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'INCLUSION, COLLABORATION KEY TO HEALTHY WORLD'

■ Virtually addressing World Health Assembly in Geneva, PM Modi says theme of session 'One World for Health' aligns with India's vision

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 78th Session of the World Health Assembly in Geneva virtually from New Delhi on Tuesday, highlighting India's contributions to global health initiatives under the unifying theme of "One World for Health."

PM Modi mentioned India's Ayushman Bharat scheme, the world's largest health insurance programme, which covers 580 million people and provides free treatment.

He outlined three cores for the future of a healthy world -- inclusion, integrated vision and collaboration.

INDIA OFFERS SUSTAINABLE MODEL: PM

- The future of a healthy world depends on inclusion, integrated vision and collaboration, said the PM
- Emphasizing that inclusion is at the core of India's health reforms, PM Modi highlighted Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest health insurance scheme, which covers 580 million people and provides free treatment.
- This programme was recently extended to cover all Indians above 70 years, said PM Modi.
- Highlighting that the Global South is particularly impacted by health challenges, PM Modi stressed that India's approach provides replicable, scalable, and sustainable models.

PM Narendra Modi addresses the 78th Session of the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, on Tuesday. ANI

"The future of a healthy world depends on inclusion, integrated vision and collaboration. Inclusion is at the core of India's health reforms. We run Ayushman Bharat - the world's largest health insurance scheme. It covers 580 million people and provides free treatment. This program was recently extended to cover all Indians above 70 years," said PM Modi.

He emphasised India's network of health and wellness centres, which screen and detect diseases like cancer, diabetes, and hypertension. "We have a network of thousands of health and wellness centres. They screen and detect diseases

PM Modi chairs meeting to review, boost tourism

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday chaired an important meeting in the national capital to review and improve India's tourism sector. This comes following the terror attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir on April 22, which instilled fear among tourists. The Central government is pushing for boosting tourism in the Valley.

Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat, his deputy in the Tourism Ministry Suresh Gopi, Union Tourism Secretary Vidyavathi and top PMO of-



Officials attended the meeting. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) also shared a short video on its YouTube page.

"Attended the review meeting chaired by honourable PM Shri @narendramodi to assess the progress in the #Tourism sector. His visionary leadership is the guiding force for all our efforts in making Bharat a top global tourist destination," Shekawat posted on X.

Several senior officials of the Tourism Ministry also attended the meeting which

We back India's actions against terror: Dutch PM

AGENCIES
HAGUE

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during his two-day official visit to the Netherlands from May 19 - 20, held high-level meetings with top Dutch leadership, including Prime Minister Dick Schoof and Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp.

The meetings focused on strengthening cooperation across various sectors, from trade, technology and defence.

Netherlands Prime Minister Dick Schoof after the meeting said he discussed the dastardly Pahalgam terror attack with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday in The Hague. Schoof said they also dis-

cussed Strategic Partnership concerns of long-term cooperation between the Netherlands and India

fairs S Jaishankar at the Catshuis. First of all, I expressed my support for India's fight against terrorism



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Netherlands Prime Minister Dick Schoof, in The Hague on Tuesday. ANI

in areas such as trade, innovative technology, agriculture and security. In a post on X, he said, "Good to receive the Indian Minister of Foreign Af-

after the terrible attack last month in Pahalgam. It is good for all parties that the violence between India and Pakistan has not escalated

'Under BJP, money, resources for select rich while Cong gives to poor'

AGENCIES
HOSAPETE

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday said that the BJP follows a model under which select rich people get entire money and resources, whereas in the Congress' model, money is put into the bank accounts and the pockets of the poor.

The Congress leader was speaking at an event to



mark Karnataka Congress government's two years in office, during which over one lakh title deeds were distributed to eligible beneficiaries, whose "undocumented habitations" have been declared as revenue villages.

"Congress party government has completed two years. During the election, we made you promises. We had promised five guarantees. The BJP people said that Congress party will not be able to fulfill it. The Prime Minister said this won't be done," Gandhi said.

Listing out the five guarantee schemes implemented by the government, he said, "We have told you that we will put

Stalwart of India's nuclear power sector, MR Srinivasan dies

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Former Atomic Energy Commission Chairman MR Srinivasan passed away at the age of 95 on Tuesday. The Padma Vibhushan recipient had played a key role in the development of India's nuclear power programme.

"We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Dr MR Srinivasan, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)," the

family said in a statement. It said Srinivasan joined the DAE in September 1955 and began his distinguished career working alongside Dr Homi Bhabha on the construction of the country's first nuclear research reactor, Apsara, which achieved criticality a year later.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today condoled the passing of Dr. MR Srinivasan, a stalwart of India's nuclear energy program.

He wrote in a post on X: "Deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. MR Sriniva-



vasan, a stalwart of India's nuclear energy program. His instrumental role in developing critical nuclear infrastructure has been

foundational to our being self-reliant in the energy sector. He is remembered for his inspiring leadership of the Atomic Energy Commission. India will always be grateful to him for advancing scientific progress and mentoring many young scientists. My thoughts are with his family and friends in this sad hour. Om Shanti."

President Droupadi Murmu also condoled the passing of Srinivasan and expressed grief over the death of Srinivasan and conveyed condolences to his family mem-

bers, friends and admirers. "Deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. M R Srinivasan whose contribution to India's nuclear energy development program has been extraordinary. His contribution to India's energy security and scientific development will always be remembered. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations of engineers and scientists. My condolences to members of his family, friends and admirers," Murmu said.

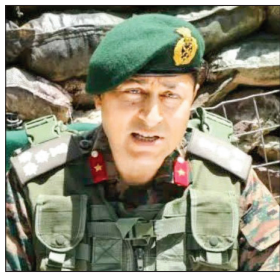
Congress President Mal-

Op Sindoor dealt blow to Pak Army's morale: Poonch Brigade Commander

AJAY JANDYAL
POONCH

Brigadier Mudit Mahajan, Commander of the Poonch Brigade, on Monday said that the Pakistan Army suffered significant losses—not just in numbers but also in morale and credibility—during Operation Sindoor, launched in response to the Pakistan-sponsored Pahalgam terror attack on April 22.

Briefing the media, Brigadier Mahajan stated that



Brigadier Mudit Mahajan

Pakistan's losses continue to mount.

"Pakistan Army's losses were not just in numbers, but in morale and initiative. Today, they have lost

their credibility before their own nation. We have inputs indicating heavy fatal and non-fatal casualties on the enemy side. These numbers are still rising as our intelligence agencies continue to verify them," he said.

He asserted that Operation Sindoor is not over, but remains temporarily suspended. "The Indian Army remains fully alert and prepared. If provoked again, we will respond with the fire and resolve of the nation,"

TMC to join all-party outreach after Rijiju dials Mamata

SUPROTIM MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has decided to send its national general secretary and Lok Sabha MP, Abhishek Banerjee, with the all-party delegations that will visit different countries to convey India's stance on terrorism and drum up support in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, the party said on Tuesday.

Trinamool Congress sources said that the decision came after Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju called Tri-

"At a time when the world must unite to confront the growing threat of terrorism, Shri Abhishek Banerjee's inclusion brings both conviction and clarity to the table."

namool supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to "pacify" her and seek her suggestions for a representative from her party to the delegations.

"We're delighted to share

that our Chairperson Smt. @MamataOfficial has nominated Nat'l GS Shri @abhishekaite to represent Trinamool Congress in the all-party delegation for India's global outreach against terrorism. At a time when the world must unite to confront the growing threat of terrorism, Shri Abhishek Banerjee's inclusion brings both conviction and clarity to the table. His presence will not only reflect Bengal's firm stand against terror but also strengthen India's collective voice on the global stage," the party



Misri briefs multi-party delegations ahead of their visits abroad

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Tuesday briefed three of the seven multi-party delegations on Pakistan's long sponsorship of terrorism in India and how the country is determined to respond strongly to any terror incidents on its soil.

"Our message to world leaders will be that enough is enough and that Pakistan has acted like a thief asked to probe his own crime whenever India has in the past

trusted its words on acting against terrorism," JD(U) leader Sanjay Jha said.

Jha is leading a delegation to Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Shiv Sena leader Shrikant Shinde, who is leading a delegation to the UAE and some African countries, said they will highlight Pakistan's links to terror incidents in India.

Misri, sources said, briefed MPs and other members of the delegations that Indian action was targeted against

Pak Army Chief promoted after Op Sindoor battering

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Cabinet on Tuesday approved a proposal to promote Army Chief General Asim Munir to the rank of Field Marshal, reported Reuters citing a statement from the Prime Minister's Office. The post of Field Marshal is for life.

The move comes days after India and Pakistan engaged in firing and military action after tensions escalated between the two countries. DETAILS P12

NIA, IB grill Haryana YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), Intelligence Bureau (IB), and Military Intelligence officials are jointly interrogating Haryana-based YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra, who was arrested on May 16 for allegedly spying for Pakistan.

Police officials confirmed that she is under intense scrutiny, with central agencies probing her foreign travel history, financial trans-

HARYANA TO CRACK DOWN ON YOUTUBERS AFTER SPY ARREST, CM SAINI ORDERS STRICT ACTION

During the meeting, the Chief Minister issued clear instructions to keep a close watch on all YouTube channels linked to Pakistan and to check their old videos and data.

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Saini has ordered strict monitoring of YouTube channels reportedly connected and supported to Pakistan. This step comes after the recent arrest of YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra from Hisar, who has been accused of spying for Pakistan.

Following several arrests of suspected spies in Haryana after India's "Operation Sindoor" against Pakistan, CM Saini called an urgent meeting in Chandigarh. The meeting was attended by ministers, MLAs, and top officials from the Home and Police Departments. The discussions focused on the growing concern of spying activities and the role of certain YouTube channels.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister issued clear instructions to keep a close

THE ESPIONAGE

- Jyoti Malhotra Arrested: Hisar YouTuber accused of spying for Pakistan.
- SOP for YouTubers: Govt to regulate YouTubers like journalists.
- Police Reforms: FIRs to be registered promptly; transparency mandated.
- Social Media Watch: Teams monitoring suspicious channels, sleeper cells.
- No Intelligence Failure: Govt defends handling of Jyoti case.
- Patriotic Content Push: Artists urged to create nation-building content



watch on all YouTube channels linked to Pakistan and to check their old videos and data. He also ordered the creation of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to regulate YouTubers, similar to the rules followed by journalists. The aim is to ensure that no channel spreads false or dangerous content in favor of Pakistan.

The chief minister directed the police to listen patiently to all individuals visiting police stations, promptly register complaints, and take appropriate action. The Chief Minister further instructed that the complainant should not have to make multiple visits to police stations to get an FIR registered. If, for any reason, an FIR cannot be

registered, the police should provide clear reasons to satisfy the complainant.

After the meeting, Haryana's Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Dr. Sumita Mishra, told reporters that the government is investigating several YouTube channels suspected to be working for or praising Pakistan. Special teams are

CISF officer becomes first from force to scale Mt Everest

ABHINANDAN MISHRA
NEW DELHI

In a landmark achievement, Lady Sub-Inspector Geeta Samota of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has become the first officer from the force to successfully climb Mount Everest, the world's highest peak at 8,849 meters. She reached the summit on the morning of 19 May.

Geeta's accomplishment is not only a personal milestone but a proud moment for the entire nation and the CISF. Hailing from Chak village in Rajasthan's Sikar district, she overcame numerous challenges throughout her journey, emerging as a symbol of determination and inspiration.

Joining the CISF in 2011, Geeta discovered her passion for mountaineering. With no formal mountaineering team in the CISF at that time, she paved her own path. She was the only woman in her 2015 basic mountaineering course at the ITBP training institute in Auli and later completed an advanced course in 2017, becoming the only CISF personnel to do so.

Her earlier achievements include being the first woman from any Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) to scale Mount Satopanth and Mount Lobuche in 2019. She later pursued the

Seven Summits challenge, climbing the highest peaks of four continents in under seven months — a national record. She also holds the distinction of climbing five Ladakh peaks within three days.

Her perseverance bore significant fruit in 2019 when she became the first woman from any Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) to scale

Seven Summits challenge, climbing the highest peaks of four continents in under seven months — a national record. She also holds the distinction of climbing five Ladakh peaks within three days.

Undeterred by the global COVID-19 pandemic, Geeta relentlessly pursued her Seven Summits dream. Between 2021 and early 2022, she successfully summited four of these formidable



Sub-Inspector Geeta Samota of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) successfully summits the Mount Everest, on 19th May. (ANI)

Mount Satopanth (7,075 meters) in Uttarakhand and Mount Lobuche (6,119 me-

ters) in Nepal. In early 2021, the CAPF contingent for a Mount Everest expedition of which Geeta was part, was unfortunately called off due to technical reasons.

mters) in Russia, Mount Kilimanjaro (5,895 mtrs) in Tanzania, and Mount Aconcagua (6,961 mtrs) in Argentina. She achieved this incredible feat — conquering four of the Seven Summits — in a remarkable span of just six months and 27 days, making her the fastest Indian woman to do so. Adding to her accolades, Geeta also became the first and fastest woman to climb five peaks in Ladakh's Rupshu region in just three days, including three peaks over 6,000 meters and two over 5,000 meters. On May 19, 2025, Geeta achieved

the most ambitious challenge of her mountaineering career, successfully scaling Mount Everest, a mission resonating with courage, unwavering commitment, and profound national pride. Geeta has received several honors, including the International Women's Day Award 2023 from the Delhi Commission for Women and the "Giving Wings to Dreams Award" from the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Following her historic Everest summit, the CISF plans to launch a full mountaineering team to attempt the peak in 2026. The CISF Director General and the entire force have congratulated Geeta on her outstanding achievement, calling her a beacon of inspiration for the youth of India.

26 people killed in Pahalgam, as Modi govt did not provide security: Kharge

TDG NETWORK
VIJAYANAGARA

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday criticised the Modi government for alleged security lapses that led to the Pahalgam terror attack, resulting in 26 deaths.

Kharge claimed that the government failed to provide adequate security arrangements for tourists, despite being aware of potential security threats.

He was speaking at the Samarpana Sankalpa Samavesh rally in Karnataka, highlighting the achievements of the state government over the past two years. Mallikarjun Kharge said, "26 people were killed in Pahalgam because the Modi government did not provide security there. The centre did not provide police security or forces to tourists. Modi did not say anything about this. There were people going to Kashmir on the



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge

17th, but Modi did not go to Kashmir, because his intelligence security told him not to go, as there would be chaos in Kashmir."

He alleged that the government's intelligence agencies had informed Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the security threat, but no action was taken to warn tourists. Kharge condemned the government's priorities, stating that the Prime Minister's security was prioritised over the lives of citizens. "You knew this.

When you cancelled the trip to Kashmir, why did you not tell the tourists through the police? Why didn't you tell the tourists not to go there? If you had told them, 26 lives would have been saved. Pakistan has no power. It is weak; they have taken power from China and attacked our country. I had told you on the 22nd that we are all united. The country is important to us, but here it shows that Modi is more important than the country. You gave protection to Modi, but not to the people," he further added.

He attacked PM Modi and said that Congress would never be weakened by notices sent by central agencies.

"Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi gave their lives for this country. You thought we should give ED and CBI notices to such a party and cause trouble and weaken it. That will never happen," he added.

73 Pakistani agents behind bars now: Assam CM

TDG NETWORK
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said that 73 individuals allegedly working as "Pakistani agents" have been arrested so far as part of the state's ongoing crackdown on anti-national activities.

Taking to social media platform X, Sarma posted, "It is unfortunate that some individuals enjoy every privilege India offers -- salary, power, and position -- yet their loyalty lies across the border. They draw everything from Bharat but work only for Pakistan's interests. This is betrayal. Like #OperationSindoor, our mission to track and punish anti-nationals is going on."

Providing an update as of 10:30 am on May 20,



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

the Chief Minister said two fresh arrests had been made: "@chirangpolice arrested Faridul Islam. @Hojai_Police arrested Sahabuddin Rain."

With these, the total number of arrests in the ongoing operation has climbed to 73, he noted.

Sarma also lauded the efforts of Assam Police in pursuing and apprehending individuals accused of promoting anti-national activities.

A TMC delegation to visit Srinagar, Poonch, and Rajouri

TDG NETWORK
KOLKATA

A five member-delegation of Trinamool Congress will visit Srinagar, Poonch, and Rajouri area of Jammu and Kashmir from May 21 to May 23 to express solidarity with the people affected by cross-border attacks by Pakistan.

TMC MP Derek O'Brien, MP Md. Nadimul Haque, West Bengal Minister Manas Ranjan Bhunia, MP Sagatika Ghose and MP Mamata Bala Thakur are part of the delegation that will visit the areas in J-K.

TMC, announcing the visit on social media platform X, said that visit is to express solidarity with the people affected by cross-border attacks, and share the grief of the families who have lost their loved ones.

‘Incumbent upon govt to call Parliament session’: Congress’ Karti Chidambaram

TDG NETWORK
COIMBATORE

The Congress continues to raise doubts over the chain of events leading to cessation of hostilities between India and Pakistan following Operation Sindoor, launched in response to the Pahalgam terror attack. Congress MP Karti Chidambaram on Tuesday demanded a special parliamentary session to be convened to brief the nation about the "security failure"

during the recent terrorist attack that killed 26 civilians. "We support Operation Sindoor unconditionally. We understand that all the facts can't be laid out on the table immediately because of issues of national security. However, it is incumbent upon the government to call for a short session of the Parliament and to inform the nation through the house about the events post-Pahalgam, including what

led to the security failure (in Pahalgam)," Chidambaram told ANI.

He further stated that asking questions was natural in a functioning parliamentary democracy while acknowledging that some questions may not be answered openly due to national security issues. Chidambaram asserted that it was necessary for the centre to make a statement in the Parliament.

"Some legitimate ques-

tions will be asked. We understand that some can be answered openly, and some can't be. However, questions will be asked, and that's natural in a functioning parliamentary democracy. It is necessary that the government comes and makes a statement on the floor of the house...A two-day session can be held where the Prime Minister and Defence Minister can take the house into confidence," he added.

AAP's protest nears end at Nangal Dam amid Punjab-Haryana water row

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Government and Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) protest at the Nangal Dam against the Bhakra Beas Management Board's (BBMB) move to release extra water from Punjab's quota to Haryana entered its final day on 20 May. Information and Public Relations Minister Harjot Singh Bains announced that the dharna, which began on May 1, will conclude tomorrow with a large rally in Nangal, to be addressed by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

The protest began when CM Mann made a sudden visit to the Nangal Dam and directed officials not to release additional wa-

ter to Haryana, calling it a breach of Punjab's rightful share. The move triggered a chain of events that saw the AAP taking an aggressive stand at the dam site, accusing BBMB of acting against Punjab's interests and succumbing to political pressure from the Centre and Haryana.

Bains said the dharna marks a successful defense of Punjab's water rights and tomorrow's rally will celebrate this "victory for Punjab." During the protest, various leaders and supporters gathered at the site, with Sanjeev Gautam, chairman of Guru Ravidas Ayurvedic University, crediting CM Mann for "saving Punjab's share" and calling out the BBMB's alleged his-

torical bias.

However, Haryana has maintained that the additional water it requested—8,500 cusecs—was essential to address drinking water and irrigation needs. In a bid to press the issue, Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) leaders Ajay Singh Chautala and Dushyant Chautala announced they would meet Punjab Governor Gurbachan Singh Chahal over the drinking water shortage affecting Haryana's districts.

Meanwhile, despite Punjab's opposition, sources in BBMB confirmed that additional water would be released from the Nangal Dam starting intervening night of 20-21 May. The release, based on recommendations of the BBMB's



Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains. ANI

technical committee, will be carried out through the Bhakra Mainline Canal and will benefit Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan. The timing coincides with the end of the Bhakra Dam's annual depletion period (September 20-May 20), with the upcoming monsoon and snowmelt expected to replenish storage levels.

Deadlock and Legal Tussle The situation escalated into a full-fledged deadlock when Punjab deployed police to block the release of additional water, defying BBMB's orders. The board responded by approaching the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which directed the Punjab government

not to interfere in BBMB's functioning and to abide by its technical decisions. While the court's direction was viewed as a setback to Punjab's stance, AAP leaders presented it as a moral and political win, claiming they had prevented misuse of Punjab's share.

Punjab officials argued that Haryana had already consumed its allocated share and that the state

couldn't afford further depletion of its own supply, especially when groundwater levels are already under stress.

BBMB, on the other hand, defended the release citing collective decisions taken at the technical committee level, where Punjab was outvoted by other states.

Historical Background: How Consensus Gave Way to Confrontation

The Bhakra-Nangal project, one of India's earliest multipurpose river valley projects, was conceived to serve the states of undivided Punjab. After the reorganization of Punjab in 1966, the BBMB was created to manage water and power distribution among Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Him-

achal Pradesh, and Delhi.

Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan were allocated specific annual shares from the Ravi-Beas waters under a central arrangement. However, the issue of distribution remained politically sensitive. Punjab has long argued that it bears the ecological and social cost of storing and managing the rivers, yet does not get fair compensation or control over water released to other states.

Tensions have frequently arisen—particularly between Punjab and Haryana—over the perceived imbalance in resource allocation. While several interstate meetings have attempted to foster consensus, these often result in fragile

compromises or temporary administrative solutions.

The current situation at Nangal, therefore, reflects not only a recent administrative decision but the deep and unresolved conflict between upper and lower riparian states.

What began as a mechanism for shared development has evolved into a battleground of political assertion and regional distrust.

As the dharna turns into a celebration for AAP, and Haryana continues to demand more water citing public distress, the Bhakra waters remain as contested as ever—flowing not just through canals, but through the undercurrents of federal politics and state pride.

NEW E-ZERO FIR TO NAB CYBER CRIMINALS WITH UNPRECEDENTED SPEED: SHAH

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that the new e-Zero FIR initiative will automatically convert cyber financial crimes above Rs 10 lakh and registered on the 1930 helpline of the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), into FIRs.

In a post on X on Monday, Shah emphasised that the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) has introduced this initiative as a pilot project for Delhi as of now, but it will soon be extended to the entire nation.

“The MHA’s Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) introduced the new e-Zero FIR initiative to nab any criminal with unprecedented speed. Launched as a pilot project for Delhi, the new system will automatically convert cyber financial crimes filed at NCRP or 1930 to FIRs, initially above the threshold limit of Rs 10 lakh. The new system, which will drive investigations swiftly, cracking down on cyber-criminals, will soon be extended to the entire nation. The Modi government is bolstering the cybersecurity grid to build a cyber-secure Bharat,” the Union Home Minister said.

