor and he gives his best in India colours)," his father says.

Neymar included in Brazil's WC squad

Associated Press
Rio de Janeiro, May 19

NEYMAR MADE Brazil's World Cup squad, a selection many local analysts and former footballers deemed unlikely only days ago. The striker will appear at his fourth World Cup.

The 34-year-old Neymar is Brazil's all-time top goal-scorer with 79 but has struggled to return to top fitness since he tore his left ACL in October 2023. He's played eight matches for Santos this year with four goals and two assists.

"He has improved his fitness, he will be an important player in this World Cup," Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti said at a press conference in Rio de Janeiro on Monday.

The coach added he preferred experienced players for some spots in his squad, including Neymar.

"He can still improve his fitness until the first match of the World Cup," Ancelotti said.

kind of competition, the love of our group, he can create a better environment in this group." Shortly before Ancelotti's squad was announced, Neymar changed his Instagram bio in a revealing way; he had only Santos as a reference of where he is currently playing and added Brazil to it.

Brazil's 26-man squad also features its main players in recent years, Vinicius Junior and Raphinha.

Ancelotti who took over in May 2025 but had not summoned Neymar until Monday. He extended his contract with the Brazilian Football Confederation last week to the 2030 World Cup but he has had a troubled spell in Brazil so far with many injured players out of his World Cup squad; strikers Rodrigo and Estevao are the ones he will miss the most in North America.

Brazil opens its World Cup campaign against Morocco in New Jersey on June 13, followed by Haiti and Scotland in Group C.

• GUNNERS ON VERGE OF TITLE, GUARDIOLA ON VERGE OF EXIT

Arsenal get narrow win over Burnley to inch closer to crown

Reuters
London, May 19

ARSENAL CLEARED the penultimate obstacle in their quest to win the Premier League title with Kai Havertz securing an anxious 1-0 win over Burnley to move them five points clear on Monday.

Havertz broke stubborn Burnley's resistance when he headed in a Bukayo Saka corner shortly before halftime and while Arsenal were nowhere near their best, they are now agonisingly close to a first league title in 22 years.

Arsenal have 82 from 37 games with Manchester City on 77 from 36 and Mikel Arteta's side will be confirmed as champions if City fail to win at Bournemouth on Tuesday.

Should City take the race to the wire, Arsenal would be guaranteed the title by beating Crystal Palace away on Sunday.

Since losing to City one month ago, Arsenal have dug deep and have now reeled off four successive league wins without conceding a goal to re-

claim pole position.

They have also reached the Champions League final and there was a mood of celebration long before kick off in the streets of north London and outside the stadium with the Arsenal team coach greeted by thousands of fans and a fog of red flares.

Expectation hung in the air as the game began, but the reality was Arsenal still had a job to do and while manager-less Burnley are long since down, they were not about to roll over.

The apprehension that has been present at many Arsenal home games in the run-in as they try to edge out City was there again but they eventually began to exert some pressure. Eberechi Eze volleyed one effort at Burnley keeper Max Weiss and Arsenal were howling for a penalty when Saka went down under a clumsy challenge from Lucas Pires. The tension lifted but it descended again after the interval as Arsenal missed several chances to secure the points safely with Eze bouncing one effort onto the crossbar.



Kai Havertz's first-half goal was enough for Arsenal to get the win. AP

Havertz was fortunate when a poor tackle on Burnley midfielder Lesley Ugochukwu that earned him a yellow card was viewed by VAR for a possible red, but the relieved German escaped more serious punishment.

Guardiola set to leave

Pep Guardiola is expected to take charge of Manchester City for the final time on Sunday, drawing the curtain down on a

decade that has reshaped not only his club but English football itself.

When the Catalan arrived in 2016, he was already regarded as one of the game's great innovators. What followed was something even more profound: a transformational reign that turned City from wealthy contenders into the defining team of an era. Ten years on, Guardiola leaves City having won 15 major trophies, not including

Arsenal have also reached the Champions League final and there was a mood of celebration long before kick off in the streets of north London and outside the stadium.

the UEFA Super Cup and Club World Cup.

His trophy cabinet includes six Premier League titles -- including a record four in a row -- and the club's first Champions League crown, a haul that places him among the most successful managers in English football history.

This season alone, he has guided City to both the League Cup and FA Cup titles, and pushed Arsenal right to the wire in the Premier League race.

His final match, expected to be Sunday's league game against Aston Villa, will close the book on a story of dominance,

reinvention and influence that extended far beyond results.

And the Etihad Stadium crowd will surely soak up every second, singing their tribute song to their beloved manager: "We've got... Guardiola!" to the tune of The Dave Clark Five's "Glad All Over".