Meanwhile, Amit Shah inaugurated a revamped Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) portal here in the national capital on Monday to improve the digital experience for OCI cardholders. The launch marks a significant step in the government’s efforts to modernise citizen services for the Indian diaspora. According

to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the new portal has been developed in response to rapid technological advancements over the past decade and feedback from existing OCI cardholders regarding issues with the previous system. “Union Home Minister Amit Shah today launched the new Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) portal in New Delhi. In light of significant technological advancements over the past decade and feedback received from



OCI cardholders.

The launch marks a significant step in the govern-

ment’s efforts to modernise citizen services for the Indian diaspora. According

OCI cardholders, a new OCI portal has been developed to address existing shortcomings and enhance the user experience,” said the MHA in a statement. Officials stated that the revamped platform addresses existing shortcomings and is designed to offer a more user-friendly, efficient, and seamless interface for individuals of Indian origin residing overseas.

The OCI card is issued to people of Indian origin who have obtained citizenship

in another country, allowing them lifelong visa-free travel to India and certain economic and educational rights. Over the years, the demand for improved digital services and more responsive systems has grown with the increasing number of OCI holders globally.

With this launch, the Ministry of Home Affairs continues its push toward a digitally empowered governance framework, especially for Indians living abroad.

OCI cardholders, a new OCI portal has been developed to address existing shortcomings and enhance the user experience,” said the MHA in a statement. Officials stated that the revamped platform addresses existing shortcomings and is designed to offer a more user-friendly, efficient, and seamless interface for individuals of Indian origin residing overseas.

The OCI card is issued to people of Indian origin who have obtained citizenship

Punjab gets one more day to respond to Haryana’s claim on Bhakra waters

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Tuesday gave the Punjab government one more day to reply in the case about releasing more water to Haryana, emphasizing that the last chance for Punjab to respond. The division bench comprising Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Summeet Goel granted the state of Punjab one day’s time to respond to the assertions made.

This case is about an earlier High Court order on May 6, which asked Punjab to release extra water to Haryana due to a water shortage. On the other hand, Centre, Haryana and Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) opposed Punjab’s plea for recalling the High Court’s May 6 order.

Punjab, in its plea, had

sought a recall or modification of the court’s May 6 order, arguing that the court was given the impression that a meeting was held on May 2 specifically to decide on the issue of additional water release. However, the state contended that there was no specific agenda related to this in that meeting. Punjab government’s lawyer, senior advocate Gurminder Singh, asked for more time to respond to the arguments made by the Central Government, Haryana, and the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB). The High Court had directed Punjab to comply with the decision reportedly taken during the May 2 meeting. The court gave Punjab one day to respond and fixed May 22 for the next hearing.

The water disputed between the neighbouring states started on April 23,

when Haryana asked for 8,500 cusecs of water from the Bhakra-Nangal dam — 4,500 cusecs more than usual evoking a sharp response from Punjab.

Haryana filed a statement saying Punjab is trying to avoid contempt of court and is stopping BBMB from doing its job. Haryana also said Punjab sent police to the Bhakra-Nangal Dam on May 1 to stop water from being released. Haryana called this action unconstitutional and dangerous. Haryana said it urgently needs water, especially in May when farmers start sowing Kharif crops. It said the BBMB’s decision to give 8,500 cusecs was based on technical reasons, not politics. Haryana also accused Punjab of not following court orders for many years, like not building the Satluj-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal.

Retreat ceremony resumes at Attari-Wagah border after 12-day suspension

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

The retreat ceremony at the Attari-Wagah border between India and Pakistan in Punjab resumed on Monday after a 12-day hiatus. The ceremony had been suspended on May 7, following India’s ‘Operation Sindoor’ airstrike on Pakistan during the night of May 6–7.

However, the Border Security Force (BSF) has made some changes to the format of the ceremony. During the retreat, the gates at the border between India and Pakistan will remain closed, and troops from both sides will not shake hands — a customary gesture that has been suspended for now.

A large number of people carrying the Indian tricolour gathered on the Indian side to witness the retreat. In contrast, the spectator



A BSF personnel during a retreat ceremony at the Attari-Wagah border, near Amritsar, Tuesday, May 20, 2025. The Border Security Force (BSF) has said the public flag-lowering retreat ceremony at three locations in Punjab along the Pakistan frontier will begin on Wednesday, about two weeks after it was stopped following Operation Sindoor. ANI

gallery on the Pakistani side remained largely empty. To show a crowd, Pakistani Rangers reportedly brought in local workers and seated them in the gallery.

Ahead of the retreat, a contingent of BSF women personnel also conducted a parade.

In addition to the Attari-Wagah border, retreat ceremonies have also resumed at the Hussainiwalla border in Ferozepur and the Sadiqi border in Fazilka. It is worth noting that the retreat ceremony has been a tradition between the two countries since 1959.

PM Modi chairs meeting...

CONTINUED FROM P1

lasted over an hour, a source in the Union Tourism Minister’s office said.

The government is now working to bring back tourists to the region and encourage travel. The meeting focused on checking

current plans and finding new ways to promote tourism across the country. Previously, on May 15, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had chaired a meeting on May 15 with the Hoteliers Association at the Civil Secretariat. He held the meeting to dis-

cuss their concerns after the April 22 Pahalagam terror attack. Chief Minister Abdullah assured the various stakeholders present at the meeting that the government is fully committed to supporting the sector and will carefully consider their valuable suggestions.

CONTINUED FROM P1

such as cancer, diabetes and hypertension. Thousands of public pharmacists provide high-quality medicines at far less than the market price,” added PM Modi.

Highlighting the role of technology in improving health outcomes, Modi underscored India’s digital initiatives like the digital platform that tracks the vaccination of pregnant women and children and the unique digital health identity system, which is helping integrate benefits, insurance, records, and information.

“The health of the world depends on how well we care

for the most vulnerable,” the Prime Minister asserted.

Noting that the Global South is particularly impacted by health challenges, Modi stressed that India’s approach provides replicable, scalable, and sustainable models.

He expressed India’s willingness to share its learnings and best practices with the world, especially with the Global South.

PM Modi invited countries to participate in the International Day of Yoga, with the theme “Yoga for One Earth One Health.”

“In June, the 11th International Day of Yoga is coming up. This year’s theme is ‘Yoga

for One Earth One Health.’ Being from the nation that gave yoga to the world, I invite all countries to participate,” said PM Modi.

PM Modi congratulated the WHO and member states on the successful negotiations of the INB Treaty, aimed at fighting future pandemics with greater cooperation.

“I congratulate the WHO and all Member States on the successful negotiations of the INB Treaty. It is a shared commitment to fight future pandemics with greater cooperation while building a healthy planet. Let us ensure that no one is left behind,” he said.

The INB was established in December 2021, at a special session of the World Health Assembly, bringing together Member States and relevant stakeholders, including international organizations, private sector, and civil society.

At the World Health Assembly in June 2024, governments made concrete commitments to complete negotiations on a global pandemic agreement within a year. The upcoming Assembly, starting May 19, 2025, will consider the proposal developed by the INB and decide whether to adopt the instrument under Article 19 of the WHO Constitution.

Misri briefs multi-party delegations

CONTINUED FROM P1

terror sites in Pakistan and Pak-occupied Kashmir, and not against military installations and civilians.

It was only after Pakistan’s attempts to attack Indian military installations and the civilian population that India hit back, he said.

Members of the delegations headed by JD(U)’s Sanjay Jha, Shiv Sena’s Shrikant Shinde and DMK’s Kanimozhi attended the briefing in which they are expected to be told about their agenda and its finer details. Kanimozhi, however, could not attend the meeting.

We back India’s actions...

CONTINUED FROM P1

further.”

During the talks, Jaishankar thanked Prime Minister Schoof for the Netherlands’ “firm and resolute” stance against terrorism. Jaishankar, during his meeting with Netherlands’ Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp on Monday (local time), admired the country’s strong condemnation of the April 22 Pahalagam terror attack and its support for a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism. Taking to the social media platform X, Jaishankar expressed gratitude for the Netherlands’ hospitality, noting his discussion with his counterpart on deepened bilateral ties between the two nations and pressing global issues.

Jaishankar arrived here on Monday in the first leg of a three-nation tour. He is also travelling to Denmark and Germany.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement on Tuesday, “External Affairs Minister (EAM), Dr S Jaishankar, paid an official visit to the Netherlands from 19-20 May 2025. During the visit,

EAM called on HE Dick Schoof, Prime Minister of the Netherlands. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the growing strategic convergences in the India-Netherlands relationship, and agreed further to strengthen bilateral ties through regular high-level visits and exchanges. EAM conveyed India’s appreciation for the statement of solidarity from the Netherlands in the fight against terrorism.” EAM Jaishankar met with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp, and reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation and regional and global matters of mutual interest. “The ministers expressed satisfaction over the progress in diverse sectors including trade and economy, science and technology, water, agriculture and health, education, culture and people-to-people ties,” the MEA said in a statement. “They also discussed ways of increasing collaboration in new and emerging sectors of digital technology, semiconductors, AI, and green hydrogen,” it said.

‘Under BJP, money, resources...’

CONTINUED FROM P1

money into the bank account of Karnataka’s poor. Today, thousands of crores of rupees is being directly put into your bank account. This money, you use for the education of your children, for your health. This is what we wanted -- your money comes back to your pocket.”

“The BJP wants only to select people to get India’s entire money, but we want the money to go to the pockets of poor, backward, dalits, adivasis directly. When we put money into your pockets, that money goes into the market and because of

this production increases and money gets injected into villages as you spend this money in your villages and cities and Karnataka’s economy benefits from it,” he added. Stating that in the BJP’s model, the entire money is given to two-three billionaires, the Congress leader said these billionaires don’t spend money in villages or towns, but they buy assets in London, New York and other places.

“Your money goes into the hands of a select few under the BJP’s model. In their model, employment gets finished, but in our model,

employment gets generated. In their model, if you are ill, you will be under debt, in our model, you will have money in your pockets and you will get treated. You will give lakhs of money to private schools, colleges and universities for education under their model and face debt, while in our model we give you money,” he added.

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, party general secretary Ran-deep Singh Surjewala, host of party leaders and ministers were present at the event.

Stalwart of India’s nuclear power sector...

CONTINUED FROM P1

likarjun Kharge condoled the death of MR Srinivasn and said his demise mark a significant loss for India’s scientific community. In a post on X, Kharge said, “The demise of Dr. MR Srinivasan, a pioneering nuclear scientist and Padma Vibhushan recipient, marks a significant loss for India’s scientific community.”

MR Srinivasan joined the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) in September 1955 and began his distinguished career working alongside Homi Bhabha on

the construction of India’s first nuclear research reactor, Apsara, which achieved criticality in August 1956. Srinivasan held several key positions of national importance. In 1974, he became Director of the Power Projects Engineering Division, DAE, and in 1984, Chairman of the Nuclear Power Board. In these roles, he oversaw the planning, execution, and operation of all nuclear power projects across the country. In 1987, he was appointed Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy.

NIA, IB grill Haryana YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra

CONTINUED FROM P1

actions, and connections to suspected operatives. The 33-year-old, who runs the popular YouTube travel channel ‘Travel with JO’ with over 3.87 lakh subscribers, was arrested from the New Aggarsain Extension area of Hisar and booked under the Official Secrets Act and relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). She is one of 12 individuals arrested over the past two weeks in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh in connection with an alleged Pakistan-backed espionage ring targeting North India.

TMC to join all-party outreach...

CONTINUED FROM P1

shared on X.

The Centre had earlier named Berhampore Trinamool MP and former India cricketer Yusuf Pathan as a member of one of the seven diplomatic delegations that will travel to different countries to explain India’s stand on terrorism and expose Pakistan against the backdrop of Operation Sindoor. However, Pathan later opted out after Mamata Banerjee and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee made their displeasure public.

On Monday, Mamata Banerjee had said the Centre should not decide who the party nominates to the delegations. Mamata Banerjee said the Centre did not consult the Trinamool Congress “mother party” to seek the name of its representative in the multi-party delegations, adding: “If they request me to send someone’s name, we will decide it and tell them. This is customary and is the system. We are totally with the Centre regarding the foreign policy.”

Mamata also said: “Nowa-

days, they (Centre) don’t inform the mother party, but only the parliamentary party. However, the parliamentary party only works for the Parliament session, it cannot take policy decisions. No requests came to us. If the request comes to us, of course, we can consider it. We are totally in favour of the country’s best interests.”

Toeing her stance, Abhishek Banerjee said the leadership of a party should decide on the names of its representatives for the diplomatic mission to counter Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, while simultaneously affirming the party’s support for the Centre in its anti-terrorism efforts.

“I believe that whatever decision the Union Government takes — if it aims at combatting and curbing terrorism, safeguarding the sovereignty of the nation and protecting the national interest — we, as a party, will stand with the Centre shoulder-to-shoulder. But if there is a multi-party delegation being sent, it will be up to the individual party to decide its

representatives,” he had told reporters at Kolkata airport before leaving for Delhi on Monday.

The international parliamentary outreach on Operation Sindoor involves a total of 51 political leaders, including current members of Parliament, former Ministers, and eight former Ambassadors.

They will be divided into seven separate delegations, each tasked with visiting major world capitals to explain and assert India’s position on counterterrorism and the rationale behind Operation Sindoor.

All these developments are taking place in the wake of India’s launch of Operation Sindoor on May 7, which was described as a strong military response to the April 22 terror attack in Pahalagam, where 26 Indian citizens were killed.

During Operation Sindoor, the Indian Armed Forces carried out strategic strikes on terrorist infrastructure located in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

MP GOVT CONSTITUTES SIT TO PROBE CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS BY VIJAY SHAH

TDG NETWORK
BHOPAL


The Madhya Pradesh government has constituted a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the controversial remarks made by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Kunwar Vijay Shah, who serves as the Tribal Affairs minister in the state cabinet.

This development comes after the Supreme Court directed the Madhya Pradesh government to form an SIT, comprising three IPS officers, including a lady officer, while coming down heavily on Shah for his remarks against Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, referring to her as “sister of terrorists”.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh directed that the SIT must consist of three senior IPS officers from the Madhya Pradesh cadre, who are currently serving in the

POLITICAL FALLOUT

- SIT Formed: MP govt forms 3-member SIT to probe BJP minister Kunwar Vijay Shah.
- SC Order: Supreme Court directs SIT with 3 IPS officers, including a woman.
- Offensive Remark: Shah called Col. Sofiya Qureshi “sister of terrorists.”
- Court Criticism: SC slams Shah’s apology as insincere; calls remark “shameful.”
- Shah to Cooperate: Arrest stayed, but full co-operation with probe ordered.
- Next Hearing: SIT to submit report; matter listed for May 28.
- Political Reaction: Congress slams BJP for not seeking Shah’s resignation.



The bench said it would not monitor the investigation directly, it made it clear that it would keep a close watch on the case.

state but do not originally belong to it. The court also specified that one of the officers must be a woman. The apex court instructed

the Director General of Police to constitute the SIT by May 20. Terming the minister's remarks as “filthy, crass

and shameful”, the court rejected Shah's public apology, calling it insincere. “The nation is ashamed of you (Shah). Redemption is yours to seek,” said Justice Surya Kant.

While the court stayed Shah's arrest, it directed him to join and fully cooperate with the investigation. Although the bench said it would not monitor the in-

vestigation directly, it made it clear that it would keep a close watch on the case.

The SIT has been asked to submit a status report on the probe, and the matter has been posted for hearing on May 28.

Earlier, Madhya Pradesh Leader of Opposition (LoP) and Congress leader Umang Singh welcomed the Supreme Court's direction. He said, “I welcome the decision of the Supreme Court. I can say that it is a move of the Apex Court in the army's honour. But the Bharatiya Janata Party government, be it the central government or the state government, did not wake up; the court did, but they didn't. The Supreme Court said that the minister's remark is not worthy of apology, but the BJP feels that it is worthy of apology, and that is why the state government hasn't asked for the resignation of the minister yet.”



Addressing the gathering in Vijayanagara, the Congress leader said that whoever owns land in Karnataka must also have ownership rights.

said. He further said that unlike the BJP, the Congress model ensured that employment continues to be created.

“In the BJP model, if you fall ill, you get drowned in debt. In the Congress model, if you fall ill, you have money in your pocket for treatment. In the BJP model, people have to pay lakhs of rupees to private schools, colleges and universities. In the Congress model, we give you money,” Rahul Gandhi said.

He further highlighted the Congress party's promises and said that the Congress government of Karnataka deposits money in the accounts of crores of women.

“It has been two years since the Congress Government was formed in Karnataka. We promised to provide five guarantees during the election. BJP and PM Modi said that Congress will not fulfil the guarantees. Our first guarantee was to provide Rs 2,000 every month to one crore women under the Griha Lakshmi scheme. The Karnataka Government provides this money to the accounts of crores of women,” Gandhi said.

Telangana govt forms 6-member panel to probe Gulzar House fire incident

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has constituted a six-member high-level committee to investigate the recent fire incident at Gulzar House near Charminar, as per the release statement.

The panel includes senior officials from civic, police, fire, and power departments. The state leadership will take further action based on the committee's report.

“The Telangana government formed a six-member committee to conduct a thorough investigation into the Gulzar House fire incident that occurred on May 18 near Charminar,” said the statement.

According to officials from the office of Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, the high-powered panel will include



Firefighters present at the spot after a fire broke out at the Gulzar House near Charminar, in Hyderabad on Sunday. Reportedly, 17 people lost their lives in the incident. (ANI Photo)

key administrative and enforcement heads: Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner R.V. Karnan, Hyderabad District Collector Anudeep Durshsetti, Hyderabad Police Commissioner C.V. Anand, Director General of Fire Services Nagi

Reddy, Hyderabad Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Ranganath, and Chairman and Managing Director of the Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL) Musharaf. Earlier, Telangana Fire Disaster Response Emergency and Civil Defence, at least 17 people lost their lives in the fire that broke out early Sunday morning at a building housing the Krishna Pearls shop and a residential complex near Charminar. Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy also expressed deep shock over the tragic fire mishap that occurred near Gulzar House in the Old City of Hyderabad. He instructed the top officials to take all necessary measures to save the families trapped in the fire accident; the Chief Minister issued orders to shift the injured to nearby hospitals and provide better medical treatment.

Chhagan Bhujbal takes oath as Maha minister

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Chhagan Bhujbal on Tuesday morning took oath as a minister in the Mahayuti-led Maharashtra government at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai.

The oath-taking ceremony was held in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Governor CP Radhakrishnan, who administered Bhujbal's oath.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, the chief of NCP, were also present at the occasion, along with other prominent ministers in the Mahayuti gov-



NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal takes oath as a minister in the Maharashtra government, at the Raj Bhavan in Mumbai on Tuesday. (ANI Photo)

ernment. Shinde said that Bhujbal had served as a minister earlier, and his experience would benefit the Maharashtra government. He said that CM Fadnavis would decide on the portfolio for the veteran leader. The Deputy Chief Minister further informed that Bhujbal started his political

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, the chief of NCP, were also present at the occasion, along with other prominent ministers in the Mahayuti government.

career with the Shiv Sena and was a Shiv Sainik of Bal Thackeray.

“Chhagan Bhujbal has served as a minister before as well. He has led many departments. He is an experienced minister. He is also a Shiv Sainik of Balasaheb Thackeray. He started from the Shiv Sena.

He started from corporator, mayor and went on to become an MLA and a

minister. He has held many positions. Today, he has taken the oath again. I want to congratulate him. His experience will benefit the government. The portfolio will be decided by the Chief Minister,” Shinde told ANI.

Earlier, Maharashtra Minister and State BJP Chief Chandrashekhhar Bawankule welcomed the inclusion of Bhujbal in the State cabinet.

YSRCP MP claims illegal liquor sales in Tripuati, accuses TDP

TDG NETWORK
TADEPALLI

YSRCP MP Maddila Gurumoorthy has alleged that illegal liquor is being sold in Tirupati, citing evidence gathered by party's Tirupati incharge Bhumana Abhinay.

In a statement, Gurumoorthy alleged that the sales are taking place under watch of ruling TDP-led coalition and said that the temple city has become a hub of unlawful liquor trade, operating round-the-clock in gross violation of excise laws.

According to a statement from MP Gurumoorthy, Bhumana Abhinay inspected over a dozen liquor outlets across Tirupati and found liquor being sold at least Rs. 50 above MRP, and shops open as early as 5:00 AM



YSRCP MP Maddila Gurumoorthy

and past midnight--clearly violating legal time restrictions. Gurumoorthy said this illegal liquor network not only threatens the sanctity of Tirupati but also reflects the complete breakdown of governance and regulatory enforcement. He demanded that the government take immediate action against

those responsible and answer to the people for turning a holy city into a hotspot of lawlessness.

“The TDP coalition is looting even in Tirumala's shadow. If this is the situation in a temple town, one can imagine the anarchy elsewhere in the state,” he said.

Earlier on Saturday, Gurumoorthy denounced what he described as “false and politically driven” liquor scam allegations against the YSRCP. In a sharply worded statement, the MP accused the TDP Government in Andhra of orchestrating a campaign of vendetta to target former YSRCP officials and damage the image of opposition leaders through what it called “fabricated cases, coerced confessions, and media manipulation.”

Tamil Nadu: Three dead after wall collapses amid heavy rain in Madurai

TDG NETWORK
MADURAI

Three people, including two women and a 10-year-old boy, died after a wall collapsed during heavy rain in Valaiyangulam village near Thirupparankundram in Madurai district on Monday evening, officials said.

According to Madurai District Superintendent of Police Arvind, the deceased have been identified as Ammappillai (65), her grandson Veeramani (10), and their neighbour Vengatti (55).

The incident occurred around 7 p.m. on Muthalamman Kovil Street, where the victims were sitting near the entrance of Ammappillai's house amid a power outage that had begun around 6 p.m. While it was raining, a portion of

While it was raining, a portion of the house wall suddenly collapsed on them.

the house wall suddenly collapsed on them.

All three sustained severe injuries. Neighbours immediately alerted the 108 ambulance service, and the injured were taken to Valaiyangulam Government Hospital for first aid.

Despite medical efforts, Vengatti succumbed to her injuries at the hospital. Ammappillai and Veeramani were referred to the Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai for further treatment, where they too died.

Telangana: 4 killed, 17 injured in truck-bus collision

TDG NETWORK
VIKARABAD

At least four people lost their lives and around 17 others were injured in a collision between a cement-loaded truck and a bus under the Parigi police station limits in Vikarabad district of Telangana.

The mishap occurred around 1:45 am on Monday when the bus, carrying passengers returning from a wedding reception in Shahbad, rammed into the truck.

The bodies of the deceased were shifted to the government hospital for post-mortem examination (PME), and the injured were shifted to various hospitals for treatment.

According to Vikarabad Superintendent of Police, K. Narayana Reddy, said, “This accident took place



early this morning around 1:45 am between a cement-loaded truck and a bus. The bus was carrying people who were returning from a reception to Shahbad. Four people died, and around 17 others were injured. They were immediately shifted to various hospitals in Hyderabad, and the deceased bodies were shifted for post-mortem examination

(PME).” In India, road accidents, including bus-truck collisions, are governed by a combination of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (amended in 2019), and the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860. The Motor Vehicles Act outlines duties of drivers involved in accidents, such as stopping the vehicle, helping the injured, and informing authorities.

Andhra Pradesh: YSRCP alleges police collusion in Tiruvuru election violence

TDG NETWORK
TADEPALLI

Jalla Sudarshan Reddy, representing the YSRCP Legal Cell, strongly criticised the NTR district police for their alleged disregard of the Election Commission and judicial directives, claiming that their actions led to violence against YSRCP councillors.

Speaking at a press conference, Reddy detailed a disturbing pattern of aggression by coalition party (TDP, BJP, JSP) goons tar-

geting YSRCP councillors heading to the Tiruvuru Municipal Chairman election. The police, instead of protecting the councillors as mandated, colluded with the attackers, arresting YSRCP leaders while allowing the perpetrators to act with impunity.

Police failed to ensure safe passage for councillors, despite clear orders from the Election Commission and support from the local MLA. This follows a similar attack the previous day, which forced the postponement of

the election.

According to the release, despite YSRCP's formal appeal to the Election Commission and a detailed submission of the councillors' travel plans to the police, no protection was provided.

The police arrested several key figures from the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), including Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) Arun Kumar, leader Devineni Avinash, and former MLA Nallagatla Swamidas. In Madhavaram village, located in the A.



Konduru mandal, coalition supporters blocked councillors from entering the area.

Fearing for their safety, the councillors were forced to retreat and could not partici-

Police failed to ensure safe passage for councillors, despite clear orders from the Election Commission and support from the local MLA. This follows a similar attack the previous day, which forced the postponement of the election.

pate in the election. Reddy condemned this as a deliberate tactic by the coalition to suppress YSRCP's majority and manipulate the election outcome with their limited

councillors.

Highlighting the broader implications, Reddy stated, “When police side with goons and ignore court and Election Commission or-

ders, it is clear that democracy in this state is being murdered.”

He revealed that a house motion petition filed last night was taken up by the court today, with the government's counsel falsely claiming adequate protection was provided.

The court has now directed authorities to submit a detailed report on the security measures. YSRCP would escalate the matter to the judiciary, ensuring accountability for the officials complicit in this travesty.

ARVIND KEJRIWAL LAUNCHES AAP'S STUDENT WING 'ASAP'

ASAP will operate alongside AAP's youth wing, Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Samiti (CYSS).

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Am Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday launched a students wing of his party — Association of Students For Alternative Politics (ASAP) — at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi with an aim to connect students from colleges and higher educational institutions from across the country and motivate them to push for political reforms.

Earlier, the youth wing of AAP -- Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Samiti — was the default students wing, and it also contested elections in Delhi University. The ASAP will exit in parallel to CYSS. In over 12 years of its existence, the AAP didn't have a separate students wing.

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tues-



APAP's Arvind Kejriwal, party leaders Manish Sisodia, Awadh Ojha and others during the launch of the party's student wing, Association of Students for Alternative Politics (ASAP), at Constitution Club of India in New Delhi. ANI

day said Hindu-Muslim politics practised by mainstream parties for the last 75 years is the root cause of all problems in the country.

Speaking at the launch of the party's student wing -- the Association of Students for Alternative Politics (ASAP) -- here, the former Delhi chief minister accused the current BJP dispensation of destroying the city's education system.

"Our country is grappling

with a lot of problems. People do not have food or access to education. Why is this happening? It is because parties like the BJP, the Congress and others have only indulged in politics in the last 75 years," he said.

"These parties are only teaching our school children about Hindu-Muslim... This is the root cause of problems in our country," he said.

Talking about the ASAP,

he said student cultural groups will be formed in colleges across the country under the forum.

Kejriwal said the AAP has proved that elections can be fought with complete honesty. During his speech, Kejriwal slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress saying that they practise mainstream politics.

He also hit out at the BJP-led government in Delhi for

the long power cuts in the national capital.

"Nowadays, there are three to four hour-long power cuts in Delhi, which did not happen earlier. Within three months, they (BJP) have started ruining the education in Delhi," he said. "The AAP did not allow the private school mafia to increase fees in 10 years of its tenure," he added.

The AAP chief said the ASAP will carry out large scale engagement of students across colleges of the country through dialogues and deliberations.

Former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said even after over 75 years of Independence, India is late in giving required education to the students. Referring to the name of the new student wing ASAP, Sisodia said the need for reform is urgent and should be done as soon as possible.

Govt reduces local area fund for MLAs to Rs 5 cr

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The BJP-led Delhi government has reduced the annual MLA Local Area Development (LAD) Fund from Rs 15 crore to Rs 5 crore, officials have said. In October last year, the previous AAP government in Delhi enhanced the MLA LAD Fund from Rs 10 crore to Rs 15 crore, months ahead of the assembly polls. The AAP was defeated by the BJP in the polls held in February this year.

According to a recent order issued by Urban Development Department of the Delhi government, the MLA LAD Fund as per a cabinet decision on May 2, has been kept at Rs 5 crore per assembly constituency per year.

"In pursuance of Cabinet Decision No. 3187 dated 02.05.2025, the allocation of fund under MLALAD Scheme has been kept at Rs 5 crore per assembly constituency per year from financial year 2025-26 onwards," said the order.

Further, the Council of



A Bjp MLA said that the government set aside Rs 350 crore under the MLA LAD Fund that was divided into Rs 5 crore each among the 70 legislators in Delhi.

Ministers has directed that this will be an untied fund and could be spent for the approved works of capital nature as well as repairs and maintenance of the assets without a ceiling, added the order.

A BJP MLA said that the government set aside Rs

350 crore under the MLA LAD Fund that was divided into Rs 5 crore each among the 70 legislators in Delhi.

In the previous AAP regime, Rs 4 crore was provided to each MLA in 2021-22 and 2022-23, which was enhanced to Rs 7 crore in 2023-24.

City power demand hits 7,401 MW

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Amid the prevailing hot and humid weather, the national capital's power demand clocked at 7,401 MW on Tuesday afternoon, the highest for the summer season, so far, discom officials said. The State Load Dispatch Centre Delhi's real-time data showed the peak demand was 7,401 MW at 3:11 pm.

BSES discoms - BRPL and BYPL "successfully" met the peak power demand of 3,285 MW and 1,559 MW, respectively, on the day, said a company spokesperson.

The BSES discoms were prepared to handle the growing power demand in the city, aided by over 2,100 MW of green power during summer months, he added.

"BSES discoms are



Birds dissipate body heat from a fountain amid rising mercury, at Kartavya Path in New Delhi. ANI

geared-up to ensure reliable power supply to meet the power demand of more than 50 lakh consumers in South, West, East and Central Delhi, including long term power purchase agreements, banking arrangements with other states and deployment of latest technologies for predicting power demand accurately," the spokesperson said.

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited said in a statement that it "successfully" met peak power demand of 2,178 MW in its distribution area, North Delhi, as the city recorded the season's highest power demand.

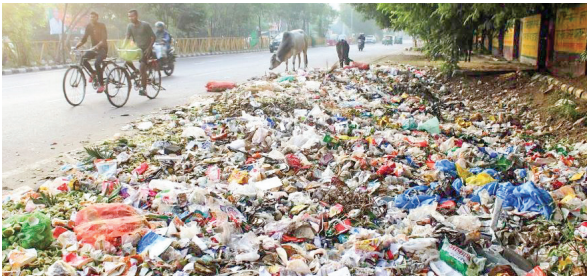
The statement further said that there were no network constraints or supply disruptions despite the enhanced demand.

MCD to roll back garbage collection fee

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The ruling BJP in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi has announced to roll back levying of user charges on garbage collection and bring an amnesty scheme to settle old house tax dues, party leaders said on Tuesday. The decisions were announced by Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva and city Mayor Raja Iqbal Singh.

"The previous AAP dispensation in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) imposed the user charge without any discussion. Officials have been instructed that no user charge should be imposed on people. We will bring a private resolution on this



in the MCD House meeting on Wednesday," Singh said.

The mayor also said the BJP will bring an amnesty scheme under which previous dues of house taxes will be settled on depositing the pending dues of five years. No penalty or late payment surcharge will be imposed and people will be provided no objection certificates by the MCD, showing settlement of house tax

dues, Singh said.

Stating that the BJP discussed the issue with the prominent residents' welfare associations (RWAs), Sachdeva said the AAP imposed the user charge "arbitrarily".

On Monday, AAP councillors held a sit-in outside the Delhi mayor's office, protesting the omission of a proposal to roll back the user charges from the House agenda.

Accused on run in 2017 murder of BSP leader held

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has nabbed the absconding key accused in the sensational 2017 Burari murders in which Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Chaudhary Munawwar Hassan, his wife and four children were killed, officials said on Tuesday. The accused, Saheed Khan alias Bunt, who had been absconding since September 2024 after being released on parole, was apprehended by the special staff of north Delhi, the officials said.

"Khan, who was the main conspirator in the multiple murders, had been on the run for over seven months after failing to surrender



before jail authorities following his parole," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) (North) Raja Banthia in a statement said.

The officer further said a police team arrested Khan, 35, near his residence where he had come to collect money.

According to police, Khan

was a former business partner of Munawwar Hassan and aimed to usurp properties worth Rs 5-6 crore belonging to Hassan in the Burari area.

"In 2017, while Hassan was lodged in Tihar Jail in connection with a rape case, Khan allegedly plotted to eliminate Hassan's family.

Delhi cabinet approves plan for sanitation, dust control: CM

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday said the cabinet has approved a comprehensive sanitation and dust control plan for the Public Works Department (PWD). Under this plan, the cabinet has approved the procurement of advanced cleaning machines to reduce pollution on Delhi roads.

In a statement, she said under this initiative, a range of equipment will be deployed on PWD-maintained roads to combat dust pollution. They include 250 water sprinkler machines integrated with anti-smog guns and 70 Mechanical Road Sweeping (MRS) machines integrated with 210



water sprinkler machines and anti-smog guns, 18 dump vehicles and 18 water tankers.

All these machines are expected to be fully operational on Delhi roads before the onset of winter. The Environment Department will provide the necessary budget to the PWD under the 'Pollution Control and Emergency Measures' scheme for the deployment of the machines, she said. These machines will

be used exclusively for dust cleaning on roads and can be deployed across Delhi as needed with the goal of improving overall air quality.

Gupta said the cabinet also approved the proposal of Directorate of Education to reinstate the name of the scheme namely 'Lal Bahadur Shastri Scholarship to Meritorious Students' in place of 'Chief Minister Scholarship for Meritorious Students'.

"In 2019-20, the 'Lal Bahadur Shastri Scholarship for Meritorious Students (LBS)' scheme was discontinued and restructured under a new name -- Chief Minister Scholarship for Meritorious Students -- by the previous government.

Rs 30,000 subsidy for 3 kW solar panels approved

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi cabinet on Tuesday approved a subsidy of Rs 30,000 on the installation of 3 kW rooftop solar panels, Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said. The minister said the cabinet also approved the procurement of litter machines, anti-smog guns, mechanical road sweepers and water sprinklers as part of its pollution control measures.

Sirsa said, "Now the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has approved a subsidy of Rs 10,000 per kilowatt more which comes around to Rs 30,000."



The central government provides a subsidy of Rs 78,000 for installing rooftop solar panels under PM Surya Ghar Yojana.

Sirsa also said that the government will tie up with banks so that people can get easy loans on installation charges for solar panels. People will not have to spend any money from their pocket and will save Rs 4,200 per month, he added.

82-km Delhi-Meerut RRTS corridor to be ready by June

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

By the end of June, people can travel to Modipuram in UP's Meerut in just 45 minutes from Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi as the final phase of India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor is nearly complete, officials said on Tuesday. The 82-kilometre-long corridor, known as the Namo Bharat corridor, is being imple-



menting by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) as a high-speed regional connectivity project.

Of the total length, a 55-kilometre stretch with 11 stations is already operational, while work on the remaining 27-kilometre portion is

progressing rapidly, said an official of NCRTC.

Work on a two-km extension from Sarai Kale Khan to Jangpura is still underway.

Since the launch of services on the 17-km priority section on October 21, 2023, the corridor has steadily expanded its reach. In Delhi, the segment between Sahibabad and New Ashok Nagar was inaugurated on January 5.

Delhi govt launches 'Jal Doot' to combat heat

TIKAM SHARMA
NEW DELHI

Amidst the intensifying heat in Delhi, the newly formed Delhi Government has introduced the 'Jal Doot' initiative as part of the 'Delhi Heat Action Plan 2025'. As a key part of this initiative, Transport Minister Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh inaugurated the Smart Cold RO Water Dispensers and officially launched the Jal Doot program at the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) Nehru Place Terminal today. This initiative is one of

several proactive steps designed to protect commuters from extreme summer temperatures. The Minister also personally drank water from the 'Jal Doots' and praised their dedicated service to the public.

As a crucial component of the campaign, Smart Cold RO Water Dispensers will be installed at all DTC Bus Terminals. Initially, fourteen such dispensers will be set up on a pilot basis. Additionally, Jal Doot Volunteers will be stationed at over 500 Bus Queue Shelters throughout

the city to distribute chilled and purified drinking water to commuters free of charge.

Transport Minister Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh stated, "Offering water to someone in need is the highest form of service. It is rightly said that water is life. The severity of Delhi's summer is well known, and those most affected are the people who spend long hours outdoors or rely on public transport. In such challenging conditions, DTC's effort to ensure access to clean and cool drinking water is both vital

and commendable."

"One of the key aspects of this plan is the placement of 'Jal Doots' at Bus Queue Shelters (BQS) across Delhi. These individuals have been specially trained to carry water containers and supply clean drinking water to people waiting for buses. This initiative is essential in mitigating the health impact of extreme heat. As the summer intensifies, it is our responsibility to ensure that clean drinking water is available at all bus depots and queue shelters.

DELHI HC NOTICE: THAROOR ASKED TO RESPOND TO CHANDRASEKHAR’S DEFAMATION COMPLAINT

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday issued notice to Congress leader and Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor in a petition filed by BJP leader and former Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar. The appeal challenges a trial court’s decision to dismiss Chandrasekhar’s criminal defamation complaint against Tharoor.

The bench of Justice Ravinder Dubeja sought a response from Shashi Tharoor after hearing detailed submissions by senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, who appeared on behalf of Rajeev Chandrasekhar. The matter has been listed for hearing on

September 15, 2025.

Senior Advocate Mahesh Jethmalani argued that the trial court had issued a grossly erroneous order in dismissing the Revisionist’s (Rajeev Chandrasekhar’s) defamation complaint. He contended that the Revisionist had sought the prosecution of the Respondent (Shashi Tharoor) for criminal defamation under Section 203 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. However, the court exercised judicial discretion perversely and overlooked material evidence on record.

Furthermore, Jethmalani submitted that the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, in delivering the impugned order, had failed to recognize the Respondent’s attempt to



Chandrashekhar alleged that Tharoor falsely claimed in an interview that he had bribed voters in the Thiruvananthapuram constituency.

gain an unfair advantage in the election by making false statements right before the polls. He argued that these statements not only severely damaged the credibility and reputation of the Revisionist—leading to his defeat by a narrow margin—but also undermined the principles of free and fair elections, which form the cornerstone

of democracy

In February 2025, the Rouse Avenue Court in Delhi declined to issue summons to Congress MP Shashi Tharoor in a defamation complaint filed by BJP leader Rajeev Chandrashekhar.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (ACJM) dismissed the complaint after reviewing pre-summoning

evidence presented by the complainant’s counsel, ruling that the case did not establish defamation against the proposed accused.

Earlier, on September 21, 2024, the court had taken cognisance of the defamation complaint and directed the complainant to present pre-summoning evidence.

Chandrashekhar alleged that Tharoor falsely claimed in an interview that he had bribed voters in the Thiruvananthapuram constituency. He argued that this statement damaged his reputation and contributed to his loss in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

In its September 21 order, the Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate stated: “Based on the submissions and mate-

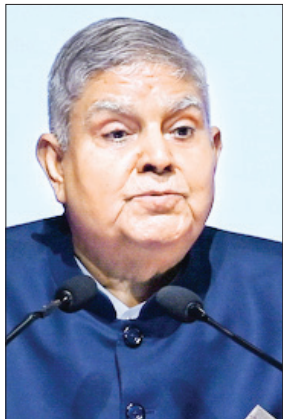
rial placed on record, which prima facie disclose the ingredients of the offence, I take cognisance of the offences under Sections 500 IPC and 171G IPC.”

The complaint further alleged that Tharoor defamed Chandrashekhar by making false and derogatory statements on national television, knowingly misrepresenting facts with the intent to harm his reputation and influence the election outcome.

Additionally, it was claimed that the interview was widely circulated by various news channels and social media platforms at the behest of the proposed accused, leading to reputational damage and ultimately contributing to Chandrashekhar’s electoral defeat in 2024.

No FIR to date, need to find out bigger sharks: Dhankhar on Justice Yashwant Varma case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar has raised concerns over the probe by a panel of three judges into allegations of discovery of unaccounted cash at the official residence of Justice Yashwant Varma during a fire incident in March this year, wondering that there is no FIR to date and everyone in the country is now thinking “whether this will be washed off.”

VP Dhankhar spoke at the book launch event of ‘The Constitution We Adopted (with Artworks)’, edited by Vijay Hansaria, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Monday. “We’re confronted with the jarring reality. A judge’s residence in Lutyens Delhi had burnt notes. There is no FIR to date...Everyone in the country is now thinking whether this will be washed off or fade with time, and they are really concerned.

A judge’s residence in Lutyens Delhi had burnt notes. There is no FIR to date...Everyone in the country is now thinking whether this will be washed off or fade with time, and they are really concerned.

“But now is the time to take a call. Partly the confidence has been restored by Justice Khanna. When you put in public domain documentation which people thought will never be shown to them. That was a big step by him to project accountability and transparency. If democratic values have to prosper, I am sure this is a test case. There must be a swift investigation by those concerned with the investigation,” VP Dhankhar added. A panel of judges tasked with conducting an internal inquiry into allegations of cash being discovered at Justice Yashwant Varma’s official residence submitted its report to the then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna on May 4. The Chief Justice of India constituted this committee on March 22 to examine the allegations against Justice Yashwant Varma, a sitting judge of the High Court of Delhi.

Vaishnaw shares update on Bullet Train Project, says 300 km viaduct completed

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw shared an update on the country’s ambitious Bullet Train Project on Tuesday, announcing the completion of 300 kilometres of viaduct. Taking to his official handle on X, the minister posted a video along with the caption, “300 km viaduct completed. -- Bullet Train Project.”

The project is being implemented by the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL). Approximately 76 per cent of the excavation work has been completed on the Mumbai bullet train station located at Bandra Kurla Complex, which is the only underground station on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor. According to a release, 14.2 lakh cubic metres of



the excavation work has been completed. 18.7 lakh cubic metres of earthwork must be excavated from this site. Three batching plants of 120 cum/hr capacity are functional at site. Batching plants are provided with an ice plant and a chiller plant that help control concrete temperature. The site is provided with a modern concrete lab, with facilities like a Water Permeability Test, a Rapid Chloride Penetration Test, etc. All concrete tests are conducted at the site, and samples are intermittently sent to a reputed lab.

Proud moment for nation, says Nadda after WHO awards India for eliminating trachoma

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

After India was conferred the certificate of elimination of Trachoma as a public health problem at 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Union Health Minister JP Nadda lauded this achievement and said it is a proud moment for the nation.

In a post on X, JP Nadda said, “A proud moment for the nation at WHA78 (World Health Assembly) India has been conferred the Certificate of Elimination of Trachoma as a Public Health Problem by Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General at WHO, at the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva.”

Crediting the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Nadda said this milestone reflects the success of our public health initiatives. “This significant milestone reflects the success of our public health initiatives under the visionary leadership Prime Minister



Narendra Modi ji whose focus on preventive and inclusive healthcare continues to drive global recognition,” JP Nadda said.

Nadda further assured that the country remains firmly committed to disease elimination and ensuring health for all through sustained, people-centric health reforms.

On Monday, World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus awarded India the Certificate of

Elimination of Trachoma as a Public Health Problem at the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) stated that this recognition highlights India’s sustained efforts in disease elimination, its focus on preventive healthcare, and its continued commitment to the vision of Health For All.

The milestone was announced during India’s participation in the 78th World Health Assembly, which

officially began on May 19 in Geneva. According to a post shared by the MoHFW on X, the Indian delegation is being led by Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary at the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

“Today marks the commencement of the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva. The Indian delegation, led by Punya Salila Srivastava... is actively participating in the Assembly, reflecting India’s continued commitment to strengthening global health systems and advancing international collaboration,” the ministry said.

India’s presence at the World Health Assembly underscores its larger role in global health governance. The delegation’s active involvement aligns with India’s consistent efforts in supporting multilateral health initiatives and highlights the nation’s leadership in public health challenges, including neglected tropical diseases such as trachoma.

Army organises free medical camp for border residents affected by Pak shelling

TDG NETWORK
BARAMULLA [J&K]

In a humanitarian effort to support the civilians affected by Pakistani shelling during the Indo-Pak conflict, Indian army on Tuesday organised a free medical camp in the Uri sector of Baramulla. Meanwhile, havoc has wreaked the life of locals in the Rajouri district who were the first to be in the line of fire during the Indo-Pak conflict. The homes of these locals have been destroyed or are in a dilapidated condition, becoming uninhabitable. Mohammad, an elder of a village in Rajouri, said that his entire house came down after shells hit the building. He appealed to



the government to provide his family with tents and other assistance since they have nowhere to go. “It was morning when I was going for my prayers, and we heard the explosion. We have a house with two floors, which came down. It has become uninhabitable. We should be given tents or some kind of assistance. They (officials) came, saw and went away. I was admitted to the hospital (after injuries to the head) and received stitches. I have been discharged after seven days,” he said. “I took loans to teach my

daughter...We have no support. I urge the government to help us in any way possible,” he added. Mariya, a family member, said that her uncle Mohammad and her cousins were inside the house when shelling occurred, after which they fainted and regained consciousness after a while. “When shelling occurred, my uncle (Mohammad) and his family members were inside the house. The shelling has caused massive losses to them. They have worked as labour to educate their daughters. Everyone in the house fainted when the shells hit the house. As soon as they regained consciousness, they tended to my uncle’s injuries. We appeal to the government to help them,” she said.