Guardiola's legacy at City is measured not just in silverware but in the scale of control his teams exerted. At their peak, they amassed points totals previously unimaginable, winning four straight league titles between 2021 and 2024 and forcing rivals into near-perfection just to keep pace.

In 2023, they completed the treble, joining Manchester United's 1999 side as the only English teams to hoist the league, FA Cup and Champions League trophies in the same season.

The 55-year-old is credited with changing the game by imposing a level of control and technical precision rarely seen in English football, turning City into the benchmark for how the game could be played.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Another Sooryavanshi special

Teenage opener's 93 lights up Jaipur but Jurel sees Rajasthan Royals home, giving a boost to playoff hopes

SYNOPSIS: Sooryavanshi's backlift and Jurel's finish light up Jaipur as RR stay alive; LSG's 220 never enough despite Marsh's 96 and Inglis's 60.

Sriram Veera
Mumbai, May 19

VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI made 93 off 38 balls and Dhruv Jurel finished what he started, as Rajasthan Royals beat Lucknow Super Giants by seven wickets in Jaipur on Tuesday, moving to fourth on the points table and keeping their qualification hopes alive in a season that had threatened to end weeks ago.

The backlift

Sooryavanshi was 13 when Zubin Bharucha first asked him whose fan he was. The answer came without hesitation - Brian Lara. Not MS Dhoni, not Virat Kohli. A boy in Bihar, growing up after Lara's career had ended, had settled on the left-hander from Trinidad as his template. Bharucha noticed the walking gait first, then the way the bat was held. By the time the boy lifted his bat to play his first ball, Bharucha was smiling. The backlift - past vertical, wrists

snapping it back even further, almost 180 degrees - had arrived fully formed.

On Tuesday, Mohsin Khan got the first over. Sooryavanshi left three, defended one, dabbled a single. Then Mayank Yadav arrived at 148kph, short and outside off. Sooryavanshi leaned back, lofted, and held his pose as the ball cleared deep extra-cover. That pose - bat finishing high, body still, ball already gone - is what happens when the sequencing arrives. Bharucha has said that when it all comes together, the ball doesn't need to be persuaded. It simply goes.

By the eighth over, it had gone many times. Akash Singh conceded 26 in a single over - a pull over deep mid-wicket, a slash through third man, a heave through mid-wicket. Rishabh Pant walked across mid-over to speak to his bowler. Yashasvi Jaiswal fell for 43 at the other end, caught at the boundary, and barely interrupted the evening. Sooryavanshi's fifty came in the ninth over, a reverse-sweep off Digvesh Rathi's googly. Sooryavanshi raised his fingers - an inverted V with one across it. Something private, unexplained. Four more sixes followed across overs 10 and 11. Over 12, Digvesh dragged short and wide, it was flat-batted be-



Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's 93 from 38 balls helped Rajasthan Royals beat LSG on Tuesday. ROHIT JAIN PARAS

fore the fielders moved.

With Royals needing 41 off 38 at the start of the 14th over, the chase was done. Mohsin came back. Slower ball, outside off. Sooryavanshi cleared his front leg for the hoick - but the slowness did exactly what it was meant to do. Hit high on the bat, lobbed to long-on. Abdul Samad held it.

Ninety-three off 38. Ten sixes, seven fours. He is fifteen, batting at a strike rate no one in IPL history has matched across a full season, with 53 sixes - only Gayle in 2012 has hit more in a

single edition.

Inglis and Marsh

LSG batted first. Josh Inglis knew where to look - at his own hands. During his stint with Punjab Kings under Ricky Ponting, he shifted his stance so his hands sat further from his body, giving him room to swing through the line of the ball. "Now I feel like my hands are out here a bit more," he said once.

Jofra Archer, Royals' sharpest Powerplay weapon all season, found out first. Mitchell Marsh charged and slapped

him over mid-off for six in the opening over. Inglis followed - a 99-metre heave over deep backward square leg off Sushant Mishra's second ball. LSG were 83/0 at the end of the Powerplay. Inglis reached 50 off 22 balls. Marsh followed off 33. The stand was 105 when Yashraj Punja arrived.

The googly

In the narrow corridor of the Punja home, where the house rule permitted only spin, the younger one's leg-breaks kept coming out as wrong 'uns.

Then came the height - 6 foot 5 - and a chance encounter at a Bengaluru academy where Bharucha happened to be watching nets.

Punja was the only Royals bowler who made the batsmen think. In the ninth over, he tossed one up around leg stump, Inglis went low to slog-sweep, missed, and the middle stump was disturbed. Nicholas Pooran followed 11 balls later. Four overs, 35 for 2 on a batting belt - Punja finished with an economy rate of 8.75.