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CBI arrests India Post official, one other for taking bribe of Rs 25,000

TDG NETWORK
JAUNPUR [UTTAR PRADESH]

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested two accused, including Sub Divisional Inspector (SDI) of India Post and a driver for demanding and accepting bribe of Rs. 25,000 from Branch Post Master in Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, according to a statement from probe agency on Tuesday. The CBI has registered the case on Monday against Sub Divisional Inspector (SDI), India Post Madiyahu on allegations that accused conducted inspection of India Post, Branch Office Seur, and asked for a bribe from Branch Post Master after noticing a cash shortage. According to CBI, SDI conducted the inspection on May 15 and asked the complainant (Branch Post Master) to submit a clarification upon noticing cash shortage. The complainant submitted his clarification on May 17,



however the SDI demanded a bribe of Rs 25000 from the complainant in lieu of settling the matter and ensuring that the complainant is not suspended. CBI laid a trap and caught the accused driver of Mail Motor red handed while demanding and accepting bribe from the complainant in criminal conspiracy with said India post officer. Later, both accused were arrested and produced before the CBI court, the statement added.

The CBI has registered the case on Monday against Sub Divisional Inspector (SDI), India Post Madiyahu on allegations that accused conducted inspection of India Post, Branch Office Seur, and asked for a bribe from Branch Post Master after noticing a cash shortage. According to CBI, SDI conducted the inspection on May 15 and asked the complainant to submit a clarification.

Indian Army’s bomb disposal squad destroys live Pakistani shell in Poonch

TDG NETWORK
POONCH [J&K]

The bomb disposal squad of the Indian Army has destroyed a live Pakistani shell near a border area village in Jammu and Kashmir. The live shell was placed on the roadside and destroyed to ensure the safety of the locals.

Mohammad Mashuk said that the army was do-

ing a “tremendous” job of destroying the live shells launched by Pakistan. He said that the live shell, which was here in Dara Bagyal, was a threat to everyone living here, and this threat has now been averted.

“I want to say that the Indian army is doing a tremendous job in the entire Poonch. The live shell was there on the roadside, and

there is a ‘basti’ nearby. However, the army personnel destroyed it. It was a huge threat for us, especially for those who walk down this path.

A local from Dara Bagyal in Poonch said, “The army has destroyed a bomb, which came from Pakistan. We were in danger and fearful due to this. I want to thank them for destroying the bomb.”



Meanwhile, locals in border districts in Jammu and

Kashmir have suffered massive damages due to in-

tense shelling by Pakistan during the recent conflict. Locals in these districts were the first to be in the line of fire during the recent conflict between India and Pakistan, which has come to a pause after both countries reached an agreement of cessation of hostilities.

However, the destruction caused by shelling from the Pakistani side has wreaked havoc in the lives of people

living in villages near the border areas, with their houses destroyed or in a dilapidated condition, becoming uninhabitable.

Mohammad, an elder of a village in Rajouri, said that his entire house came down after shells hit the building. He appealed to the government to provide his family with tents and other assistance since they have nowhere to go.

Reportedly, the locals have suffered damages to their livestock, properties, and essentially their livelihood in border areas such as Nowshera.

Last week, Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary visited border villages near the LoC in Rajouri district and interacted with residents affected by recent hostilities.

DELAY IN REGULATORY CLEARANCES CAN HURT INVESTOR CONFIDENCE, SAYS NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

FM backs faster M&A clearances to boost business confidence

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday cautioned that delays in regulatory approvals can create uncertainty, disrupt business timelines, and reduce the value of commercial transactions.

Addressing the audience at the 16th Annual Day Celebrations of the Competition Commission of India in New Delhi, the Union Finance Minister said THAT “India’s ongoing structural reforms - asset monetisation, disinvestment, and digital public infrastructure - are all geared towards unlocking market potential and deepening competition.”

Any delay in regulatory

- KEY POINTS
- FM Sitharaman flagged delays in regulatory approvals as harmful to business value, investor confidence, and India’s FTA negotiations.
 - Called for faster, agile regulation to clear benign M&As without compromising competition oversight.
 - Backed CCI reforms like the Green Channel and reduced merger review timelines from 210 to 150 days.
 - Said CCI will drive fair markets by enabling MSMEs, digital inclusion, and consumer choice.



approval is closely monitored by global investors and can influence India’s position in ongoing free trade agreement negotiations, highlighting the need for regulatory agility and responsiveness. “Delays in regulatory clearance can lead to uncertainty, disrupt commercial timelines and potentially erode the intended value of transactions, and globally, it has an impact, even as we negotiate free trade agreements with different countries, because the ability, the nimbleness and the readiness of regulators

are very keenly watched by investors,” Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman said. Sitharaman further emphasised that while regulatory frameworks must ensure strict oversight, they should also enable swift and seamless approvals for mergers and acquisitions that do not threaten market competition. Going further, she expressed happiness over the introduction of the ‘Green Channel mechanism’ by the CCI, which is a trust-based, risk-calibrated approach that allows for au-

tomated approval of Combinations that are deemed to have no appreciable adverse effect on competition to reduce transaction costs and timelines for benign mergers and acquisitions.

The Union Finance Minister further added that the enactment of the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023, has been an important landmark in the evolution of competition law in India.

She said that the act is strengthening the Commission’s enforcement capabilities while simultaneously creating a more facilitative

and transparent regulatory framework.

Sitharaman also praised the CCI’s initiative for merger review timelines, adding that the reduced timelines from 210 days to 150 days are enabling quicker regulatory decisions that align with the fast-moving nature of global business transactions. Sitharaman highlighted that as India integrates further with global value chains and digital ecosystems, maintaining open and contestable markets will be crucial to its competitiveness. “The Competition Commission of India, through its unique mandate and cross-sectoral role, will be a key enabler in this journey - whether it is facilitating market access for MSMEs, addressing barriers that impede fair competition, promoting digital inclusion, or ensuring that consumers benefit from better choices, lower prices, and improved quality,” Union Finance Minister Sitharaman added.

RBI may change its liquidity management approach: Report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India’s banking system remained in a liquidity surplus during the week ending May 16, 2025, with average surplus funds amounting to Rs 2.04 lakh crore, according to a recent report by Union Bank of India.

Despite tighter liquidity conditions in recent months, the weighted average call rate (WACR) stood at 5.69 per cent, which is lower than the current repo rate. This indicates the presence of excess funds in the system.

The report said, “The banking system remained in surplus for most of the week, averaging Rs. 2.04 lakh crore”.

It also added that as of May 2, 2025, total bank credit rose by 9.9 per cent on a year-on-year basis, while deposits grew slightly faster at 10.0 per cent. This has led to a narrowing of the gap between credit and deposit growth. The difference has turned slightly negative, moving from a positive gap of 13 basis points in the previous fortnight to a



negative 6 basis points.

The report stated this reflects banks’ active efforts to mobilise more deposits in response to earlier tight liquidity conditions.

Meanwhile, the domestic bond market saw a fall in yields. The yield on the 10-year government security (6.79 per cent GS 2034) dropped by 6 basis points over the week to 6.26 per cent. It had earlier risen to 6.3449 per cent before falling to a low of 6.2525 per cent.

The decline in yields is largely due to expectations of a higher dividend transfer from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), estimated at around Rs 2.5-3.0 lakh crore, and easing consumer price inflation (CPI), which opens up the possibility of future rate cuts.

The RBI recently reviewed its economic capital framework (ECF) and has sought the government’s approval to expand the range of its contingent risk buffer (CRB), which could impact the final dividend amount.

Markets are now closely watching for the RBI’s dividend announcement, scheduled for May 23, 2025.

The report said that a higher-than-expected dividend could push system liquidity above Rs 6.0 lakh crore. In that case, the likelihood of further open market operations (OMOs) would reduce, as most have already been front-loaded.

Meanwhile, the RBI has called a meeting this week to discuss its liquidity management framework. The current framework largely revolves around 14-day repo and reverse repo operations, supported by shorter-tenor tools.

However, recent weeks have seen a consistent omission of the 14-day operations, possibly indicating a shift in the central bank’s liquidity management approach.

India leads call for inclusive energy governance at BRICS Energy Ministers’ meet

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Manohar Lal, who led the Indian Delegation for the BRICS Energy Ministers’ Meeting hosted in Brasilia this week, highlighted energy security as one of the most pressing current challenges and emphasized the need to strengthen BRICS cooperation to ensure economic stability and sustainability, as well as to promote equitable access to energy resources globally.

The Union Minister for Power and Housing and Urban Affairs reaffirmed India’s unwavering commitment to building a sustainable and inclusive energy future and lauded Brazil’s leadership under the theme, ‘Strengthening Global South Cooperation for More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance.’

He further emphasised the critical role of energy security, access, and affordability

in advancing global development goals.

Minister Manohar Lal showcased India’s rapid progress in clean energy highlighting some of the key achievements, including a 90 per cent increase in electricity capacity over the past decade, reaching 475 GW in 2025 and targeting 900 GW by 2032; becoming the world’s third-largest producer of solar and wind energy; marching fast towards achieving Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); achieving a 20 per cent ethanol blending milestone, advancing biofuel adoption and emissions reduction; investing in smart grids, advanced metering infrastructure, and an expanded transmission network, including the Green Energy Corridor; setting ambitious goals for green hydrogen and nuclear energy, including a 100 GW nuclear capacity target by 2047. He also emphasised the role of

the Global Biofuels Alliance in advancing cooperation in the biofuels sector and underscored India’s commitment to energy efficiency through innovative programs such as the Energy Conservation Sustainable Buildings Code, rooftop solar initiatives, and efficient appliance standards.

He underscored the vital role of fossil fuels in the global energy mix - especially for developing countries - and urged greater cooperation to promote their cleaner and efficient use through technologies such as coal gasification, carbon capture and storage, and green chemical innovations. In conclusion, Minister Manohar Lal extended an invitation to the BRICS nations to participate in the next BRICS Energy Gathering, scheduled for 2026 in India, reaffirming the country’s commitment to leading the energy agenda for the Global South.

Stocks continue to slump over profit booking; news on US trade deal in focus

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian stock indices slumped for the third straight session, possibly due to continued profit booking, while investors awaited further updates on India-US trade deal negotiations.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal had “good discussions” with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, towards expediting the first tranche of the India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement in his ongoing visit to the US. Sensex closed at 81,191.51 points, down 867.91 points or 1.06 per cent, while Nifty closed at 24,684.85 points, down 260.60 points or 1.04 per cent. All the sectoral indices were deep in the red, with auto, FMCG, media, and pharma slumping the most. Nifty India Defence

slumped 2.4 per cent. Gold, a key indicator of the financial sector, was trading at USD 3,238.50 per ounce, up USD 5.00 or 0.15 per cent. Sensex is now some 4,000 points below its all-time high of 85,978 points. Among Sectors, all the major sectoral indices registered intraday profit booking at higher levels, but Defence, Auto indices lost the most, shedding over 2 per cent. Technically, after a positive open market consistently witnessing selling pressure at higher levels,” said Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said, “With the lack of major positive triggers and prevailing uncertainty over U.S. fiscal stability, investors opted for profit-booking and adopted a cautious stance.

Taiwan to set up sovereign wealth fund

TDG NETWORK
TAIPEI

President Lai Ching-te on Tuesday announced a plan during his first anniversary speech for Taiwan to set up a sovereign wealth fund (SWF) to be responsible for foreign investment “to connect with the world,” as reported by Focus Taiwan.

“The government will set up a sovereign wealth fund to build a national-level investment platform,” he said in his address made at the Presidential Office one year after he took office.

The fund will “take advantage of the strengths of Taiwanese businesses and be led by the government while harnessing the power of the private sector to build a global presence and connect with major target markets in the AI era,” Lai said, without elaboration.

Solar Industries reports record FY25 profits, with orderbook of Rs 17,000 cr

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Solar Industries India Limited (SIIL) posted the highest ever yearly revenue and profits with a significant orderbook of Rs 17,000 crore in the financial year 2025, the company said in a release.

Solar Industries India Limited (SIIL) registered the highest ever quarterly and yearly sales at Rs 2167 crore and Rs 7540 crore. It also posted the highest ever quarterly and yearly EBITDA at Rs 546 crore and Rs 2031 crore, respectively.

The company has also posted highest highest-ever defence revenue in the quarter and year at Rs 430 crore and Rs 1355 crore, as per the Solar Industries India Limited.

Presenting the Quarterly and yearly results, Manish Nuval, Managing Director and CEO of Solar Industries, shared delightedly the pivotal year where strategy, scale, and execution converged to deliver the highest ever revenue and profits.

“We are happy to report the highest ever sales for the quarterly and year at Rs 2167 crore & Rs 7540 crore. We have also achieved the highest ever quarterly EBITDA & PAT at Rs 546 crore & Rs 371 crore, registering growth of 47 per cent and 42 per cent yoy and highest ever yearly EBITDA & PAT at Rs 2031 crore & Rs 1288 crore registering growth of 44 per cent & 47 per cent in the year FY25. We achieved around 27 per cent EBITDA margin, more than our annual guidance”.

Nishant Pitti rubbishes linkages to unlawful conduct as ED probes Mahadev app case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

EaseMyTrip Founder and Chairman Nishant Pitti on Tuesday rubbished allegations that he was linked to illegal activities involving Sky Exchange, the Mahadev app, or any form of unlawful conduct.

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) had conducted searches at the premises of Nishant Pitti in mid-April 2025, under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in the

“Mahadev Online Book Betting APP case”.

“I strongly deny the recent allegations linking me to any illegal activities involving Sky Exchange, the Mahadev app, or any form of unlawful conduct. These claims are completely baseless, speculative, and misleading,” Nishant Pitti said in a statement on Tuesday.

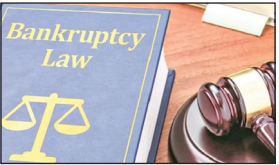
According to Pitti, someone is making a deliberate and sustained effort to tarnish his reputation through “false narratives and misinformation.”

Govt likely to bring IBC amendment bill in Parliament’s monsoon session: Sources

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The central government is likely to bring an amendment in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) in the upcoming monsoon session of Parliament, sources said.

The amendment in Section 31(4) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) will be made. This particular section mandates prior approval from the CCI for any resolution plan. Sources said the amendment in the IBC will reduce the load on the Competition Commission of India (CCI). Once the



new amendment is adopted, approval from CCI would not be needed for a company planning resolution under the IBC route, they added. The plan to amend the IBC comes in the wake of the Supreme Court’s latest observation during the hearing of the resolution plan of AGI Greenpac. The apex court had noted that the resolution was unsustainable without CCI approval. The Supreme Court had re-

portedly observed in January 2025 that AGI Greenpac Ltd’s bid for the acquisition of insolvent Hindustan National Glass (HNG) Ltd without the Competition Commission of India’s (CCI) approval is unsustainable and must be set aside.

“AGI Greenpac’s resolution plan is unsustainable as it failed to secure prior approval from the CCI, as mandated under the proviso to Section 31(4) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Consequently, the approval granted by the Committee of Creditors (CoC) to the resolution plan dated October 28,

Only 7% Indian firms are cybersecurity ready: Cisco

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Cybersecurity readiness remains alarmingly low in Indian companies, with only 7 per cent of firms in India achieving a mature level of readiness by 2025, according to a recent report by global technology firm Cisco.

This is an increase from last year’s (2024) Index, in which 4 per cent of Indian organisations were designated as mature, the Cisco 2025 Cybersecurity Readiness Index observed.

This demonstrates that despite an improvement from



last year, cybersecurity preparedness remains low as hyper-connectivity and AI introduce new complexities for security practitioners.

The report added that artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionising security and escalating threat levels, with 9 in 10 organisations (95 per cent) facing AI-related security incidents last year.

However, only 66 per cent of respondents are confident that their employees fully understand AI-related threats.

The report further observed that more than half of Indian organisations (57 per cent) suffered cyberattacks, hindered by complex security frameworks with disparate point solutions in the previous year.

Cybersecurity Readiness Index adds that the industry respondents view external threats like malicious actors and state-affiliated groups (46 per cent) as more significant to their organisations than internal threats (54 per cent).

India notifies port restriction move on Bangladeshi exports

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The port restriction on the import of certain goods from Bangladesh to India has been notified in the Gazette of India.

The official gazette notification was issued on Monday and published today.

India has imposed restrictions on the entry of Bangladeshi ready-made garments (RMG) and other products through its northeastern land ports -- Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram -- and Fulbari and Chan-

grabandha in West Bengal, weeks after controversial remarks made by Bangladesh’s interim chief advisor Muhammad Yunus about the India’s northeastern region, during his visit to China.

During a speech in China, Bangladesh’s Chief Adviser Yunus had described India’s northeastern states as a “landlocked region with no access to the ocean.” This comment has sparked diplomatic friction, with Indian officials viewing it as undermining the region’s connectivity and status.

The new restrictions will, slapped on May 17 and came into effect immediately, forced Bangladesh to reroute exports -- including Ready-Made garments (RMG), plastics, melamine, furniture, juices, carbonated drinks, bakery items, confectionery, and processed foods -- through Kolkata port in West Bengal or Nhava Sheva port in Maharashtra, sharply increasing logistics costs.

With 93 per cent of Bangladesh’s exports to India previously moving through these land routes, the im-



pact on its ready-made garments sector -- which exports nearly USD 740 million worth of garments

to India annually -- could be severe.

The move is expected to disrupt Bangladesh’s gar-

ment industry, raising costs and limiting market access, while creating new opportunities for Indian

manufacturers. India’s restrictions on imports from Bangladesh via land ports will impact goods worth USD 770 million, accounting for nearly 42 per cent of total bilateral imports, according to the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) report, a trade-focused research group.

The May 17 directive makes clear that imports of essential items like fish, LPG, edible oil, and crushed stone remain unaffected. Goods transiting through India from Bangladesh to Nepal and Bhutan are also exempt.

The Indian government has imposed land port restrictions on certain Bangladeshi exports to the northeastern states, a move that sources say is aimed at restoring “equality in the relationship”. The sources further said that while India had hitherto allowed all exports from Bangladesh without restrictions, the transit and market access to India’s northeast region had been restricted by Bangladesh. The sources further said that the relationship with Bangladesh will now be on “reciprocal terms”.

THE OUTRAGE ABOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION CAN'T BE SELECTIVE

OPINION

YASHWANT DESHMUKH & SUTANU GURU



Within hours of Haryana Police arresting Ashoka University academic Alik Khan Mahbubabad, the lead author had posted a strong critique on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter. The authors even discussed the issue soon after and agreed that the Supreme Court might step in and grant bail to the professor, as it has done in many cases in the recent past where activists, journalists, academics and critics have been arbitrarily arrested on specious grounds. During the conversation, the co-author pointed out the elephant in the room related to the rising intolerance and authoritarianism in political parties and their regimes. Goes without saying that much of that debate has landed on the doors of “intolerant” right wing, but the abject failure of the left-liberals to behave in a truly liberal fashion is adding fuel to the fire as they have been blatantly selective in their outrage. Protests against assault on free speech and individual liberty have become so polarised along ideological and political lines that they have become a meaningless display of partisanship. It is indeed the duty of all sensible citizens to support the fundamental right of

people like Ali Khan Mahbubabad to express their opinions without being carted off to jail on vague and specious charges. But the future looks grim because we as a society have become conditioned to selective outrage. In that context, it is indeed time for the Indian liberal to look at the mirror and accept that she doesn't practice what she preaches. The first brutal truth is that there is no absolute freedom of speech in India. The First Amendment to the Constitution in 1951 took away those rights. Since then, governments, parties and regimes of all hues have pushed the barriers consistently by targeting critics whom point out uncomfortable facts. In the past, support for freedom of expression and the ability to criticise was not based on ideology. At least not to the extent it does today. In contemporary times, that basic tenet that we must support the freedom of expression of people we dislike has collapsed. And governments are taking advantage of that in a clinically ruthless manner. Let's look at some events in the recent past to see what exactly is happening across India. In March 2025, a digital journalist Dilawar Hussain Muzumder was arrested under stringent sections of the SC/ST Act by the As-

sam Police for questioning the managing director of a cooperative bank over an alleged scam. The MD is a tribal. The chief minister is Himanta Bishwa Sharma and the ruling party is BJP. In March 2025, two female journalists Pogadanda Revathi and Thanvi Yadav were arrested and slapped with “organised crime” charges by Telangana Police for quoting a resident who strongly criticised the chief minister. The chief minister is Revanth Reddy and the state is ruled by the Congress. In 2023, a YouTuber from Bihar Manish Kashyap was arrested by Tamil Nadu Police for posting a video citing. A daily news-

• In 2024, a Republic TV journalist Santa Pan was arrested by West Bengal police for covering the atrocities against Hindu women in Sandeshkhali. The chief minister is Mamata Banerjee and the ruling party is Trinamool Congress. In May 2023, the Times Now TV network featured a series of reports that related to allegedly extravagant expenditures to refurbish the residence of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. Soon after, a reporter from the network Bhavna Arora was arrested by the Punjab Police on stringent SC/ST charges while she was on an assignment in the state. The chief minister is Bhagwant

and the ruling party is a CPI(M) led alliance. In 2020, a theatre personality Ketaki Chitale shared a Facebook post that was critical of Sharad Pawar. She was arrested by the Maharashtra Police and spent about 40 days in jail for no rhyme or reason. The chief minister was Uddhav Thackeray and the ruling party was an alliance led by undivided ShivSena with Congress and NCP support. The same year, prominent anchor Arnab Goswami too was arrested by Maharashtra Police. In 2022, a journalist Loknath Dalei “exposed” alleged corruption in the police in the Balasore dis-

trict of Odisha. The man was arrested, brutally beaten up and chained to a hospital bed on trumped up charges. The chief minister was Naveen Pattnaik and the ruling party was BJD. A Kerala based journalist Siddique Kappan was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh police while trying to cover the infamous Hathras gang rape incident and spent more than two years in jail. The chief minister is Yogi Adityanath and the ruling party is the BJP. The authors could just go on and on with similar incidents from all across India. What the discerning reader might have noticed is that the arrests show how



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many others. Sadly, they have miserably failed the test of true liberalism by refusing to protest or at best issuing bland statements when people who are not liked by the Left-Liberal ecosystem are arrested. That gives ample ammunition to the “right wing” to justify other arrests. The authors have noted with deep regret the fact that even distinguished bodies like the Editor's Guild of India have failed to defend the freedom of expression of ALL—no matter what their ideological or political leanings. Freedom of expression can never be selective. It is time Indian liberals learnt this lesson.