The last 12 overs

Marsh finished on 96. Jaiswal, running from long-on, caught him short with a precise throw to the wicketkeeper. Eleven fours, five sixes, 57 balls - the innings had earned its hundred by every measure except the one that counts. Pant made 35 off 23 and LSG managed only 115 runs after the Powerplay. That perhaps was the difference.

Jurel finishes it

When Sooryavanshi fell, Royals needed 41 off 38. Jurel took it from there - two sixes off Mayank in the 11th over, a fifty off 38 balls, then Ferreira's six over long-off off the first ball of the 20th.

BRIEF SCORES: LSG 220/5 in 20 overs (Marsh 96, Inglis 60; Punja 2/35) lost to RR 225/3 in 19.1 overs (Sooryavanshi 93, Jurel 53*; Mohsin 1/31) by 7 wickets.

'Management's call': Fleming on his future as Super Kings head coach

Venkata Krishna B
Chennai, May 19



With 5 IPL crowns and two Champions League titles, Fleming is the most decorated coach in the IPL. CREIMAS/BCCI

AS THE five-wicket defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad pushed Chennai Super Kings to the brink, their hopes of qualification for the play-offs isn't in their hands anymore. Should they fail to make it, it would be the third season that Chennai have failed to make the play-offs. With the pressure piling on head coach Stephen Fleming, the Kiwi has refused to confirm his continuity, revealing the decision would be taken by the management.

Since arriving at the franchise as a player during the inaugural edition of the IPL in 2008, Fleming took charge as the head coach in the 2009 and has since become the longest serving coach at any IPL franchise. With 5 titles and two Champions League titles, Fleming is the most decorated coach in IPL, but after another failed shot at making the play-offs, there has been growing displeasure among the CSK faithful. Those noises had reached Fleming which he acknowledged early in the season.

And speaking shortly after their defeat to Hyderabad, Fleming was asked if he would be back next year to steer the team. "Well, it's always a choice for the management," Fleming conceded. "There's been a lot of talk about it. There's a lot of good things we've done. We've introduced some new players that will be hopefully generation players for the CSK, but I know

we are judged on results, that's fair. So yeah, that's the management's call," the former New Zealand captain said.

CSK began the season with three straight defeats before they got the campaign back on track in the middle phase. And when there was a spot in the play-off was there for the taking their last two defeats to LSG and SRH ended up being a big blow for the franchise which has been ravaged by injuries to key players.

"We knew coming into the season we're a little bit behind in terms of other teams having a year to beat down their plans. It would have been great to have started well, but we started poorly. And then I was really proud of the recovery to get back and win, I think six out of eight and get back into the mix was really satisfying. But yeah, we had injuries to key players, which sort of stopped a bit of momentum and made us a little bit unsettled," Fleming said.

From ACL surgery to finding feet on court: Malvika's return

Shivani Naik
Mumbai, May 19

MALVIKA BANSOD was on a career-high of World No. 23 in June of 2025, one good tournament result away from overhauling PV Sindhu as India No. 1, who was at her lowest ranking point in years back then. What the 24-year-old did not have was Sindhu's physical conditioning.

Malvika had made the China Open quarters previous September defeating Olympic medalist Gregoria Mariska Tunjung. But at the Indonesia Open a year ago, she landed awkwardly and suffered a badminton player's worst nightmare - an ACL knee injury, needing surgery. She lost to former Olympic champion Chen Yufei last week, but is determined to make a strong comeback, even if she is India's 8th best ranked Indian player now, instead of second when the injury struck.

Malvika is now back on the court after rehab, and hoping to make a lift-off from her present World No. 50. She tested waters on the European circuit starting February, and is now back on Tour. "Everyone fears the ACL," she says of the dreaded three letters that have stuttered and ended many badminton careers. "But with the support of my family, my coach, sponsors, doctors and Rehab staff and above all the almighty I could overcome the most feared injury in the life of a badminton player, the ACL surgery," she says.

The struggle was physically daunting. "I have never forgotten the pain and tears during the rehab I went through," she says. "Believing in myself and rebuilding everything took time. My physique looked like it was the biggest struggle and I have not taken a single day off in my schedule from last July to be able to come back to my original strength. Yet still I am not my 100 percent," she states.

Since returning to competition post injury, she has participated in nine tournaments on



Malvika Bansod is currently ranked 50th in the world. FILE

the European tour, including a quarterfinal finish at the Orleans Masters in March. "Confidence comes from each match played and won," she adds.

Having slipped down the pecking order after injury, and with India's TOPS funding only reserved for the Top 25 ranked, Malvika would've ordinarily struggled. And the Nagpur shuttler has known for a while that funding would go to the pack of teenaged juniors - asking for government help was not likely to work out.