PERSPECTIVE

CORRECTING PAK'S FAKE NARRATIVE

India is sending a team of seven all party delegations to the rest of the world to explain India's stand on Operation Sindoor, which were carried out in response to the dastardly attack in Pahalgam. The delegations will have both BJP and Opposition MPs along with some seasoned former diplomats and experts. There is a feeling that while India has won the war militarily, it is losing the global narrative. This move is to correct that narrative and nail some of Pakistan's fake propaganda. The delegations will send out a strong message underlining India's zero tolerance to terrorism and reiterate that Operation Sindoor was a precision response whose mission was to take out the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK. The targets of the nine strikes carried out on the early morning of 7th May were civilian and non military. It was Pakistan that escalated the conflict with its response. It should be noted that Pakistan is also sending out its own delegation headed by former Pakistan foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto. “The delegations are set to visit key partner countries, including members of the UN Security Council later this month. The All-Party delegations will project India's national consensus and resolute approach to combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations. They would carry forth to the world the country's strong message of zero-tolerance against terrorism,” the government said, announcing the names of leaders who will head the seven delegations. Meanwhile the Parliamentary Standing committee on external affairs has been briefed on Operation Sindoor by foreign secretary Vikram Misri. The committee was told in no uncertain terms that it was Pakistan that reached out to India for a ceasefire, after the precision strikes carried out by the Indian armed forces hit Pak military installations, including a China-made missile defence system in Lahore and the strategically important Nur Khan air base. Internal politics has broken out over the inclusion of some of the names. When asked by the Parliamentary Affairs minister Kiiren Rijju to give a list of names, the Congress handed a list of four names but only one of these was included by the government in the final list. Instead names that were left out were added, the most notable being that of Shashi Tharoor. The Congress leader and former external affairs minister of state played a key role articulating India's stand to the foreign media post 7th May. His eloquent defence of India's actions which willy nilly ended up defending the current government as well, did not go down well with his party colleagues even though Tharoor said he was speaking as an Indian and not as a member of any political party. Another eloquent Congress leader Manish Tewari has also been included in the delegation level talks, though Tewari's hyphenation with Tharoor has not irked his party leadership as much. Incidentally, Salman Khurshid is another Congress name who has been included. The only name who made it from the list given by the Congress leadership is that of Anand Sharma. The political ramifications of Tharoor being projected by the BJP is still to be played out though there is speculation that he may be asked to leave the Congress. If that happens, then there is little doubt that the BJP will happily find a role for him because what the party lacks is the kind of talent and bench strength that Tharoor brings to the table. The army has done its bit and delivered. It is now time for our political and diplomatic class to step up to the challenge because unfortunately in today's world, the battle is as much about the optics and the airwaves, as it is a physical one on ground. .

PRIYA SAHGAL

SC's new ruling on civil judge appointments: Reform or roadblock?

OPINION

PARTH GAUTAM AND PRAGATI SOLANKI



In a significant ruling on 20th May 2025, the Supreme Court, in the case of *All India Judges Association vs Union of India 2025*, overturned its 2002 judgment and made it mandatory for candidates appearing for

the Civil Judge (Junior Division) exam to possess a minimum of three years of legal practice. While this may appear to be a reform aimed at ensuring experienced and capable individuals join the judiciary, a closer examina-

tion reveals that the move is more regressive than revolutionary.

THE KEY TAKEAWAYS OF THE JUDGEMENT

- Three years of legal practice is now compulsory for eligibility.
- Legal experience will be counted from the date of registration with the State Bar Council after clearing the All-India Bar Exam (AIBE).
- Practice certificates must be signed by an advocate with 10 years of experience and endorsed by a judicial officer or principal judicial officer designated for the purpose.
- For those practicing in High Courts or the Supreme Court, a designated court officer will be responsible for verification.
- Recruitment processes already underway will not be affected by this

decision. Experience as a Law Clerk will now be counted toward the three-year requirement. The judgment overrules the 2002 ruling that allowed fresh law graduates to appear for judicial exams, a policy supported only by Sikkim and Chhattisgarh. Most High Courts expressed dissatisfaction, citing that freshers hinder judicial efficiency.

THE REALITY CHECK
Irregular and Unpredictable Judicial Examinations
Judicial service exams across Indian states are far from regular. Many states notify vacancies only once every 4–5 years. On top of that, the selection process starting from preliminary to final appointment can take up to 1.5 years. By mandating an additional three years of practice, the Court has inadvertently created a

situation where aspirants may have to wait nearly a decade from graduation before becoming eligible. The result? An entire generation of brilliant legal minds may be discouraged from pursuing the judiciary at all. **Disruption for Thousands of Law Students**
In their final year, thousands of law students begin intensive preparation for judicial services, committing years of effort and spending substantial amounts on coaching and study resources. Despite the judgment being prospective, it has created widespread confusion. Students who had structured their career paths based on the earlier eligibility criteria now find themselves navigating an uncertain future. The sudden change in rules has upended their expectations, raising concerns about wasted time, financial investment,

and the direction of their professional journey. **A Setback for Women in Law**
This ruling delivers a particularly harsh blow to women. In a society where women are still under societal pressure to marry young and shoulder disproportionate family responsibilities, asking them to spend five years studying, three years practicing, and then wait several more years for exam cycles to turn is a formula that will push many women out of the race entirely. Just when women were beginning to make significant inroads in judicial appointments, this decision threatens to undo that progress. **The Door to Corruption Swings Wide Open**
The Supreme Court's requirement that experiences certificates be signed by a senior advocate and endorsed

by judicial officers might seem like a step towards accountability. However, this opens the floodgates to nepotism, favouritism, and corruption. For those with the right connections or the means to “influence” the process, obtaining a certificate will be no big deal. Meanwhile, genuine aspirants who strictly adhere to ethics may find themselves sidelined—yet another injustice in the name of justice. Who will protect these honest aspirants? Who will ensure that the “verification” of legal practice doesn't become another bureaucratic hurdle riddled with underhanded dealings? **WHAT WE NEEDED VS WHAT WE GOT**
What India's judiciary truly needs is systemic reform uniformity in exam schedules, a transparent and time-bound recruitment process, and structural reforms in the lower judi-

ciary. What we got instead is a band-aid solution that disproportionately affects young, bright aspirants and women, and incentivizes manipulation over merit. This ruling, while cloaked in the language of reform, is a textbook example of how well-intentioned policy can go wrong when ground realities are ignored. In seeking to keep “inexperienced” individuals out of the judiciary, the judgment ironically risks keeping merit and integrity out as well. The future of judicial reform lies not in exclusion but in transformation. And that transformation must start with accountability, transparency, and above all, empathy for the very aspirants who dream of upholding the Constitution.

Parth Gautam, Advocate, Delhi High Court, and Pragati Solanki, Assistant Professor, HLM Group of Institutions, Ghaziabad.

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL HEALTH: THE 2025 PANDEMIC ACCORD

The accord aims to strengthen global cooperation, improve pathogen sharing, and ensure equitable access to vaccines during future pandemics—addressing COVID-19-era failures.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

On May 20, 2025, the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva adopted a historic global pandemic accord. This accord marks a transformative moment in international public health diplomacy, as it formalises a multilateral commitment to enhance global preparedness, response, and equity in managing infectious disease outbreaks. It was widely seen as a direct response to the systemic shortcomings exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and its adoption could represent the most significant restructuring of global health governance since the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948.

The COVID-19 catalyst: The COVID-19 pandemic (2019–2023) laid bare the deficiencies of existing global health mechanisms. Delays in sharing epidemiological data, unequal access to vaccines and treatments, and the absence of a cohesive international response all contributed to the pandemic's severity. Countries closed borders, hoarded supplies, and pursued unilateral solutions in a time when global cooperation was sorely needed. The resulting loss of life and socioeconomic disruption created an impetus for reform.

Calls for a new pandemic treaty began as early as 2021, with multiple countries and civil society organisations emphasising the need for binding commitments to transparency, equitable distribution of medical tools, and improved surveillance systems. The WHO, under the leadership of Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, became the focal point for these efforts.

THE 2025 ACCORD:

The newly adopted pandemic accord outlines a comprehensive framework addressing preparedness, early detection, transparent reporting, research cooperation, equitable access, and accountability. Its most prominent features include:

International Surveillance and Reporting Obligations: Countries are required to strengthen disease surveillance systems and report potential outbreaks within 72 hours of detection. The WHO will oversee a global early warning system, integrating real-time data from member states to identify potential threats.

Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS): One of the most contentious yet groundbreaking elements is the Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing system. PABS mandates that member states share pathogen samples and genetic sequence data with the WHO in exchange for guaranteed equitable access to resulting vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments. This aims to avoid the vac-



TDG EXPLAINER

cine nationalism witnessed during COVID-19, where wealthy nations secured early access at the expense of poorer ones.

National preparedness reviews: Every three years, countries will undergo an independent external evaluation of their pandemic preparedness capacities. The results will be made public, encouraging accountability and allowing international support to target gaps.

R&D and intellectual

property mechanisms: The accord promotes public-private partnerships in research and development (R&D), with clauses that compel companies benefiting from public funds to license technologies on a non-exclusive basis during pandemics. This seeks to democratise innovation and reduce dependency on a few manufacturers.

Equity Fund: A Global Pandemic Equity Fund, overseen by WHO and supported through assessed

contributions, will provide financial assistance to low- and middle-income countries for stockpiling vaccines, strengthening health infrastructure, and training personnel.

The United States' Withdrawal: Despite broad international support, the United States did not participate in the adoption of the ac-

cord. The U.S. had exited the WHO under President Donald Trump during his second term, citing national sovereignty concerns and criticisms of WHO's alleged deference to China during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak. The U.S. absence from the accord casts a shadow over its universality and raises questions about

enforcement and influence. While public health experts in the U.S. have criticised the decision, arguing that it isolates the country from critical global health discourse, supporters claim that the agreement could compromise national autonomy in handling pandemics. The Biden administration's failure to reverse the exit from

China and the European Union emerged as key proponents of the treaty, emphasising multilateralism. Russia supported the accord but voiced reservations about WHO oversight. India, a pharmaceutical manufacturing hub, backed the accord conditionally, asking for clarity on IP waivers and pricing norms. **Legal and Ethical Dimen-**

as a shared security issue.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

The 2025 Pandemic Accord can be compared to post-World War II institutions like the United Nations and the WHO itself. Just as those institutions were born from the ashes of war, this accord arises from the global trauma of COVID-19.

The failure of the International Health Regulations (IHR) during COVID-19 was a catalyst. Although the IHR required countries to report outbreaks, there was no enforcement mechanism. The new accord aims to fill that gap with mandatory reporting and regular evaluations.

Past attempts at global health cooperation, such as the 2009 influenza vaccine sharing agreement, faltered due to a lack of trust and political will. The 2025 accord appears more robust, with stronger financial and legal scaffolding.

Looking Ahead: Challenges and Prospects While the accord is a historic milestone, its success will depend on implementation. Key challenges include: **Political Commitment:** Countries must remain engaged beyond the adoption phase. Regime changes and shifting priorities could derail progress. **Funding:** The Equity Fund's effectiveness hinges on sustained contributions, which historically have been unreliable.

Private Sector Cooperation: Ensuring that pharmaceutical companies adhere to licensing commitments during emergencies may prove difficult.

Geopolitical Tensions: The U.S. absence may embolden critics and reduce the accord's legitimacy. A fragmented global response could undermine its goals.

Nevertheless, the accord's symbolic and practical value is undeniable. It codifies a shared memory of the pandemic and institutionalises a collective vow to "never again" allow such devastation unchecked.



the WHO underscores how global health has become enmeshed in American political polarisation.

Global Response and Ratification: Over 110 of the 194 WHO member states expressed intent to sign the accord following its adoption. However, the accord will only come into effect once at least 60 countries ratify it, along with the annexe, which includes implementation details on PABS and intellectual property.

Several African, South Asian, and Latin American countries have welcomed the accord, citing its emphasis on equity. Civil society groups, especially those advocating for health as a human right, have lauded the inclusion of mandatory benefit-sharing. Still, some developing nations remain cautious, wary of whether commitments from pharmaceutical companies and high-income countries will materialise.

sions: The accord, though not technically a treaty, is legally binding under Article 19 of the WHO Constitution. This gives it the same weight as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2003), marking only the second time the WHO has invoked this article.

Its legal standing raises complex questions about national sovereignty, compliance enforcement, and dispute resolution. The accord allows for arbitration under WHO auspices, but critics argue that without the participation of major powers like the U.S., enforcement will be limited.

Ethically, the accord places health equity at the centre of global governance. It challenges the traditional donor-recipient model, advocating instead for solidarity and mutual accountability. This reflects a paradigm shift toward recognising global health

BEATING THE HEAT: ESSENTIAL FOODS TO COMBAT HEATWAVES IN RAJASTHAN

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

As Rajasthan grapples with extreme summer temperatures, the health risks posed by heatwaves are significant. With mercury soaring well above 45°C in several regions, staying cool isn't just about fans and air-conditioners—it's also about what you eat. The right diet can help the body maintain hydration, improve energy levels, and reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses such as dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke.

Here is a comprehensive guide to foods that can help people in Rajasthan stay healthy and cool during the intense summer months:

1. HYDRATING FRUITS

Fruits with high water content are nature's perfect antidote to heat. They replenish lost fluids and provide essential vitamins.

Watermelon: Composed of over 90% water, watermelon is rich in lycopene and vitamin C. It keeps the body hydrated and supports skin health.

Muskmelon (Kharbuja): Common in Rajasthan, muskmelon is cooling and light, ideal for digestion during hot weather.

Cucumber: Technically a fruit, cucumber is loaded with water and helps detoxify the body. It can be eaten raw or added to salads and buttermilk.

2. COOLING DRINKS

Traditional Indian beverages are not only refreshing but also packed with health benefits.

Buttermilk (Chhach): Widely consumed across

Rajasthan, buttermilk is probiotic, aids digestion, and keeps the gut cool. Adding cumin (jeera) or mint enhances the cooling effect.

Aam Panna: Made from raw mangoes, this tangy drink helps prevent heatstroke and maintains electrolyte balance.

Bel Sharbat: Prepared from the pulp of wood apple (bel), it's soothing for the stomach and prevents constipation caused by heat.

Nimbu Pani (Lemon Water): Simple yet effective, lemon water with a



pinch of salt and sugar can act as a natural oral rehydration solution.

3. SEASONAL VEGETABLES

Choosing the right vegetables helps in maintaining body temperature and promoting digestion.

Bottle Gourd (Lauki): With its high water content and easy digestibility, bottle gourd is a staple during summers. It can be consumed as a curry or juice.

Tinda (Apple Gourd): Popular in Rajasthani households, tinda is light,

non-greasy, and ideal for hot weather.

Snake Gourd and Ridge Gourd: These green vegetables help cool the system and prevent acidity, common during heatwaves.

4. COOLING HERBS AND

Fennel Seeds (Saunf): Chewing fennel or drinking fennel water can calm the digestive system and reduce internal heat.

5. GRAINS AND

Coriander Leaves: Helps cool down the body and can be used in chutneys or garnishes.

Fennel Seeds (Saunf): Chewing fennel or drinking fennel water can calm the digestive system and reduce internal heat.

6. CURD-BASED DISHES

Curd is an essential summer food in Rajasthan. Rich in probiotics, it soothes the gut and helps in hy-

7. LIGHT AND FREQUENT MEALS

During heatwaves, heavy, spicy, and oily food should be avoided. Instead, one should opt for: Khichdi or Dalia: Light and nutritious, khichdi made from moong dal and rice is a summer-friendly meal.

Vegetable soups or stews: Served lukewarm or at room temperature, they are nourishing and hydrating.

8. TRADITIONAL RAJASTHANI PRACTICES

In Rajasthan, people have long relied on traditional wisdom to handle harsh summers: Matka (Earthen Pot) Water: Drinking water stored in earthen pots naturally cools the water and maintains mineral balance.

Chhachh and Bajra Roti Combo: A traditional summer meal that provides energy without heating the body. Use of Khus Curtains and Sandalwood Paste: While not food, these are examples

9. TRADITIONAL RAJASTHANI PRACTICES

of how traditional cooling practices permeate all aspects of life.

10. TIPS FOR MEAL PLANNING DURING HEATWAVES

Eat during cooler parts of the day: Breakfast and dinner should be more substantial, while lunch should be lighter. Stay hydrated throughout the day: Don't wait to feel thirsty to drink water.

Use local and seasonal produce: These are best suited to the body's needs in that climate.

Avoid alcohol and smoking: Both can dehydrate the body.

Managing diet wisely is one of the most effective

ways to combat Rajasthan's

extreme heat. Incorporating cooling foods, avoiding heat-inducing ingredients, and maintaining hydration are key to staying healthy during a heatwave. In a state known for its arid zones and scorching summers, these traditional and modern food habits offer a protective shield against heat-related health issues. Whether in rural villages or urban cities, embracing a summer-friendly diet can help the people of Rajasthan not only endure but thrive through the challenging summer months.

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Here is a comprehensive guide to foods that can help people in Rajasthan stay healthy and cool during the intense summer months:

ADDITIONS

Incorporating specific herbs and natural ingredients into daily meals can aid in fighting heat.

Mint (Pudina): Used in chutneys or drinks, mint gives a refreshing kick and

The choice of staples plays a crucial role in how the body handles heat.

Barley (Jau): Known for its cooling properties, barley water is commonly consumed during summers. Barley flour can be used in

rotis.

Rice: White rice is lighter than wheat and easier to digest. It pairs well with curd or buttermilk.

Millet (Bajra, Jowar): While bajra is traditionally consumed in winters, in Rajasthan's scorching summer,

or boondi.

Chhachh ki Kadhi: A Rajasthani delicacy that is tangy, light, and digestive.

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The summer pickles of Rajasthan: A tradition of flavour and heritage

TDG NETWORK
JAIPUR

Pickles in Rajasthan are not just a side dish; they are an essential part of every meal, offering a burst of flavor that complements the otherwise simple and rustic Rajasthani meals. Whether it's dal-baati, gatte ki sabzi, or the classic roti and chawal (rice), a dollop of pickle is a must for every Rajasthani. Summer pickles are especially important in the region due to the seasonal nature of fresh produce, and the traditional practice of preserving fruits and vegetables during this time has been integral to the lifestyle of Rajasthan's rural and urban communities alike.

Rajasthani summers are harsh, and the heat can dehydrate and tire the body. The presence of pickles, with their tanginess, spice, and salt, adds a burst of flavor and zest that is said to help stimulate the appetite and aid digestion. The use of mustard oil, fenugreek, cumin, garlic, and a variety of other spices in these pickles is believed to have cooling properties that help combat the oppressive summer heat. Furthermore, many of the fruits and vegetables used for making pickles are also rich in vitamins and nutrients, which help keep the body nourished and energized during the sweltering months.

Rajasthan, a land of vibrant colors, majestic forts, and rich culture, is also home to a distinct culinary tradition that is deeply embedded in its heritage. Among the many food

items that are cherished in the region, summer pickles stand out as one of the most iconic and beloved delicacies. These pickles not only tantalize the taste buds but also represent a significant aspect of Rajasthan's food culture, where the art of preserving seasonal fruits and vegetables during the scorching summer months has been passed down through generations.

In a land where the heat can reach extreme levels, Rajasthani households have long relied on the preservation of fruits and vegetables in the form of pickles to ensure a steady supply of flavorful accompaniments throughout the year. Summer pickles, in particular, play an important role during the hot months, when fresh produce is abundant and the need for cooling, tangy, and spicy food items is felt the most.

VARIETIES OF SUMMER PICKLES IN RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan's summer pickles are diverse, with different regions and communities within the state having their own unique versions. The most common fruits and vegetables used for making pickles in Rajasthan include mangoes, lemons, garlic, and green chilies, although there are many other ingredients that are used as well. The preparation of these pickles is an intricate process, requiring patience, attention to detail, and a deep understanding of the balance between flavors. Below are some of the most popular summer pickles found in Rajasthan.

1. AAM KA ACHAAR (MANGO PICKLE)

Aam ka achaar is undoubtedly the most famous and loved pickle in Rajasthan, and for good reason. Mangoes are in abundance during the summer months, and Rajasthani families waste no time in making this delectable pickle. Traditionally, raw mangoes are cut into pieces and marinated with a blend of spices such as mustard seeds, fenugreek, cumin, red chili powder, and turmeric. The pickle is then left to soak



in mustard oil and is sundried to enhance its flavors.

There are various types of mango pickles in Rajasthan, ranging from the spicy and tangy to the sweet and tangy varieties. The choice of spices and the type of oil used can vary depending on personal preferences and regional influences. Some families prefer their mango pickle to be fiery hot, while others add jaggery or sugar to balance the tartness of the mangoes.

2. NIMBOO KA ACHAAR (LEMON PICKLE)

Lemons are another staple in the preparation of summer pickles in Rajasthan. Lemon pickles are widely consumed, offering a perfect balance of sourness and spice. This pickle is often prepared with both whole lemons and lemon wedges, which are mixed with salt, turmeric, chili powder, and other spices such as fenugreek, cumin, and asafoetida.

Lemon pickles, like mango pickles, undergo a sun-drying process. The drying



helps to intensify the flavors and softens the lemons, making them easier to digest. This pickle is particularly favored for its ability to add a burst of flavor to any dish, and it is often enjoyed with simple meals like dal-chawal, parathas, or bajra rotis.

3. LAHSUN KA ACHAAR (GARLIC PICKLE)

Garlic, with its distinct flavor and aroma, is another key ingredient in Rajasthani pickles. Garlic pickles are tangy, spicy, and savory, and they have a unique abil-

ity to pair well with a variety of dishes. The preparation involves using fresh garlic cloves, which are peeled and mixed with a spice blend of mustard seeds, cumin, red chili powder, and turmeric.

Garlic pickles are often prepared in large quantities, as they can last for several months when stored properly. The tanginess of the garlic, combined with the heat of the spices, makes this pickle a popular choice for those who enjoy bold, robust flavors. It is commonly

served as a side dish with roti, rice, or even as a topping for savory snacks.

4. HARI MIRCH KA ACHAAR (GREEN CHILI PICKLE)

For those who prefer a strong, fiery punch, green chili pickle is a must-have in Rajasthan. Made using whole green chilies, this pickle is known for its intense heat and spice. The chilies are stuffed with a spice mixture of mustard powder, turmeric, and red chili powder, then sealed in a jar and preserved with

mustard oil.

Green chili pickle is not for the faint of heart, as it packs a serious punch. However, for those who love spicy food, it is an essential accompaniment to almost every meal. This pickle is known to aid digestion and is particularly popular during the summer months, when the body's need for stimulation is higher.

5. GAJAR-MOOli KA ACHAAR (CARROT AND RADISH PICKLE)

In addition to fruits, certain



vegetables are also commonly used to make summer pickles. Carrot and radish pickles are another popular variety, especially in rural Rajasthan. The combination of carrots and radishes adds a crunchy texture to the pickle, while the spices provide a savory kick.

Carrot and radish pickles are made by cutting the vegetables into julienned strips, mixing them with salt, and adding spices such as mustard seeds, cumin, chili powder, and garlic. The pickle is then stored in jars and left to

ferment in the sun for several days, allowing the flavors to blend and mature. This pickle is often enjoyed as a side dish with parathas, dal, or curd-based dishes.

6. TINDA-KARELA KA ACHAAR (APPLE GOURD AND BITTER GOURD PICKLE)

Tinda (apple gourd) and karela (bitter gourd) are another pair of vegetables that are often pickled in Rajasthan. The bitter flavor of karela is tempered by the addition of spices, while the sweetness of tinda balances the bitterness. The preparation of tinda-karela pickle involves chopping the vegetables into small pieces, mixing them with a blend of spices, and preserving them in mustard oil.

This unique pickle is appreciated for its health benefits, as both tinda and karela are considered good for digestion and managing blood sugar levels. It is particularly popular among the health-conscious in Rajasthan who enjoy a more bittersweet flavor profile.

THE ART OF MAKING RAJASTHANI PICKLES

The process of making pickles in Rajasthan is not just a culinary tradition but a time-honored ritual. The preparation of these pickles often involves entire families coming together to select the freshest ingredients, mix the spices, and ensure that everything is perfectly balanced. The process can take several days, as many pickles require sun-drying to enhance their flavors.

The use of mustard oil in many Rajasthani pickles is essential, as it not only pre-

serves the pickle but also contributes to the robust flavor profile that defines Rajasthani cuisine. The heat of the mustard oil is believed to complement the intense spices and help preserve the fruits and vegetables for long periods of time.

Rajasthani pickles are typically stored in glass or ceramic jars, which allow them to ferment and mature over time. The longer the pickle sits, the deeper and more intense the flavor becomes. Pickles can be enjoyed fresh or after they have had time to develop their flavors. In many Rajasthani households, pickles are made in large batches and are passed down from generation to generation.

Rajasthani summer pickles are more than just a food item; they are a symbol of the state's culinary heritage and the resilience of its people. These pickles represent a tradition of preserving the bounty of summer for the harsh, dry months ahead, while also providing a burst of flavor that makes every meal exciting.

From tangy mango pickles to fiery green chili varieties, Rajasthan's pickles are a testament to the ingenuity and creativity of the region's culinary culture. These pickles, made with local ingredients and a unique blend of spices, continue to be an essential part of Rajasthan's food culture and a source of pride for its people. Whether served with a traditional thali or enjoyed with a simple meal, Rajasthani summer pickles remain a beloved and enduring part of the state's rich gastronomic history.

IS CHINA TRYING TO REVIVE BANGLADESH’S LALMONIRHAT AIRBASE NEAR INDIA’S BORDER?

In 2019, the Bangladesh government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, proposed establishing an aviation and aerospace university at the site.

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A World War II-era airfield known as Lalmonirhat Airbase, in northern Bangladesh, located just a few kilometres from the Indian border, is drawing renewed attention following reports of increased Chinese activity at the site.

CHINESE INTEREST

The Lalmonirhat airbase — once a strategic Allied hub during World War II — has resurfaced in regional discourse after Chinese officials were seen visiting the site, and activity around the area reportedly increased.

Located in the Rangpur division of Bangladesh, the airfield lies merely 12–20 km from the Indian border and is around 135 km from the strategically critical Siliguri Corridor. This has raised concerns among Indian defence and strategic circles, particularly given the sensitive nature of the region.

The proximity of the airfield to India’s narrow Siliguri Corridor, which connects the country’s northeastern states to the mainland, makes any for-

eign involvement in the area especially sensitive for New Delhi. The Indian military’s eastern command is said to be closely monitoring developments around the site.

WARTIME LEGACY OF LALMONIRHAT AIRBASE

Built in 1931 by British authorities, the Lalmonirhat airfield played a crucial role during World War II as a forward operating base for Allied forces conducting



Chinese visits to Bangladesh’s WWII-era Lalmonirhat airbase near India’s border spark concern over proximity to Siliguri Corridor.

TDG EXPLAINER

A BROADER REVIVAL PLAN OF LALMONIRHAT AIRBASE

The recent uptick in interest in Lalmonirhat is part of a broader initiative by Bangladesh’s interim government, led by Mohammed Yunus, to revive six British-era airports across the country as part of an economic development strategy.

According to TOI, the other airfields included in the plan are Thakurgaon, Ishwardi, Shamshernagar, Comilla, and Bogra. While the stated purpose of these redevelopments is economic, the reported involvement of Chinese officials has intensified scrutiny of the program.

INDIA’S ‘CHICKEN’S NECK’ UNDER FOCUS

At the core of India’s concern is the airfield’s proximity to the Siliguri Corridor — a narrow, 22-kilometre-wide strip in northern West Bengal that connects India’s northeastern states to the rest of the country. The corridor is of immense strategic importance for both civilian and military logistics.

Any perceived threat to this corridor has the potential to disrupt access to the eight northeastern states: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Sikkim.

Geographically wedged



between Nepal and Bangladesh, with Bhutan and China nearby, the Siliguri Corridor has become a flashpoint in regional geopolitical calculations.

What is temporary protected status, and why is Trump targeting it?

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Temporary Protected Status is a humanitarian immigration provision that allows individuals already in the U.S. to remain and work legally if their home countries are deemed unsafe due to war, natural disasters, or other extraordinary events. Created by Congress in 1990, TPS is granted in six- to 18-month increments by the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security. While it does not offer a path to citizenship, many beneficiaries have lived in the U.S. for decades due to repeated renewals.

HOW DID TRUMP HANDLE TPS IN HIS FIRST TERM?

During his first term, Trump attempted to end TPS protections for approximately 400,000 people from countries including El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and Sudan as part of an immigration crackdown, according to Reuters. Federal courts blocked those efforts, leaving the program intact through the end of his presidency in 2021.

WHAT CHANGED UNDER BIDEN?

President Joe Biden expanded TPS, granting new protections to nationals from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Venezuela and several other countries. Venezuelans became the largest group under TPS, with over 600,000 eligible



US President Donald Trump

by the end of Biden’s term. In a last-minute move before leaving office, then-Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas extended TPS for Venezuelans and several other groups.

WHAT HAS TRUMP DONE SINCE RETURNING?

Trump’s current Homeland Security Secretary, Kristi Noem, has rolled back Biden-era TPS extensions. In early February, she rescinded protections for 348,000 Venezuelans, arguing the decision was

recognised as BAF Station Lalmonirhat (ICAO code VGLM) and is one of nine active air bases in the country. During its prime, it was regarded as the second-largest airport in Asia.

In 2019, the Bangladesh government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, proposed establishing an aviation and aerospace university at the site. That institution is now operational and functions under the command of the Bangladesh Air Force.

WHAT IS THE LEGAL STATUS?

While lower courts initially blocked the terminations, the Supreme Court’s order on Monday allows the Venezuelan TPS rollbacks to proceed during ongoing litigation. The decision could signal a judicial shift in favour of allowing terminations, even if challenged.

A San Francisco judge had previously blocked the Venezuela decision, calling the administration’s characterisation of TPS recipients as criminals a depiction that “smacks of racism,” as reported by Reuters.

A Homeland Security notice states TPS for Afghans will end in July and for Cameroonians in June, the report said, adding that Haitian protections are set to expire in August unless extended. Further decisions on remaining Venezuelans — over 250,000 — are expected in July.

What is the Take It Down Act? Trump signs first federal law

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

US President Donald Trump on Monday signed into law the Take It Down Act, a groundbreaking piece of legislation that criminalises the distribution of explicit images without a subject’s consent, including those generated or altered by artificial intelligence (AI).

“This will be the first-ever federal law to combat the distribution of explicit imagery posted without subjects’ consent,” President Trump declared during a signing ceremony at the White House. “We will not tolerate online sexual exploitation,” he added.

Following the formal signing, Trump handed the legislation to First Lady Melania Trump, who added her signature in symbolic support.

BIPARTISAN BACKING AND FIRST LADY’S ADVOCACY

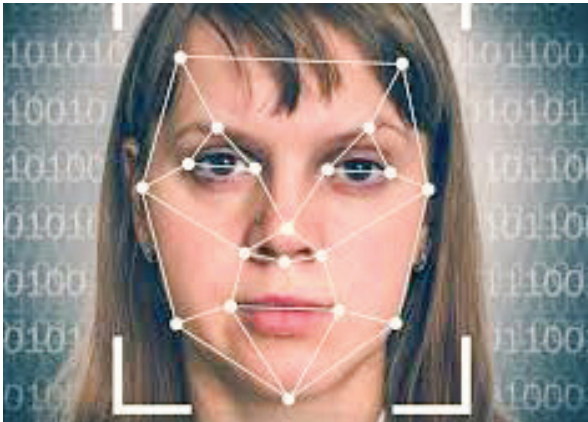
The bill, which garnered strong bipartisan support, was publicly championed by Melania Trump. Initially introduced last year by Senators Ted Cruz and Amy Klobuchar, it passed the Senate in February and the House in March, before making its way to the president’s desk.

Calling the law a “national victory”, Melania Trump said it would help parents and families safeguard their children from digital exploitation.

Speaking during the bill’s introduction in March, the First Lady underscored the growing threat to young people: “It’s heartbreak-



Trump signs the Take It Down Act, the first U.S. federal law banning non-consensual explicit images, including AI deepfakes.



Representative image

ing to witness young teens, especially girls, grappling with the overwhelming challenges posed by malicious online content like deep fakes. This toxic environment can be severely damaging.”

She further warned about the potentially harmful effects of emerging technologies: “Artificial intelligence and social media are the digital candy for the next generation — sweet, addictive and engineered to have an impact on the cognitive development of our children,” she said. “These technologies can be weaponised, shape beliefs and,

sadly, affect emotions and even be deadly.”

KEY PROVISIONS OF TAKE IT DOWN ACT

Under the Take It Down Act, websites and social media platforms are now legally obligated to remove explicit content — including AI-generated images — within 48 hours of a victim’s request. The law imposes criminal penalties on individuals who knowingly share such content without permission.

For the first time, federal law extends protections to adults affected by manipulated or non-consensual explicit imagery. Previous

legal frameworks focused primarily on safeguarding children.

The legislation also holds tech companies accountable for failing to act swiftly on removal requests. Major digital platforms including Meta, TikTok, and Snapchat have expressed their support for the bill.

TAKE IT DOWN ACT: BALANCING PROTECTION AND FREE EXPRESSION

Despite broad support, some digital rights advocacy groups have voiced concerns. Critics argue that the legislation may lead to the removal of lawful content and lacks robust safeguards to prevent misuse of takedown requests.

Nonetheless, the law’s passage follows a surge in high-profile incidents involving the unauthorized use of deepfake technology to create explicit images of public figures and minors. Victims have included celebrities like Taylor Swift and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, as well as ordinary teenage girls.

TRUMP SAYS RUSSIA, UKRAINE AGREE TO IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE TALKS

Russia’s Kremlin indicated no urgency, emphasizing the need for detailed negotiations.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON/MOSCOW/KYIV

Donald Trump said after his call on Monday with President Vladimir Putin that Russia and Ukraine will immediately start negotiations for a ceasefire, but the Kremlin said the process would take time and the U.S. president indicated he was not ready to join Europe with fresh sanctions to pressure Moscow.

Putin said that efforts to end the conflict seemed “on the right track” and that Moscow was ready to work with Ukraine on a memorandum about a future peace accord.

The Russian president thanked Trump for supporting the resumption of direct talks between Russia and Ukraine, and said that Trump noted Russia’s support for peace, though the key question was how to move towards peace.

“We have agreed with the president of the United States that Russia will pro-



pose and is ready to work with the Ukrainian side on a memorandum on a possible future peace accord, defining a number of positions, such as, for example, the principles of settlement, [and] the timing of a possible peace agreement,” Putin told reporters near the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

If appropriate agreements are reached, then there could be a ceasefire, Putin said, adding that direct talks between Russia and Ukraine “give reason to believe that we are generally on the right track”.

“I would like to note that, on the whole, Russia’s posi-

CEASEFIRE TALKS

- Zelenskyy demanded an unconditional ceasefire and continued US involvement in peace talks.
- European leaders welcomed the Pope’s offer to host peace talks at the Vatican.
- Russia demanded Ukraine withdraw

troops from claimed regions before agreeing to a ceasefire.

■ European leaders called for tougher sanctions if Russia rejects a ceasefire, stressing the importance of US-Europe cooperation.

tion is clear. The main thing for us is to eliminate the root causes of this crisis,” Putin said. “We just need to determine the most effective ways to move towards peace.”

Comments released by Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov early on Tuesday, quoted by Russia’s state news agencies, suggested no urgency from Moscow’s side to next steps.

“There are no deadlines and there cannot be any. It is clear that everyone wants

to do this as quickly as possible, but, of course, the devil is in the details,” Peskov said.

For his part, Trump said the call went very well. In a post on Truth Social, he said that the Vatican, “as represented by the Pope, has stated that it would be very interested in hosting the negotiations. Let the process begin!”

Later on Monday, Trump said “it would be great” to hold ceasefire talks at the Vatican as it would add ex-

tra significance to the proceedings.

Describing his phone call with Putin, Trump said he told him: “When are we going to end this, Vladimir?” He added that there could be a time when sanctions are imposed on Russia, without providing more details.

“He [Putin] believes that the US – because of its influence – can resolve any problems. Vladimir Putin believes that initially the US was standing behind Ukraine in this conflict, masterminding it,” reporter said.

Trump briefed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders on the call. Zelenskyy has insisted that if Putin does not commit to a ceasefire, stronger sanctions on Russia should be imposed.

The Ukrainian president said his country is ready to hold negotiations with Russia in Türkiye, Switzerland or the Vatican, renewing Kyiv’s call for a “full and unconditional ceasefire”.

Zelenskyy accuses Russia of buying time to stall peace talks

AGENCIES
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday accused Russia of delaying peace talks in a bid to press on with its three-year invasion, even as US President Donald Trump pushes for an immediate ceasefire.

Trump spoke by phone Monday with Zelenskyy and Russian leader Vladimir Putin, while Russian and Ukrainian officials met in Istanbul Friday for their first direct talks on the conflict in more than three years.

But they failed to yield a truce, and Zelenskyy ac-



cused Putin of sending “empty heads” to the negotiating table.

“It is obvious that Russia is trying to buy time in order to continue its war and occupation,” Zelenskyy said in a post on social media.

Trump framed his two-hour conversation with Putin, the third so far this year,

as a breakthrough.

The Republican is seeking an elusive deal to end the war that he had promised on the campaign trail to solve in 24 hours.

But Putin again rebuffed the call for a full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire, instead saying only that he was ready to work with Ukraine on a “memorandum” outlining a possible roadmap and different positions on ending the war.

Moscow is feeling confident with its troops advancing on the battlefield and Trump having resumed dialogue with Putin after almost three years of the West shunning the Kremlin chief.

Trump signs bill making ‘revenge porn’ a federal crime

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

United States President Donald Trump has signed a bill outlawing so-called “revenge porn”, including images created using artificial intelligence.

The Take It Down Act, signed on Monday, makes it a federal crime to publish intimate images of a person without their consent, and obligates social media platforms to remove such images within 48 hours when requested by victims.



Trump’s immigration crackdown targets Washington restaurants

WASHINGTON: When armed immigration agents made a surprise visit earlier this month to Papatella, a trendy pizzeria in the US capital’s Dupont neighborhood, they may not have made any arrests, but they delivered a clear message.

The show of force, part of an “enhanced operation” by President Donald Trump’s headline administration, has had ripple effects through an industry

reliant on immigrant labor, owners and others in the sector say.

The agents asked to see employment eligibility forms known as I-9s, said Natasha Neely, vice president of Papatella, which has several locations in the Washington area.

“They did not have a warrant, and they did not have any form of paperwork, so they were turned away,” she told AFP.

EU, Britain implement new Russia sanctions without waiting for Trump

AGENCIES
BRUSSELS/LONDON

The EU and Britain announced new sanctions against Russia on Tuesday without waiting for the United States to join them, a day after President Donald Trump spoke to Vladimir Putin without winning a promise for a ceasefire in Ukraine.

London and Brussels said their new measures would zero in on Moscow’s “shadow fleet” of oil tankers and financial companies that have helped it avoid the impact of other sanctions imposed over the war.

EU urges ‘strong action’ from US against Russia if no Ukraine truce

LONDON: EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas on Tuesday called for the United States to take “strong action” against Russia if Moscow does not agree to a ceasefire in Ukraine.

“America said that if Russia doesn’t agree on an unconditional ceasefire, then there are going to be consequences. So we want to see those consequences, also from the US side,” Kallas said at a meeting of EU ministers in Brussels.

Donald Trump said Russia and Ukraine would “immediately” start peace talks after he spoke with Vladimir Putin on Monday, despite the Russian leader rebuffing the US president’s call for an unconditional truce.

Germany’s defence minister Boris Pistorius said the call between the two leaders showed Putin was not “genuinely interested in peace”.



tions against Russia ready to go. European leaders then phoned Trump on the eve of his call with Putin to call for him to join them in imposing tougher measures.

EU agrees to lift all economic sanctions on Syria: Diplomats

AGENCIES
BRUSSELS

Syria’s foreign minister said on Tuesday that the lifting of sanctions on his country shows an “international will” to support his country, after EU countries agreed to end most of its sanctions.

In a press conference in Damascus alongside his Jordanian counterpart, Asaad Al-Shaibani said that “lifting sanctions expresses the regional and international will to support Syria,” adding that “the Syrian people today have a very important and historic opportunity to rebuild their country.”

EU countries gave a green light to lifting all economic sanctions on Syria in a bid to help the war-torn country recover after the ouster of Bashar Assad, diplomats said.

Ambassadors from the EU’s 27 member states struck a preliminary agreement for the move, which should be formally unveiled by foreign ministers meeting in Brussels later in the day, diplomats said.

The decision from the European Union comes after US President Donald Trump announced last week that Washington was lifting its sanctions against Syria.

The country’s new rulers have been clamouring for relief from the crushing international punishment imposed after Assad’s crackdown on opponents spiralled into civil war.

EU diplomats said the



agreement should see sanctions cutting Syrian banks off from the global system and freezing central bank assets lifted.

But diplomats said the bloc was intending to impose new individual sanctions on those responsible for stirring ethnic tensions, following deadly attacks targeting the Alawite minority.

Other measures targeting the Assad regime and prohibiting the sale of weapons or equipment that could be used to repress civilians were set to remain in place.

The latest move from the EU comes after it took a first step in February of suspending some sanctions on key Syrian economic sectors.

Israeli strikes kill at least 85 in Gaza as Israel allows more aid into Palestinian territory

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

Israel pressed ahead Tuesday with its new military offensive in Gaza despite mounting international criticism, launching airstrikes that health officials said killed at least 85 Palestinians. Israeli officials said they also allowed in dozens more trucks carrying aid.

It was not immediately clear whether the desperately needed supplies were reaching any of the over 2 million people in Gaza, which has been under an Israeli blockade for nearly three months. Experts have warned about the high risk of famine. Under pressure, Israel agreed this week to allow a “minimal” amount of aid into the Palestinian territory after preventing the entry of food, medicine and fuel in an attempt to pressure the Hamas militant group.



‘UN has clearance for 100 more aid trucks to enter Gaza’

GENEVA: The United Nations has received permission from Israel for about 100 more aid trucks to enter Gaza on Tuesday, a spokesperson for its humanitarian office said, as international pressure mounted on the government to take immediate steps to alleviate the effects of an 11-week blockade that ended Monday. Israel had blocked all aid from entering Gaza since March 1, arguing that sufficient humanitarian assistance had entered the Strip during a six-week ceasefire and that Hamas was stealing aid, with the blockade necessary to pressure the terror group to release the dozens of hostages it is holding. In recent weeks, however, some officials in the IDF have begun warning the political leadership that the enclave was on the brink of starvation.

China calls for ‘lasting ceasefire’ between India, Pak; backs Pakistan’s sovereignty

AGENCIES
BEIJING

China on Tuesday called for a “comprehensive and lasting ceasefire” between India and Pakistan, urging both countries to properly handle their differences through dialogue. At the same time, Foreign Minister Wang Yi also expressed China’s support to ‘ironclad friend’ Pakistan in safeguarding sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Wang’s comments came during his meeting with Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, who is here on a three-day

visit.

Dar is the first high-level Pakistani official to visit China after India carried out precision strikes under ‘Operation Sindoor’ on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on May 7 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people.

“China welcomes and supports Pakistan and India to properly handle their differences through dialogue, achieve a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire and seek fundamental solutions,” Wang told Dar here, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. This is in line with

the fundamental and long-term interests of both India and Pakistan and conducive to regional peace and stability, and also the common expectation of the international community, he told Dar.

“As an ironclad friend, China will, as always, firmly support Pakistan in safeguarding its national sovereignty and territorial integrity, in exploring a development path suited to its national conditions, in resolutely combating terrorism, and in playing a greater role in international and regional affairs”, state-run Global Times quoted Wang as telling Dar.



claims over the democratic and separately governed island, saying only Taiwan’s people can decide their future.

The government has warned that Beijing could mark the anniversary with military drills but speaking to reporters at the presidential office in central Taipei, Lai offered a message of peace.

“I, too, am committed to peace. Because peace is priceless and war has no winners. But when it comes to seeking peace, we cannot have dreams nor illusions,” he said.

Pak Army Chief General Asim Munir promoted

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan’s Cabinet on Tuesday approved a proposal to promote Army Chief General Asim Munir to the rank of Field Marshal, reported Reuters citing a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office.

The move comes days after India and Pakistan engaged in firing and military action after tensions escalated between the two countries.

The decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, “in recognition of the strategic brilliance and courageous leadership that ensured national security and decisively defeated the enemy.”