Fortunately, her backers Go Sport Foundation had recently received help from the Australian Consulate-General in Mumbai in supporting emerging Indian athletes through Australia's Direct Aid Program which covers funding for training, international exposure, equipment, recovery, and sports science. Malvika could dip into the spending on sports equipment, through the program.

Malvika would use the DAP funds primarily for procurement of a recovery device, the Normatec boots. Returning from the knee injury, the emphasis was on her rehabilitation and recovery. These are near knee length boots (that look like gum boots) with air compressors that aid muscle recovery.

The sleeve has air chambers that inflate and deflate to simulate muscle pumping. The pul-

sating action moves lactic acid up the limbs and drains lymphatic fluid to aid recovery from swelling and soreness. It meant within ten months of her surgery, Malvika was playing in back to back tournaments.

ACLs are notorious for sinking spirits, but never recovery technology saw Malvika begin to dream again. She was brought down just when she thought her career was taking off. "The toughest day undoubtedly was the day when I qualified for the Paris World Championships at a good rank next to Sindhu and I was unable to play," she says.

The voracious reader would look for examples of players who had returned from ACL setbacks. "My biggest inspiration undoubtedly was Gopichand Sir who had undergone knee surgeries before to winning the All England championships. I told myself that he has paved a path of strength and bravery and successful comeback for each of us athletes who go through this ACL injury," she would say.

In a statement released by GoSports Foundation, Paul Murphy, Australian Consul General to Western India, would say, "The Direct Aid Program strengthens pathways from grassroots participation to elite competition, supporting athletes of all backgrounds and abilities with opportunities to excel."

It was designed to address the gaps that most commonly hold back emerging athletes in India: access to competition, quality equipment, and the science of performance - those left behind.

For Malvika, the journey gets tougher on court. She was 20-14 up last week in the second set at Thailand after losing the first, but contrived to go into extra points and win it 26-24. She lost patience, played steady, then took some risks and finally beat Wen Yu Zhang. "At times I lost patience but was happy that ultimately had it my way. Injury on court is a part and parcel of an athlete's life," she says.

After French, Alcaraz to miss Big W

Reuters
London, May 19

CARLOS ALCARAZ will skip Wimbledon as he recovers from the right wrist injury that has also forced the Spaniard out of the French Open, the world number two said on Tuesday.

The 23-year-old seven-time Grand Slam champion has not played since withdrawing from the Barcelona Open last month. "My recovery is going well and I feel much better but unfortunately I'm still not ready to be able to play, and that's why I have to withdraw from the grass-court swing at Queen's and Wimbledon," the 2023 and 2024 Wimbledon champion wrote on X.

Alcaraz's rivalry with Italian Jannik Sinner has captivated men's tennis and his absence from the next two Grand Slam tournaments is a huge blow to fans and broadcasters alike. The pair contested an epic French Open final last year with Alcaraz coming back to win the

title before Sinner turned the tables to take the Wimbledon crown. Alcaraz became the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam this year when he won the Australian Open but now faces the prospect of a drop down the ATP rankings. That will be less of a concern to Alcaraz though than ensuring his wrist is completely healed before returning.

He appeared at this year's Laureus World Sports Awards with a cast on his injured wrist.



Government of Haryana

DHAROHAR SHASTRI INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

An initiative by the Department of Archives, Haryana

The Department of Archives, Haryana, plays a key role in preserving the documentary heritage of the State - comprising administrative, historical, and cultural records of enduring value.

To strengthen academic engagement and public awareness in archival studies, the Department announces the Dharohar Shastri Internship Programme, designed to provide students and enthusiasts with practical exposure to archival work, conservation, and documentation processes.

This initiative aligns with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, encouraging experiential learning, heritage awareness, and skill development.

Programme Overview

Eligible Disciplines	Eligibility Criteria	Internship Duration
History	Diploma holders, UG (2nd year onwards), PG students, Research Scholars	1 Month
Archival Science	Heritage Enthusiasts with demonstrable interest in history, archives, or culture (Min. Graduate)	
Library & Information Science	Foreign Nationals meeting academic criteria and documentation requirements	
Other related Social Sciences and Humanities	Candidates from recognized institutions or relevant professional backgrounds	

Note: Interested applicants can contact or share mandatory documents such as CV, Statement of Purpose, and other supporting documents through the registration form.

Programme Highlights:

- Opportunity to work closely with Haryana's archival collections and heritage records
- Exposure to conservation, documentation, and archival digitization practices
- Enhancing research aptitude and professional skills in cultural heritage sectors

For details, connect with us:

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