Munir responded to the promotion saying that he was grateful to God for receiving the position and dedicated the promotion to the “entire nation, the armed forces of Pakistan, especially the civil and military martyrs and veterans,” reported Dawn. “I am grateful to the president of Pakistan, the prime minister and the cabinet for their trust,” he said.

In a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), he said that he was grateful to the President, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet for their trust and added that it was an honour to have the trust of the nation, for which “millions of Asims have sacrificed themselves”.

RANDEEP HOODA BAGS RIGHTS TO WAR DRAMA ‘OPERATION KHUKRI’

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Following the success of his film ‘Jaat’, actor Randeep Hooda has acquired the film rights to ‘Operation Khukri’. He has secured the official rights to ‘Operation Khukri: The Untold Story of the Indian Army’s Bravest Peacekeeping Mission Abroad’ by Major General Rajpal Punia and Damini Punia, as reported by Variety.

‘Operation Khukri’ is a military drama based on one of the Indian Army’s most audacious operations on foreign soil. The film focuses on the real-life events of 2000, when 233



Indian soldiers were taken hostage by rebel forces in Sierra Leone, West Africa, and the subsequent high-risk rescue mission that followed.

Hooda will portray Major General Raj Pal Punia (then a young Company

Commander of the 14th Mechanised Infantry), who navigated both the tense standoff and the extraordinary rescue operation under challenging jungle warfare conditions, according to the outlet. The mission, initially a peacekeeping effort, esca-

lated into a 75-day stand-off that tested the resolve of the Indian contingent, who found themselves surrounded and cut off from supplies in the hostile terrains of Kailahun. What followed was a bold counteroffensive, later recognised as one of the most successful operations in Indian military history, as reported by Variety.

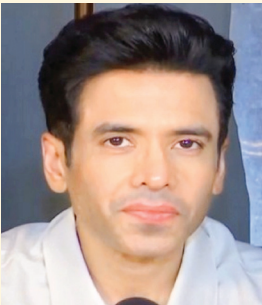
Production houses Rahul Mittra Films and Randeep Hooda Films have secured the exclusive adaptation rights to the Penguin Random House bestseller, which offers a firsthand account of the operation from Major General Punia, who oversaw the mission.

Tusshar Kapoor urges audiences to support ‘Kapkapiii’ in tribute to Sangeeth Sivan

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Actor Tusshar Kapoor has urged audiences to give a “chance” to his upcoming film ‘Kapkapiii’ in honour of its director, Sangeeth Sivan, who passed away during the film’s post-production. Reflecting on the director’s final moments, Tusshar revealed that bringing the movie to the big screen was Sivan’s “last wish.”

In an interview with ANI, Tusshar highlighted the emotional significance of his upcoming film, describing it as an important release dedicated to Sivan and his “happiness.”



“Whatever the outcome, it’s the audience who will decide. We just want them to give the film a chance — that’s what matters most. I believe, for Sangeeth ji and his happiness, wherever he may be, that would be enough,” said Tusshar.

The Golmaal actor believes there couldn’t be a “better time” for the film’s

theatrical release, with the popularity of horror comedies on the rise and schools and colleges currently on break.

“The film is releasing at the right time — during holidays, when schools and colleges are closed and people are in the mood to be entertained. Audiences are enjoying horror-comedy films, especially during this period when they have more free time. So, I hope people give this film a chance — for their own enjoyment, and as a tribute to Sangeeth ji,” said Tusshar.

The actor recalled Sivan’s “last wish” and said, “It’s clear that the release of ‘Kapkapiii’, the last

film he worked on, was his final wish. We are doing our best to fulfill that as the film gets ready for release. I truly hope it succeeds.”

Actress Siddhi Idnani, who made her Bollywood debut with ‘The Kerala Story’, is set to play a prominent role in ‘Kapkapiii’. In an interview with ANI, she expressed her hopes for the film’s success, drawing parallels to the positive reception of ‘The Kerala Story’.

“‘The Kerala Story’ received a unique and heartfelt response, and I hope ‘Kapkapiii’ gets a similar kind of reaction,” said Siddhi.



Mouni Roy snapped in a red, off-shoulder mini dress. (Instagram)

‘War 2’: Hrithik Roshan, NTR Jr get into fierce face-off in action-packed teaser

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan unveiled the teaser of his highly anticipated film ‘War 2’ on Tuesday, marking the occasion of NTR’s birthday.

Taking to X, Hrithik Roshan welcomed NTR Jr. with message, “And so it begins, @tarak9999. Be prepared, there is no place for mercy. Welcome to Hell. Love, Kabir.” War2Teaser out NOW. #War2 only in theatres from 14th August. Releasing in Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil. @advani.kiara #AyanMukerji @yrf #YRF-SpyUniverse.”

The teaser features Hrithik



reprising his role as Kabir. The teaser begins with a voiceover stating, “Meri nazar kabse tujh pe hai, Kabir... India’s best soldier... R&AW ka best agent tu tha, ab tu nahi... tu mujhe nahi jaanta... Get ready for War.”

The voiceover refers to Kabir as “India’s best soldier” and “R&AW’s best

agent,” but adds that he is no longer that. Kiara Advani makes a stunning appearance in a bikini, and the teaser showcases a sizzling romantic chemistry between her and Hrithik.

NTR also shared the teaser, writing, “This time, the war has no rules. Watch #War2Teaser now.”

BRAIN PICKING



Life is full of happiness and tears, be strong and have faith.

— KAREENA KAPOOR
(Indian Actress)

Conan O’Brien joins ‘Toy Story 5’ as voice of new character

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

TV host and comedian Conan O’Brien has been cast as the voice of Smarty Pants in Disney and Pixar’s ‘Toy Story 5’, set to hit theatres on June 19, 2026, according to Variety. The film marks the fifth installment in Pixar’s beloved ‘Toy Story’ series and serves as a sequel to ‘Toy Story 4’ (2019).

Written and directed by Oscar-winning filmmaker Andrew Stanton, the film will also feature returning stars Tom Hanks and Tim Allen as Woody and Buzz Lightyear. Joining the cast are Anna Faris, Ernie Hudson, and Conan O’Brien. The film is co-directed by McK-



enna Harris and produced by Jessica Choi.

O’Brien announced the news on his social media, joking that he was initially willing to play Woody or Buzz Lightyear — roles voiced by Hanks and Allen. However, he later learned that Smarty Pants is “the best character of them all,” according to the outlet.

‘Toy Story 4’ was released in theatres in 2019 to widespread critical acclaim and went on to gross over \$1 billion worldwide. With a global opening of \$244.5 million, the film set a new record for the biggest animated film debut at the time, according to Variety.

Earlier this year, Allen revealed that the upcoming ‘Toy Story’ film will primarily focus on Jessie, the cowgirl character introduced in ‘Toy Story 2’ and voiced by Joan Cusack.

“I can tell you that it’s a lot about Jessie,” Allen said, adding, “Tom (Hanks) and I — Woody and I — do a realign-

Sharmila Tagore, Simi Garewal attend screening of ‘Aranyer Din Ratri’

AGENCIES
CANNES

Bringing grace to the 78th edition of the Cannes Film Festival, veteran actresses Sharmila Tagore and Simi Garewal made an exquisite appearance on the red carpet on Monday evening. Recently, DietSabya, an Instagram handle, shared an adorable picture capturing the iconic reunion of these two legends at the French Riviera.

For the special premiere of the film ‘Aranyer Din Ratri’ at Cannes, both Sharmila and Simi were dressed to perfection. Sharmila dazzled in a stunning green saree, while Simi graced the red carpet in an elegant ivory outfit. Sharmila was accompanied by her daughter, Saba Pataudi. Notably, this was Simi’s debut appearance at Cannes.

Legendary filmmaker



Satyajit Ray’s ‘Aranyer Din Ratri’ underwent a meticulous restoration over six years, led by acclaimed American filmmaker Wes Anderson. The restoration project began in 2019 when Anderson, through his role on the board of Martin Scorsese’s The Film Foundation, initiated discussions about preserving the iconic film.

The director of ‘The Grand Budapest Hotel’, Anderson’s passion for Ray’s work fuelled a collaborative effort between The Film Foundation’s World Cinema Project, the

Film Heritage Foundation, Janus Films, and The Criterion Collection. The restoration was funded by the Golden Globe Foundation, according to Variety.

“Anything signed by Satyajit Ray must be cherished and preserved, but the nearly forgotten ‘Days and Nights in the Forest’ is a particularly special gem,” Anderson said.

“Made in 1970, ‘Days and Nights in the Forest’ is modern and novelistic. Ray ventured into terrain perhaps more familiar to Cassavetes, exploring a clash between castes and sexes.”

Cannes Film Festival 2025



Rihanna stuns with her look at Cannes red carpet

AGENCIES
CANNES

Rihanna made a surprise appearance at the Cannes Film Festival, walking the red carpet at the Palais to support her partner A\$AP Rocky at the premiere of ‘Highest 2 Lowest’. The singer wowed everyone with her mesmerising look, donning a sky-blue dress for the star-studded event. She accompanied Rocky, who stars alongside Denzel Washington in Spike Lee’s latest film, as reported by Variety.

Rihanna and A\$AP

Rocky are expecting their third child together, with the mom-to-be officially revealing the news on the 2025 Met Gala red carpet earlier in May. The couple are already parents to two sons, RZA, 3, and Riot, 20 months, as reported by the outlet. Rocky also spoke about being part of a power couple with Rihanna, who recently released a new song for the upcoming Smurfs film, where she voices Smurfette.

“We both have movies coming out the same year,” Rocky shared, adding, “I didn’t even realize that.

Julia Ducournau’s ‘Alpha’ premieres at Cannes

AGENCIES
CANNES

French director Julia Ducournau, who captivated the film world in 2021 when her body horror masterpiece ‘Titane’ won the Palme d’Or, returned with her latest project, ‘Alpha’. Ducournau graced the red carpet alongside her cast, including Tahar Rahim, Golshifteh Farahani, and Emma Mackey, with Cannes jury president Juliette Binoche and actress Vicky Krieps also in attendance, as reported by The Hollywood Reporter.

The audience at Cannes gave Ducournau and her team an enthusiastic standing ovation, with several cheers for ‘Alpha’, an AIDS-coded horror film exploring a mysterious illness and the fear and social exclusion it evokes. While ‘Alpha’ was far less violent and provocative than ‘Titane’, it



remained poignant, with some cast members wiping away tears when the house lights came on.

Melissa Boros, who plays the titular character Alpha, was joined by Farahani as her mother and Rahim as her uncle, a junkie infected with the virus, as reported by the outlet. However, the loudest cheers were reserved for Ducournau, with the home crowd continuing to applaud her throughout a solid 11-minute standing ovation.

Set in the 1980s, ‘Alpha’ imagines a fictional epidemic inspired by the AIDS crisis. The film fol-

lows Alpha, a troubled 13-year-old girl living with her single mother, who faces social rejection after a rumour spread that she’s been infected with a mysterious new disease. One day, Alpha returns from school with a tattoo on her arm, and both her and her mother’s world begins to unravel.

Newcomer Boros plays Alpha, with Farahani portraying her mother. Rahim and Mackey also co-star, as reported by The Hollywood Reporter.

The highly anticipated film has released its first teaser trailer.

HALDIRAM LAUNCHES AVOCADO SPECIAL MENU: A WHOLESOME TWIST TO CLASSIC INDIAN FLAVOURS

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a delightful twist to its classic Indian flavours, Haldiram's has introduced five innovative dishes featuring the superfood avocado, bringing together wholesome nutrition and irresistible taste. Known for blending tradition with innovation, Haldiram's continues to push the culinary envelope with its new avocado-infused creations, a perfect blend of health and indulgence.

To mark the debut of this innovative menu, Haldiram's hosted an exclusive launch event at their flagship outlet in Pacific Mall, Pitampura, on May 13, 2025.

The newly introduced dishes showcase the versatility of avocado in both traditional and contemporary formats:

- Avocado Cold Sandwich
- Avocado Cheese Grilled Sandwich
- Avocado & Paneer Wrap
- Avocado Sev Puri
- Avocado Chatpata Paneer Tikka

The event saw enthusiastic participation from leading food and lifestyle media, influencers, and



wellness enthusiasts, who got a first-hand experience of the new avocado creations through a curated

tasting session. Session featured engaging discussions on how the idea was conceived in response to

shifting consumer preferences and the creative process behind integrating av-

ocado into Indian cuisine. Attendees gained valuable insights into the innovation

journey, from experimenting with flavours and formats to striking the perfect

balance between health and indulgence, all while seamlessly blending with and maintaining Haldiram's legacy.

At Haldiram's, we constantly strive to innovate while staying true to our Indian culinary roots," said Mr. Kailash Agarwal, President - Retail & QSR, Haldiram's. "Our collaboration with the World Avocado Organisation has allowed us to introduce a global superfood in a uniquely Indian way. We are excited to offer our customers a fusion that reflects the evolving food preferences of modern India."

Zac Bard, Chairman World Avocado Organisation, said, "We are delighted to partner with India's biggest ethnic food chain, Haldiram's, and excited to introduce avocados into traditional India. Snack foods. With the country's dynamic culinary landscape and a growing base of health-conscious consumers, India represents a strong potential market for avocados. Our goal is to educate consumers on the benefits of including avocados in their everyday diet and to promote a healthy lifestyle. This collaboration

is a perfect blend of taste and health, marking the start of an exciting culinary journey".

The new avocado range is available across all Haldiram's outlets in Delhi NCR. About Haldiram's Established in 1937, Haldiram's is a legacy brand that has transformed traditional Indian snacking with its innovative spirit and quality-driven approach. With a strong presence across India and global markets, Haldiram's continues to delight generations of food lovers.

About the World Avocado Organisation The World Avocado Organisation is a non-profit organisation founded in 2016 whose members are avocado growers, exporters and importers from around the world - including the top four grower supplier countries to the EU and UK. The World Avocado Organisation promotes the consumption of avocados based on their nutritional value and recognised health benefits. It also shares information and insights on avocado production, supply chains and sustainability with the public.

Burger Bliss at Home: A Juicy Lucy Feast!

SANJANA CHAWLA

Cafe Delhi Heights has long been a Delhi favorite, known for its vibrant ambiance. But what they are now also known for is their newest happening chain - Juicy Lucy Burgers where juiciness meets you in every bite! But how does the cheesy, juicy experience translate to a home delivery? I recently put their delivery to the test, ordering a range of their popular items, and here's my verdict:

The stars of the show were undoubtedly the burgers. I opted for a mix of their classics and some lighter options. The Cutie Grilled Chicken Burger was a delightful surprise. Don't let the "Cutie" in the name fool you - it was packed with flavor and was a meal in itself! The chicken was juicy, and the bun was soft and held up well to the fillings. The Cutie Crispy Tofu Burger was equally impressive. Often, tofu burgers can be bland, but this one was seasoned perfectly, with a satisfyingly firm texture! Trust me when I say this because I gobbled on the tofu patty in a jiffy.

Then came the giants. The Giant Delhi Special Burger lived up to its name - a towering behemoth of a burger. While I appreciated the generous portions, I felt the flavors, while good, were slightly less balanced than the smaller burgers. The Giant Classic Tender Chicken Burger was indeed moist, and the chicken was succulent. However, both giant burgers, while delivering in size, were a bit of a challenge to eat at home, nevertheless, I loved and savoured every bite and drop of them!

Moving on to the sides, the Potato Wedges were a classic done right. They arrived crispy on the outside and fluffy on the inside, though

they could have used a touch more seasoning. The Crispy Onion Rings were another highlight - perfectly golden-brown, crispy, and not greasy at all. The Chicken Wings were a pleasant surprise. They had a nice glaze, with

a good balance of sweet and savory flavors. They were a bit mild for my taste, but still enjoyable.

To wash it all down, I ordered the Masala Banta and the Homemade Lemonade. The Masala Banta was refreshingly tangy

and spicy, a perfect palate cleanser between the rich burgers. The Homemade Lemonade was classic and refreshing, striking a good balance between sweet and sour.

Finally, for dessert, the Nutella Brownie was a rich, decadent treat. It was fudgy, chocolatey, and the perfect way to end the meal. It was also still warm upon arrival, which is always a plus!

Juicy Lucy Burgers delivers a solid at-home experience. The burgers, especially the smaller ones, traveled well and retained their flavor and texture. The sides were also a hit, arriving crispy and fresh.

The drinks were refreshing, and the Nutella Brownie was a delightful end to the meal. The overall quality of the food was excellent and their at-home delivery service is definitely worth trying.



TOAST & TONIC BIDS FAREWELL WITH THE LAST HURRAH: A HALL OF FAME MENU OF ALL-TIME FAVOURITES

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

It's time for one last, magnificent toast at Toast & Tonic, BKC! As the team prepares to close the doors this June after years of unforgettable moments and culinary creativity, they announce The Last Hurrah - a two-month celebration filled with the food, drinks, and good times that made Toast & Tonic a cherished Mumbai destination.

Central to this celebratory farewell is the Hall of Fame Menu, launching on 24th April 2025. This isn't just a menu, it's a curated collection of Toast & Tonic's most popular and well-loved dishes over the years. It's a heartfelt thank you to our patrons, and a final chance to relive your favourite Toasty memories before it's gone for good.

"This isn't about closing a door—it's about celebrating everything we've shared," explains A.D.Singh, Toast & Tonic. "The Hall of Fame Menu brings back the classics that our guests have cherished over the years, the dishes they've celebrated milestones with, the cocktails that have become part of their stories. While we are closing our doors to make space for something new, we're not going quietly! Here's to The Last Hurrah!"

YOUR FINAL CHANCE TO RELIVE THE CLASSICS

Take a delicious walk down memory lane! This carefully curated menu brings back absolute guests favourite food and cocktails for one last encore. Look forward to the iconic Mixed Mushroom & Burrata Flatbread with its distinct green mustard spread and tomato gojju, and the comforting Spaghetti Cacio e Pepe, a staple since day one. Also returning are small plates like the Bajra & Ricotta Gnocchi served in a creamed amaranth and spinach velouté, and the ever-popular Avocado Taco featuring beer-battered

avocado and chipotle salsa. And for a sweet ending, the signature Nolen Gur T&T Tres Leches makes a final appearance.

And of course, the drinks! Toast & Tonic's legendary gin cocktails return, including The Herbalist with its unique coriander-orange ice,

the British Raj infused with pomegranate and cinnamon, and the spirited Diablo featuring bird's eye chilli tonic. It's your last opportunity to experience the cocktails that cemented T&T's place in Mumbai's gin scene.

"These aren't just recipes to us—they're memories

longtime fans and newcomers alike to join in this final celebration of flavour and community. Don't miss this last opportunity to savour the flavours that defined an era in BKC.

Come raise a glass, share a toast, and enjoy your favourites before the final good-



we've created together with our guests," shares Chef Dhruv Oberoi. "Each dish tells a chapter of our story, and we're excited to share them one final time."

Toast & Tonic encourages

bye. Reservations are highly recommended during these final weeks!

The Last Hurrah Menu will be available at Toast & Tonic, BKC from 24th April until 15th June.

DEGREES ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH: HOW SKILLS ARE BECOMING THE REAL GAME-CHANGER



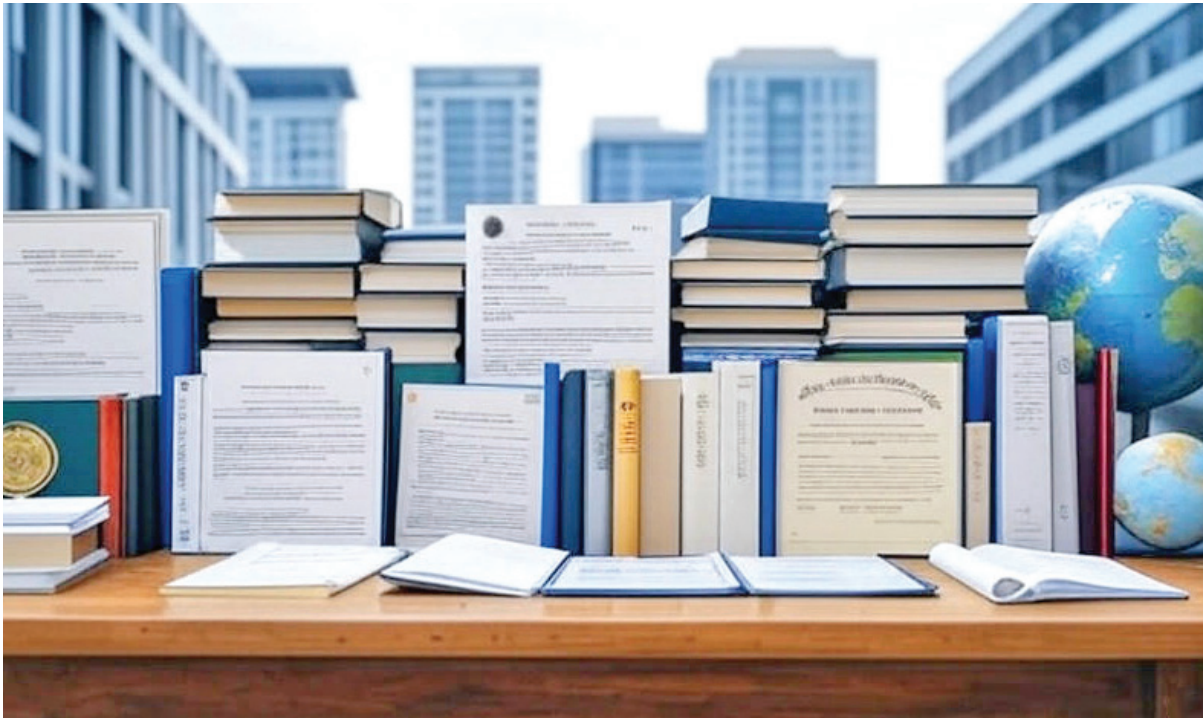
PROF. SUPRIYA PATTANAYAK

For many years, the conventional education model has put strong focus on degrees as the final score of a student's potential and employability. But the employment landscape is evolving—and at lightning speed. Employers today are less concerned with paper qualification and more with what someone can do. With a wave of automation, AI, and fluid job descriptions reshaping the working world, skills have become the real differentiator.

While degrees remain a starting point, they're no longer a destination—they're merely the gateway. The world of work now requires flexibility, cross-functional proficiency, and moment-by-moment problem-solving. A programmer can be asked to know UI/UX, a mechanical engineer to collaborate with data

analysts, and a marketing pro to operate AI software. Because boundaries are breaking down, students no longer only need knowledge but also agility—the kind that flows from experiential learning and ongoing upskilling.

This change has also been highlighted by the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025. It estimates that by 2030, about 22% of existing jobs will be dramatically changed because of automation, AI, and other forces of transformation. Although 92 million jobs will be lost, about 170 million new jobs will be created, leading to a net increase of 78 million jobs. The report also points out that almost 40% of job competencies will be altered by the year 2030, with a focus on the increasing relevance of technological skills as well as human skills such as creative thinking and flexibility. It clearly indicates that critical thinking, problem-solving, and hands-on technical skills will be the most sought-after competencies. Likewise, as per the Economic Survey 2023-24, 65% of India's rapidly expanding population is below the age of 35



years, and most of them are not skilled enough to meet the demands of a contemporary economy. It also asserted that only 51.25% of the nation's youth are considered employable, as per estimates. These figures indicate the urgent necessity to synchronise learning with the requirements of the industry.

This transformation is identified at the national policy level as well. India's

Consistent with the suggestions in NEP 2020, flexible academic paths such as lateral entry into degrees are picking up speed. With flexibility, holders of diplomas or working professionals can leverage learning done earlier and join higher programmes without duplication.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a notable step in this direction. It places significant emphasis on experiential learning, practical

orientation, and vocational training. Being based on flexibility, skill creation, and practice-oriented learning, the policy aims to make edu-

cation industry-focused and solution-oriented towards real-world challenges.

However, the implementation is most important.

Whereas most educational institutions still depend very much on the traditional classroom lectures and theoretical examinations, an increasing number are adopting production-based and action learning frameworks. These extend beyond mock-up labs to cover functional manufacturing centres and live project centres where students are trained under real-time situations. From digital design and precision machining to renewable energy systems and food technology, such centres give students hands-on, immersive learning experiences that cannot be provided in any textbook.

This method doesn't only develop technical competencies—it fosters problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and responsibility. Students work with actual materials, equipment, and deadlines, learning to achieve industry expectations and deadlines. The experience also familiarises them with cost effectiveness, quality assurance, and collaboration—key factors in any contemporary workplace.

Consistent with the suggestions in NEP 2020, flexible academic paths such as

lateral entry into degrees are picking up speed. With flexibility, holders of diplomas or working professionals can leverage learning done earlier and join higher programmes without duplication. It also echoes a larger transformation: appreciating what a student knows and is able to do, as opposed to how long they have stayed in formal studies.

The result of such an ability-integrated model of education is obvious—graduates are industry-ready, assured, and better employable. They have the theoretical grounding and practical proficiency to be immediately effective. Such a two-fold ability is exactly what employers want more and more: individuals with the ability to adjust, to contribute, and to lead in fast-changing workplaces.

As the distinction between workplace preparedness and academic education further blurs, it's increasingly apparent that the degree itself no longer assures success. Skills—demonstrable, usable, and relevant—are the actual game-changers in today's competitive landscape.

The author is Vice Chancellor, Centurion University, Odisha.

Studying Abroad in a Non-English Speaking Nation: Myths and Realities



RITIKA GUPTA

When individuals think of studying abroad, English-speaking nations such as the U.S., the U.K., Canada, or Australia usually come to mind. Yet, an increasing number of students are looking into possibilities in non-English speaking nations—Germany and France, Japan, and Brazil. Though this route has amazing cultural and academic benefits, it is usually filled with myths. Let's dis-

tinguish between the myths and realities.

MYTH 1: YOU NEED TO BE NATIVE-SPEAKING IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

Reality: Most universities in non-English-speaking nations have degree programs taught completely in English, particularly at the postgraduate level. Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and even China offer English-taught programs specifically for international students. Although learning the local language is a good idea—and sometimes a necessary part of daily life—you don't need to be fluent to go abroad.

Pro Tip: Take language classes after you arrive. You'll learn vocabulary more quickly in an immersive setting.

MYTH 2: IT'S DIFFICULT TO ADAPT TO THE CULTURE

Reality: Culture shock is inevitable, but so is cultural adjustment. Students say that host communities, instructors, and other international students are friendly and willing to assist. Universities also have orientation programs and cultural training sessions to facilitate your transition.

MYTH 3: COMPANIES LOVE DEGREES FROM ENGLISH-SPEAKING NATIONS

Reality: International employers increasingly place value on international experience, not the nation. What is more important is the quality of the institution, the applicability of your studies, and the skills you gain—particularly adaptability, cross-

cultural communication, and problem-solving.

MYTH 4: SOCIALIZING IS DIFFICULT

Reality: While language barriers may exist, you're rarely alone. International student communities are diverse and supportive. In addition, locals are often eager to connect with foreigners, and many are happy to practice their English.

Social Tip: Get involved with student clubs, go to language exchanges, and don't hesitate to take the initiative in getting to know others.

MYTH 5: YOU WON'T LEARN PROPER ENGLISH ABROAD

Reality: English remains the lingua franca of many international programs, and you'll probably get along in English with fel-

low students from all corners of the globe. If anything, you'll enhance your skill at using English in multicultural situations—something native speakers themselves can sometimes find challenging.

Attending school in a non-English speaking nation isn't just a possibility's a life experience. It makes you leave your comfort zone behind, learn intercultural skills, and better understand the world. Don't let misconceptions stop you from what might be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life.

So go ahead—venture out of the familiar and celebrate the world in all its linguistic and cultural richness.

The author is Counsellor at Aaera Consultants.

IMPACT OF CLOUD COMPUTING IN HIGHER EDUCATION



AKASH SHARMA

In today's fast-paced and digital world, technology is no longer a support tool, it's at the core of modern education. Among the most transformative innovations is cloud computing, a technology that enables access to data and applications over the internet instead of relying on local servers or personal computers. From virtual classrooms to collaborative research, cloud computing is revolutionizing higher education, especially for students.

WHAT IS CLOUD COMPUTING?

Cloud computing is the delivery of computing services like storage, databases, software, and networking over the internet—or “the cloud.” This eliminates the need for physical infrastructure and gives users access to scalable and flexible resources from anywhere in the world.

WHY CLOUD COMPUTING MATTERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

According to a report by MarketsandMarkets, the global cloud computing in education market is projected to grow from USD 8.13 billion in 2016 to USD 25.36 billion by 2021, at a CAGR of 25.6% (MarketsandMarkets, 2017). This growth reflects the increasing need for scalable, cost-effective, and remote learning solutions.

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

1. ANYWHERE, ANY-TIME LEARNING

Students can access learn-

ing materials and submit assignments from any internet-connected device, enabling continuous learning outside of campus.

1% of students prefer cloud-based tools due to the convenience and accessibility they offer (EDUCAUSE Horizon Report, 2019).

2. COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Cloud computing enables group work and team projects with tools like Google Docs, Zoom, and Microsoft



Teams. A study by McKinsey & Co. emphasized that digital collaboration tools significantly improve learning outcomes in higher education (McKinsey, 2020).

3. ACCESS TO ADVANCED TOOLS

Students gain access to:

- Virtual labs for science and engineering courses
- Cloud-based coding environments like Google Colab and Jupyter Notebooks
- Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Moodle and Canvas

4. REDUCED COSTS

Cloud computing reduces the need for physical textbooks, on-campus lab infrastructure, and high-end devices. Institutions using cloud solutions can save up to 30% annually on IT costs, according to IBM Cloud Education (IBM, 2020).

BENEFITS FOR UNIVERSITIES (THAT INDIRECTLY HELP STUDENTS)

Scalability: Institutions can scale operations to support thousands of students. Data Security: Cloud platforms offer automatic

backup, encryption, and compliance with data privacy standards.

Sustainability: Reducing paper usage and energy consumption helps institutions move toward greener campuses.

CHALLENGES & CONSIDERATIONS

Despite the advantages, cloud computing presents certain risks:

1. PRIVACY CONCERNS

Without proper security protocols, student data can be compromised.

60% of educational institutions reported experiencing at least one cloud-related data breach (Ponemon Institute, 2020).

2. INTERNET DEPENDENCE

Students in rural areas or regions with poor connectivity may face limited access to online resources.

3. LEARNING CURVE

Not all students and faculty are adept at using cloud tools, which can hinder adoption.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD DO

Learn to use platforms like Google Workspace, Microsoft 365, and Zoom. Explore cloud-based labs and tools relevant to your academic stream.

Practice virtual collaboration, a key skill for future workplaces.

Cloud computing is not just an IT upgrade—it's an educational revolution. It enhances access, enables collaboration, and makes learning more efficient and cost-effective. As cloud adoption increases in higher education, students who embrace it will gain a competitive edge not only academically but also professionally. The future of education is in the cloud—and it's already here.

The author is Director Admissions & Outreach, Noida International University.

India-UK Free Trade Agreement: A new door for Indian students



MAMTA JANI

The recently signed Free trade agreement between India and the UK has had a remarkable impact on relations between the two nations. This deal is not only beneficial for the two nations but also very important for Indian students. This deal is also very important for Indian students because it opens new doors in sectors like IT, finance, education, and professional services. With this agreement, students now have better chances of building

global careers and learning new skills.

IT SECTOR: MORE JOBS AND GLOBAL PROJECTS

India already has a very strong base in the IT industry and after signing the FTA many Indian tech professionals may find it easy to work in the UK because the demand for skills like software development, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence (AI) increased.

This is very beneficial for students who are pursuing computer science, IT, or data science. They may get better job offers and also work on global projects even while staying in India. UK companies may also outsource more work to Indian IT firms, creating more job opportunities here.

FINANCE SECTOR: NEW CAREER PATHS

IN BANKING AND FINTECH

The finance sector is set to grow. Indian fintech firms can now expand their services in the UK, and UK-based companies may invest more in India. This creates more roles in digital banking, investment services, insurance, and financial compliance.

Students studying finance, commerce, or economics may get more chances to work in multinational companies or fast-growing startups. Cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad are known for IT could see a rise in demand for finance experts.

EDUCATION: EASY EXCHANGES AND MORE RECOGNITION

Most importantly, this agreement focuses on education which is the most student-friendly part of the

FTA. With this they agreed to recognize both Indian and UK academic qualifications and it makes it easy to apply for courses, jobs, or higher education in the UK.

Apart from this, there will be more student exchange programs and joint research projects. Indian students in fields like teaching, EdTech, psychology, or instructional design may find more job openings in global education platforms and online learning.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: CAREERS ACROSS BORDERS

This agreement also helps students who want to work in areas like consulting, law, HR, and marketing. The FTA supports smoother movement of professionals between the two countries. So if you want to work in an international firm or serve global clients, it may now

be easier.

Students studying business, law, or human resources can learn more about UK systems and use that knowledge to work on international projects or advise clients from both countries.

A BIG WIN FOR YOUNG INDIANS

The India-UK Free Trade Agreement is not just for large companies—it also brings many chances for students and young professionals. Whether you're interested in IT, finance, education, or business services, this deal can help you explore international jobs and build a global career. It's a great time for Indian youth to prepare, upskill, and take the next step toward their future.

The author is Founder of On Track Education.

RR'S AKASH MADHWAL AND YUDHVIR SINGH'S BRILLIANCE RESTRICTS CSK TO 187/8

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

An exceptional bowling performance from Rajasthan Royals (RR) right-arm speedsters Akash Madhwal and Yuvhvir Singh restricted the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to a total of 187/8 in their 20 overs at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday.

The Royals need a total of 188 runs to chase down in their last match of the IPL 2025.

Rajasthan Royals captain Sanju Samson won the toss and opted to bowl first in the 62nd encounter of the ongoing 18th edition of the cash-rich league. Batters Ayush Mhatre and Devon Conway came out in the middle to open the innings for the Super Kings. The Chennai-based franchise didn't have the start which they wanted as they lost the first two wickets of Conway (10) and Urvil Patel (0) at the score of 12 on the bowling of right-arm seamer Yuvhvir Singh in the second over



Rajasthan Royals' Yuvhvir Singh and teammates celebrate the wicket of Chennai Super Kings' Devon Conway during the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 match, at Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on Tuesday. (ANI Photo)

of the innings. After two quick wickets, experienced campaigner Ravichandran Ashwin came out in the middle to bat along with young Mhatre. Both the batters scored 24 runs in the fourth over with the help of two boundaries and maximums which was bowled by Yuvhvir Singh. The MS

Dhoni-led side crossed the 50-run mark in the fifth over as Mhatre slammed a six on the bowling of left-arm pacer Kwen Maphaka. The CSK side lost their next two wickets in quick succession. First, they lost the wicket of Ashwin (13) in the seventh over, then they lost the wicket of Ravindra

Jadeja (1) at the score of 78 in the eighth over. After the fall of five wickets, the Chennai team were 78/5 in 8 overs with Dewald Brevis (8*) and Shivam Dube (0*) unbeaten on the crease. In the 10th over, the Chennai side touched 100 runs as Brevis smashed a maximum on the bowling of spinner Ri-

BRIEF SCORE
Chennai Super Kings 187/8 in 20 overs (Ayush Mhatre 43, Dewald Brevis 42; Akash Madhwal 3/29) vs Rajasthan Royals. (ANI)

yan Parag. Brevis (42 runs off 25 balls) was sent back in the 14th over as he was cleaned up by right-arm fast bowler Akash Madhwal on the fourth ball.

In the 15th over, the CSK franchise completed the 150-run mark as Parag bowled a wide. In the end, Dube (39 runs from 32 balls) and MS Dhoni (16 runs in 17 balls) scored crucial runs, which took the Chennai side to a good total of 187/8 after the completion of the first innings. For the Sanju Samson-led side, three wickets each were snapped by Yuvhvir Singh (3/47) and Akash Madhwal (3/29) & one wicket each was grabbed by Tushar Deshpande (1/33) and Wanindu Hasaranga (1/27) in their respective four overs.



Mumbai Indians sign Bairstow, Gleeson, Asalanka

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Mumbai Indians (MI) have picked England wicket-keeper/batter Jonny Bairstow, Sri Lanka captain Charith Asalanka, and England seamer Richard Gleeson as replacements for Will Jacks, Corbin Bosch, and Ryan Rickelton, who will leave for national duties, as per IPL Media Advisory.

Jacks had returned to India ahead of MI's final two group-stage games but will be unavailable for the season's conclusion due to international duty. With England's home ODI series against West Indies starting from May 29, clashing with the rescheduled knock-out stage. Rickelton, along with his compatriot Corbin Bosch, is set to miss the playoffs, with Cricket South Africa requesting members of their World Test Championship final squad to return home by May 27, according to ESPNcricinfo. Jonny Bairstow was an integral part of the England side that won



the ODI World Cup in 2019. Bairstow has a total of 287 caps for England. Bairstow has played in 50 IPL games over five seasons, having previously played for Punjab Kings (2022 and 2024) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (2019-21).

With 1589 runs in the league at an average of 34.54 and a strike rate of 144.45, he has had a remarkable career in the league. He has also hit two IPL hundreds, one of which was a record-breaking run chase against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) at Eden Gardens last year. Charith Asalanka is currently Sri Lanka's captain in the ODI and T20I

formats and has represented the country 134 times in international cricket. In T20Is, the Sri Lankan skipper has made 1247 in 58 matches with an average of 24.45 and a strike of 128.55.

Richard Gleeson, 37, has played in six T20Is for England and is known for his prowess in the death overs. He made his IPL debut last year, playing two matches for Chennai Super Kings.

Prior to their last two group stage games against the Delhi Capitals (May 21) and Punjab Kings (May 26), MI is currently ranked fourth in the points standings with seven wins and five defeats. (ANI)

Coach Vettori hails SRH batting line-up

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW

Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) head coach Daniel Vettori expressed satisfaction with the team's performance against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) on Monday, particularly highlighting their batting display.

He praised Abhishek Sharma's role in setting up the innings and commended the team for their ability to adapt to the conditions, understand their roles, and secure

a comfortable victory.

While speaking in the post-match press conference, Vettori said, "So, I think that's very pleasing and today was probably our best batting performance as well. The way that Abhishek was able to set it up, everyone who came in just read the conditions perfectly, understood their role, and got us home comfortably. So, that's very satisfying."

Vettori also spoke about finishing the tournament strongly, finding new players and giving them oppor-



tunities. "It's very important to the franchise to try and win games, to try and finish strongly, but most importantly is finding out about a few players and giving them opportunities. Obviously, Atharva Taide got a

chance today with Travis Head being unwell and then continuing seeing some performance from Isha Malinga and Kaminda Mendes."

Coming to the match, SRH won the toss and opted to field first. Markram and Marsh scored half-centuries and put 115 runs for the first wicket. Except for Pooran later, every other batter failed to touch the double digits as LSG finished at 205/7 in their 20 overs. Eshan Malinga (2/28) was the top bowler for SRH, with Harshal Patel, Harsh Dubey and Nitish

We were probably 15 runs short: Marsh reflects on LSG's defeat against SRH

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) batter Mitchell Marsh, reflecting on their match against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Monday in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) in Lucknow, acknowledged that the SRH executed their bowling strategy effectively, potentially leaving them 15 runs short on a batting-friendly pitch.

He emphasised that even with a score of 180 or 280, the Sunrisers remain a formidable and unpredictable opponent due to their strong bowling performance.

"They bowled very well to their plans throughout the middle order, and maybe we were probably 15 short on what was a really good wicket. And you know, the margins are very small in this game. But as we know, the Sunrisers, you can have 180 or 280, or you never really feel safe. So they're a dangerous side. They bat-



ted beautifully. So yeah, fair play to them," Mitchell Marsh said in the post-match press conference.

"We've shown glimpses of how good a team we can be this year, but the IPL was very hard, and you only have to be a little bit off. We've had a couple of really close games that we've gone down in, and they're the difference in tournaments like this. So we've still got two games to go, and we're a proud unit. So no doubt we'll be playing to win and finishing off the season strong," he added.

Coming to the match, SRH won the toss and opted to

field first. Markram and Marsh scored half-centuries and put 115 runs for the first wicket. Except for Pooran later, every other batter failed to touch the double digits as LSG finished at 205/7 in their 20 overs.

Eshan Malinga (2/28) was the top bowler for SRH, with Harshal Patel, Harsh Dubey and Nitish Kumar Reddy getting one each. During the run-chase, Abhishek Sharma (59 in 20 balls, with four boundaries and six sixes) and Ishan Kishan (35 in 28 balls, with three fours and two sixes) put up an 82-run partnership for the second wicket.

Bibiano dedicates SAFF U19 victory to Arunachal fans

AGENCIES
YUPIA (ARUNACHAL PRADESH)

After two months of toil, it all boiled down to the penalty shootout. However, the calm demeanour with which the India U19 men's national team conducted themselves during the most nerve-wracking moment of the SAFF U19 Championship final against Bangladesh brought out the character that the boys have, according to the official website of the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

Head coach Bibiano Fernandes was all praised for his boys after they were crowned the SAFF U19 champions at the Golden Jubilee Stadium on Sunday, May 18, 2025.

"We knew it would not be an easy final by any stretch of imagination," said Fernandes at the post-match press conference. "Bangladesh showed their mettle as well, coming back from a goal down. But our boys exhibited tremendous character to keep fighting for the 90 minutes and beyond," Bibiano Fernandes said



"Arunachal Pradesh was amazing for us. I've never seen so many fans turn up for a junior game anywhere in India. We will certainly remember this for the rest of our lives," he said.

"We must also appreciate how Bangladesh fought back. I think they showed how good a side they are. It was an entertaining game, and at the end, we're happy that we came out as champions," said Fernandes, who claimed his fourth ju-

nior SAFF title on Sunday night."

While the final boiled down to a nail-biting penalty shootout, Fernandes was quietly confident in the Blue Colts' abilities. "I was always positive for the penalties because I have full

faith in my players. I knew that our goalkeeper Suraj (Singh Aheibam) is good at saving penalties.

He's been amazing at the training sessions, when we practiced spot-kicks. We knew he would make us proud," said Fernandes. "The job for the rest of the boys was to put the ball in the net."

While the India U19S showed quiet confidence in tense situations, their 48-year-old coach attributed much of the mentality to the support from the

stands.

"Arunachal Pradesh was amazing for us. I've never seen so many fans turn up for a junior game anywhere in India. We will certainly remember this for the rest of our lives," he said. "The crowd was amazing, and the boys enjoyed playing in front of them."

"I would like to dedicate this victory to the fans in Arunachal Pradesh, they were truly amazing. They pushed us and supported us all the way.

They made us play the way we did. I'm sure this will motivate more youngsters to dream of playing for the national team one day, and we will have more players like Omang (Dodum) come through," he said.

The Blue Colts will now regroup and begin their preparations for the AFC U20 Asian Cup Qualifiers, to be held next year.

"India has ample talent. If we do good development, we will one day see India qualify for the World Cup, that remains the dream, as always," said Fernandes.

ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026: Thailand, Nepal progress to Global Qualifier

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Asia's entrants for the upcoming 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier have been locked in, with victories in the final phase of regional qualifying ensuring that Thailand and Nepal go through, according to the ICC.

The teams were featured in a Super Three contest along with the UAE, which

would've seen the top two sides in the group make it to the Global Qualifier. Nepal completed the chase of UAE's 114 in the final over to seal their progress on Monday, joining Thailand and securing their path to the next round.

After electing to field against the UAE in Bangkok, the Nepal side kept a check on the Emirati scoring rate, and despite Esha Oza's patient 39, the

Middle East side could reach only 114/7 in the 20-over mark. Manisha Upadhyay starred with 4/20 with the ball.

Nepal were clinical with the willow, and never lost sight of the target despite setbacks. Their five-wicket win was sealed in the 20th over, with skipper Indu Barma (30) and Rubina Chhetry (23) making important contributions.

Narueamol Chaiwai's



side earlier defeated the Emiratis in action on

Sunday. With Thailand's match against Nepal the

only remaining fixture, neither side can be overtaken on the points tally. Thailand's win over the UAE was a dominant display. The South-East Asian side posted 144/5 in the first innings on the back of Natthakan Chantham's (46* from New Delhi 8 20) blazing outing and Nattaya Boochatham's (49 from 48) steady hand. The UAE had lost Esha Oza early and were never in contention to

chase thereafter, finishing at 90/5 in their quota of overs.

The pair joins Bangladesh and Scotland at the Global Qualifier, who made it to the event via their participation in the last ICC Women's T20 World Cup, and the United States, which claimed victory in the Americas Qualifier, held in Argentina back in March.

Two Global Qualifier

spots are available through both upcoming Europe and Africa Qualifiers, with one place up for grabs in East Asia-Pacific action.

The top four teams at the Global Qualifier will progress to the marquee tournament to be held in England and Wales, with the hosts joined by Australia, India, New Zealand, South Africa, West Indies, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.